

# Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Evaluation: Evidence Synthesis



**CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS**

# **Developing the Young Workforce Evaluation: Evidence Synthesis**

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# **1. Executive summary**

## **1.1 Background and methodology**

Developing the Young Workforce programme (DYW) is Scotland's national youth employment strategy. DYW sets out the Scottish Government's vision for a world-class vocational education system that supports young people to engage in work-relevant learning, attain industry-recognised qualifications and pursue sustained and successful career pathways. This evidence review, which has been carried out by the Scottish Government as part of the evaluation of Developing the Young Workforce programme (DYW), synthesises evidence collected over the seven-year duration of DYW (2014-2021).

The objectives of this review are to summarise the available evidence on DYW activity and outputs between 2014-2019, and to identify good practice examples and service delivery lessons arising from DYW activity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The evidence review was conducted in autumn 2022 and comprised three phases: (1) review of key policy documentation; (2) data collection from internal and external partners; (3) documentary review and descriptive statistical analyses of the collected evidence. It drew on evidence originating from a wide range of published and unpublished documents, such as official statistics, surveys, websites, reports, policy documents, and the findings of DYW annual reports (2014 – 2019).

Practice examples of DYW implementation activities are also included in this report in the form of four case studies: work-relevant learning embedded in the curriculum across Scottish schools; Foundation Apprenticeships in Aberdeenshire; employer engagement in Ayrshire; alternative routes to positive post-school destinations in South Lanarkshire.

## **1.2 Key findings**

### **1.2.1 Overview**

The headline target of the DYW to reduce youth unemployment (excluding those in full-time education) by 40% by 2021 was achieved four years early, in 2017. The main successes of the DYW programme are manifested in the development and expansion of the provision of apprenticeships across all educational institutions, and year-on-year increases in the attainment of vocational qualifications at SCQF 5 or above. The continued challenges for vocational education and the wider DYW vision for youth education and employment are to increase employer engagement and positive destination attainment in under-represented groups of young people.

## 1.2.2 Work-relevant learning 3-18

In 2014-16, DYW was established, guidance documents were published and resources such as [SQA Journeys](#) and [My World of Work](#) were promoted. Key documents such as [Education Delivery Plan - Delivering Equity and Excellence in Scottish Education](#), [National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan](#) and [Education Governance: Next Steps](#) affirmed the Scottish Government's commitment to DYW. In 2017-19, SDS began delivering an even more [comprehensive range of career information advice and guidance \(CIAG\) services](#).

As shown in school [Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations data](#), there were increases in the attainment of vocational qualifications at SCQF 5 or above every year (9% in 2014-15; 10.7% in 2015-16; 12.8% in 2016-17; 14.8% in 2017-18, 17.1% in 2018-19). In colleges, there were increases in the number of senior phase pupils who enrolled on, and completed, college courses, and who progressed into positive destinations between 2014 and 2021. According to [2020-21 College Leaver Destinations data](#), 91% of college leavers who completed a full-time course went into positive destinations. This amounts to an increase of 7.1 percentage points since the baseline year, 2014-15 (when the figure was 82.9%).

School staff and DYW stakeholders surveyed and interviewed in 2022 thought that DYW afforded young people access to a much broader range of work-based learning opportunities, positively impacted parents' and young people's views of work-based learning, and addressed educational and workplace inequalities ([Scottish Government, 2023a](#) and [2023b](#)). They identified five facilitating factors for DYW: staff and leadership; teamwork; monitoring, resources and funding; partnerships with employers and colleges; parental and community involvement. Challenges to embracing DYW were also identified: staff capacity, skills and funding; co-ordination and information management, including information overload; geography and school type, with an emphasis on the unique challenges rural areas face; pupil needs and lack of incentivisation for participating in DYW activities; barriers to partnerships with employers and colleges such as those relating to a lack of employer awareness or buy-in to DYW.

## 1.2.3 Apprenticeships

The number of apprenticeships (Foundation, Graduate and Modern) developed and completed by young people increased between 2014-2019:

- In 2014-15, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) developed two pilot foundation apprenticeships (also known as "pathfinders"), and recruited around 300 senior phase pupils from across 20 local authorities on them. [SDS data](#) shows that in 2016, more than 300 young people enrolled on Foundation Apprenticeships, and in 2017, more than 1,200 young people were enrolled on Foundation Apprenticeships. In 2018, 1,535 young people enrolled on a Foundation Apprenticeship. This represents an increase of over 1000 young people since 2014-15 ([Scottish Government, 2015](#)).

- The delivery of Modern Apprenticeships exceeded the 25,500 MA target figure for new starts in 2015-16, providing 25,818 opportunities ([SDS, 2021](#)). The number of MA opportunities rose from 25,818 in 2015-16 to 26,262 in 2016-17. This corresponds to an increase of 1,986 from the baseline figure in 2013-14 (when new MA starts were 25,284) ([SDS, 2020](#)).
- In 2017-18, SDS engaged with employers to develop a new apprenticeship opportunity at graduate level: the Graduate Apprenticeship (GA). Graduate Apprenticeships provide young people with an opportunity to participate in paid employment whilst gaining qualifications at SCQF levels 8-11. There were 277 GA starts in 2017-18, 920 starts in 2018-19, and 1,160 starts in 2019-20 ([SDS, 2022](#)).

The apprenticeship successes were supported by partnership efforts and the launch of the [apprenticeships.scot](#) website, which connected potential apprentices with employers.

#### 1.2.4 Employers

Employer engagement with DYW was supported through the formation of several national and regional groups. In 2014, the national Developing the Young Workforce Group – an expert group drawing expertise from industry, local government, education and trade unions – was launched alongside eight regional groups. In 2015-16, 17 additional regional groups were launched, and the [Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board \(SAAB\)](#) was established to enhance the apprenticeship offer in Scotland through industry leadership. In 2016-17, better engagement between employers, schools and colleges was facilitated through the creation and implementation of a digital matching platform called [Marketplace, an online tool hosted by SDS, connecting schools and colleges with business](#).

According to the [2018-19 DYW annual report](#), in 2018-19, DYW Regional Groups reported 2,350 partnerships at engagement level where employers engaged with schools to deliver one-off events (such as careers fayres), 1,099 partnerships at collaborating level, where employers and schools co-delivered projects, and 102 influencing partnerships, where employers participated in curriculum design and delivery. Based on this data, it is evident that all schools had some degree of school-employer partnerships in place.

However, according to the [2021 Scottish Employer Perspectives Survey 2021](#), employers need to be supported further to engage with DYW. Only 8% of employers had provided work placements or work inspiration activities to young people at school in 2021, and only 19% of employers offered apprenticeships to young people. The main limitations on employers engaging or doing more around the DYW agenda are: a lack of staff time and opportunity costs; communicating with schools; COVID-19; and negative perceptions of young people.

Employers report having skill shortages in both technical and soft skills, most commonly in specialist knowledge (58%) and self-management (58%); these skills

should be developed in the future workforce through education, work experience or formal workplace training.

### **1.2.5 Equality and inclusion**

To facilitate the equitable inclusion of young people in vocational education and support DYW implementation, DYW partners published action plans and developed projects to address specific challenges. Examples of key action plans include SDS' "Modern Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan" (2014-15) and SFC's 2019 Gender Action Plan (GAPs) ([SFC, 2019](#)).

Examples of equality-oriented projects included:

- The [CareerWISE](#) project which raised the profile of STEM MAs to young women and parents
- [Community Jobs Scotland \(CJS\)](#), which offers support and job training for up to 12 months for disadvantaged young people aged 16- 29 who are furthest from the labour market
- The [Improving Gender Balance Scotland \(IGBS\) project](#): an innovative partnership between Skills Development Scotland, the Institute of Physics and Education Scotland
- [The Raising Aspirations in Science Education \(RAiSE\) programme](#) aimed to encourage young people into science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) careers

In December 2017, an [Equality Impact Assessment \(EQIA\)](#) reporting the progress of the DYW programme in the first three years was published. Equality impact was verified against the 39 recommendations of the DYW Commission. Positive impact for age, disability and gender themes was recorded for most recommendations.

## 2. Introduction

This evidence review provides an evaluative summary of the evidence collected over the seven-year duration of Developing the Young Workforce programme (2014-2021) for the purposes of analysing the evidence base on DYW activity undertaken over the course of the programme. The review identifies good practice examples and service delivery lessons arising from DYW activity during the COVID-19 pandemic. This evidence review has been carried out by the Scottish Government as part of a broader evaluation of DYW, and is being published in conjunction with two independent evaluations of the DYW education stream and employers stream.

This report begins with an overview of the DYW programme and its objectives, followed by a description of the methodological approach of the evidence review. DYW evidence is reviewed, focussing on six key areas:

- Key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Work-relevant learning in schools and colleges, and across ages 3-18
- Apprenticeships (Foundation, Graduate and Modern)
- Employers
- Equality and inclusion
- COVID-19 and DYW-related activity 2019-2021

The report concludes with a discussion of the lessons learnt from the reviewed evidence, and a synthesis of the challenges, recommendations and future visions laid out in recently published DYW policy documents.

### 2.1 Overview of the DYW programme

Developing the Young Workforce programme (DYW) embodies the Scottish Government's vision for improving youth employment levels in Scotland, ensuring a work-relevant educational experience for all young people that enables them to progress into positive destinations. In 2014, the independent Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, chaired by Sir Ian Wood, published ["Education working for all!"](#). It made 39 recommendations aimed at creating a world-class vocational education system in Scotland. The Scottish Government welcomed the report, accepted all of the recommendations, and in response published [Developing the Young Workforce: Scotland's youth employment strategy \(2014\)](#).

The DYW youth employment strategy set out a series of recommendations to help Scotland produce better qualified, work-ready young people with skills relevant to modern employment opportunities. It included implementation plans and a performance assessment framework agreed and jointly led with local government. A significant challenge laid out in the Commission's report was the need to maximise the contribution of all young people in the world of work. Ambitious



targets were set to improve outcomes for under-represented groups and those who face additional barriers to the world of work.

DYW supports the Scottish Government's ambition for a world-class system of vocational education, in which schools, colleges, training providers and employers work together to deliver learning that is directly relevant to the world of work, and which develops structured vocational pathways to support young people into sustained and successful careers. The remit of DYW includes the provision of career information and guidance, work placements and work inspiration activities, and the delivery of a curriculum that is responsive to learners' preferences and labour market needs.

The DYW Programme Board and the National Advisory Group, with members from across the education system and business, oversee DYW implementation. The DYW Programme is managed by the Scottish Government and is accountable to Scottish Ministers, and the partnership between national and local government is monitored and developed through the National Advisory Group.

In October 2019, the DYW programme was awarded the [Silver Future Policy Award](#) by the World Future Council. The award, in partnership with UN Agencies and the Inter-parliamentary Union, acknowledges policies that create better living conditions for current and future generations.

## **2.2 DYW objectives**

DYW objectives set the ambitions for the programme and the criteria against which progress would be recorded. The headline target of the DYW programme was to reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021. A set of 11 Key Performance Indicators were also set in 2014.

Annual milestones and progress reports were organised around five key change themes:

- Schools: create school curricula that are industry-focussed and influenced, and develop clearer vocational pathways which lead to industry-recognised qualifications
- Colleges: create a college system focussed on employability and respond to skills needs at the regional and national level
- Apprenticeships: ensure apprenticeship opportunities for young people to support the achievement of qualifications up to and including degree level while in work
- Employers: build a network of employer hubs supporting partnerships with schools, and offer a wider range of apprenticeships and investment in young people
- Equalities: advance equalities within Scottish education and youth employment by addressing under-representation within vocational education, with particular emphasis on gender, ethnicity, disability and care leavers.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Approach of the review**

This evidence review was conducted over three months in autumn-winter 2022. The purpose of the review was to obtain and synthesise evidence on DYW's impact on work-relevant learning (between the ages of 3-18), apprenticeships, colleges, employer engagement and equality and inclusion. The evidence review comprised three phases: (1) review of key documentation; (2) data collection from internal and external partners, as well as publicly available and unpublished sources; (3) evidence analysis.

In the first phase, key policy and strategy documents relating to DYW were reviewed, and sources of potential evidence identified. In the second phase, DYW implementation experts such as regional group leads, local authority leads, and Education Scotland and Skills Development Scotland partners were contacted, and relevant evidence obtained. Internal consultation with Scottish Government officials working on DYW and related policy areas was also conducted. In the third phase, evidence was analysed through a desk review of the findings and descriptive analyses of statistical data.

The evidence sources reviewed were diverse, and included official statistics, case study material, surveys, infographics, brochures, websites, reports, policy documents, news publications, videos and communications. The evidence short-listed for inclusion in the evidence review was chosen on the basis of relevance to DYW, and reference to key milestones, change themes and KPIs. To provide a balanced overview of the DYW programme, both quantitative and qualitative data was included in the evidence review. Care was taken to systematically collate and analyse data from a wide range of successful initiatives, covering all Scottish regions and all years during which the DYW programme was active. Where possible, activity data was supplemented with data relating to the corresponding outputs of activities and the impact of such activities.

### **3.2 Research objectives**

The documentary analysis was guided by two main research objectives:

- RO1. Summarise the available evidence on DYW activity and outputs between 2014-2019
- RO2. Identify good practice examples and service delivery lessons arising from DYW activity during the COVID-19 pandemic

### 3.3 Evidence sources

The data reviewed as part of the analysis originated from the following types of evidence sources:

- Websites – [Scottish Government Publications](#), [DYW website](#), [Skills Development Scotland](#), [Education Scotland](#)
- Statistical publications – ONS Labour Force Survey, Annual Population Survey, Eurostat, OECD statistics, school leavers and looked after children data
- DYW annual progress reports
- Internal and external contacts at national, regional and local level
- Reviews commissioned by the Scottish Government: Researching the Impact of Scotland’s Developing Young Workforce Strategy on Education (2023a) and DYW Employer Evaluation (2023b)
- Surveys – Senior phase headteacher surveys, Scottish Employer Perspectives surveys, Scottish Employer Skills surveys
- News and magazine publications – Informed Scotland magazine

### 3.4 Limitations

Most of the evidence reviewed in preparation for drafting this report covered the first five years of the DYW programme. Due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, official reporting about DYW activities was delayed, halted or limited between 2019 and 2021. As a result, there is limited insight into the scope of DYW activity during the COVID-19 pandemic. This limitation was addressed by the addition of a new heading to the report: “COVID-19 and DYW-related activity 2019-2021”.

There are three further limitations of this evidence review. Firstly, some of the evidence reviewed was not explicitly collected for the purposes of formally evaluating the impact of the DYW programme. To remedy this, findings from the official DYW annual progress reviews were synthesised and presented in the “annual progress” sections. Secondly, this evidence review incorporates analyses of secondary data to a greater extent than primary data. For this reason, commissioned reviews and surveys, which involved primary data collection, were included in the evidence review. Thirdly, there is little available evidence on young people’s views on, and experiences of, the DYW programme.

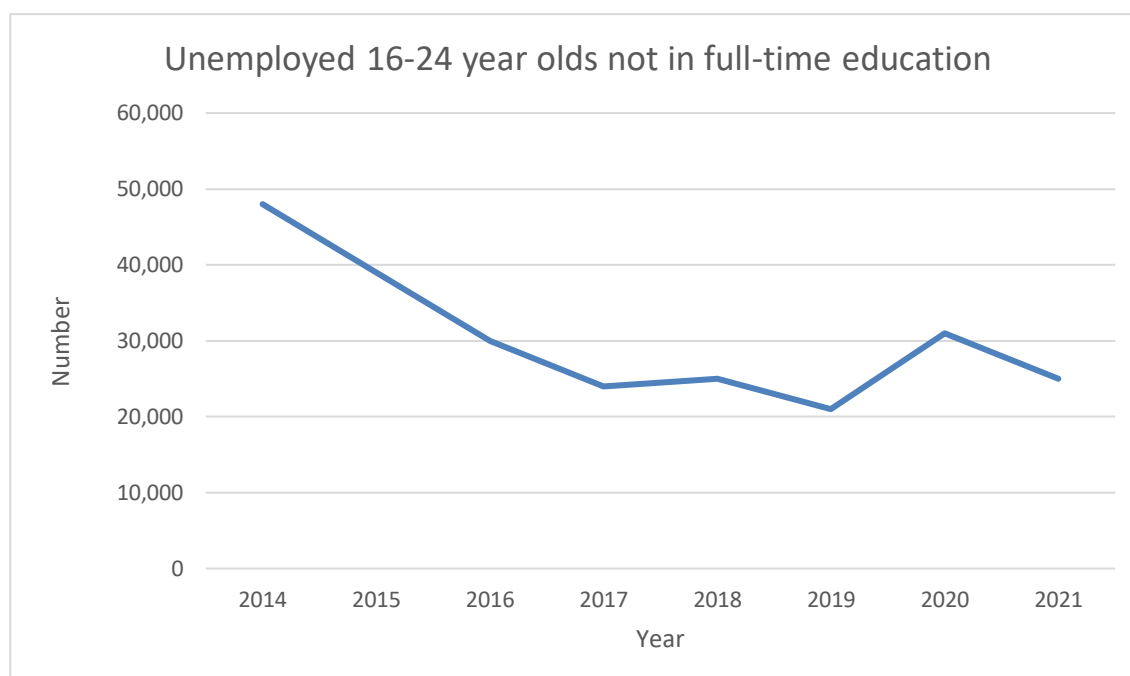
## 4. Key findings

### 4.1 Headline findings: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

In 2014, 11 key performance indicators (KPIs) for the DYW programme were designated by the Commission for Developing the Young Workforce, and endorsed by the Developing Scotland's Young Workforce Programme Board.

The headline target of the programme to reduce youth unemployment (excluding those in full-time education) by 40% by 2021 was achieved four years early, in 2017. Excluding those in full-time education, the number of unemployed 16-24 year olds reduced from 48,000 in 2014 (baseline year) to 24,000 in 2017 ([Scottish Government, 2021a](#)).

Since 2017, the estimated number of unemployed 16-24 year olds (excluding those in full-time education) remained relatively constant with the exception of 2020 when unemployment increased during the pandemic. The target continued to be met in all years except 2020 when the estimated number of unemployed 16-24 year olds (excluding those in full-time education) was 31,000, a reduction of 35.8 per cent since the 2014 baseline ([Scottish Government, 2021a](#)). In 2021, the estimated number of unemployed 16-24 year olds (excluding those in full-time education) was 25,000, a decrease of 23,000 (47.8 per cent) since 2014 ([Scottish Government, 2021a](#)).



**Figure 1: Unemployed 16 – 24 year olds, not in FT Education**

A full analysis of available data on the remaining 11 KPIs has not yet been carried out (See Appendix 1 for a list of the KPIs), however work is currently underway to interrogate the extent to which the targets set in each of these KPIs has been

achieved. A brief, preliminary analysis of published data sources was carried out, to provide an indication of progress against some of the KPIs.

This early analysis suggests that some of the KPIs have been met, with further work needed to achieve others. For example, the percentage of school leavers attaining vocational qualifications at SCQF level 5 and above (KPI 3) increased in line with objectives. As shown in school [Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations data](#), there were increases in the attainment of vocational qualifications at SCQF 5 or above every year (9% in 2014-15; 10.7% in 2015-16; 12.8% in 2016-17; 14.8% in 2017-18, 17.1% in 2018-19). In colleges, there were increases in the number of senior phase pupils who enrolled on, and completed, college courses, and who progressed into positive destinations between 2014 and 2021 (KPI4). According to [2020-21 College Leaver Destinations data](#), 91% of college leavers who completed a full-time course went into positive destinations. This amounts to an increase of 7.1 percentage points since the baseline year, 2014-15 (when the figure was 82.9%). The number of Modern and Graduate Apprentices at SCQF Level 6 increased (KPI 5) from 15,655 in 2013-14 to 22,024 in 2019-20 ([SDS, 2014, 2020](#)), and the target for youth recruitment following education (35% by 2018, KPI6) was reached in 2021, three years later than projected ([Scottish Government, 2022](#))

Preliminary analysis also suggests that, while progress has been made towards the equalities related KPIs, many of these have not yet been achieved. The percentage of MA frameworks where the gender balance is 75:25 or worse by 2021 were not reduced to 60% by 2021 (KPI 7), however, a record low gender imbalance figure was recorded in 2019-20 at 68% ([SDS, 2021](#)). The number of minority ethnic MA starts was not equal to the population share by 2021 (KPI 9). However, the number of ethnic minority starts has increased in accordance with the upward trend in the ethnic minority population share, growing from 1.1% in 2013-14 to 2.7% in 2020/21 ([SDS, 2021](#)). While the employment rate for disabled young people did not increase to the population average by 2021 (KPI 10), progress was recorded in 2019 when the employment rate for disabled young people (aged 16-24) in Scotland climbed to 42% (up from 35.2% in 2014) ([Scottish Government, 2021b](#)).

Further, more detailed analysis of available data on KPIs is currently underway, and will be added to this publication as a supplementary resource when available.

## **4.3 Work-relevant learning 3-18**

### **4.3.1 Annual progress in schools**

- [2014-2015 Progress Report](#) Highlights

In 2014, the DYW programme engaged 800 primary and 700 secondary head teachers and depute teachers through two national learning events. 300 young people and other stakeholders were engaged at school conversation days. Three guidance documents for use by partners and practitioners, and in support of employer engagement activity, were published in autumn 2015. These were the Guidance for School/ Employer Partnerships, the new Career Education Standard

(3-18), and the new Work Placements Standard. Measures of programme success and benchmarking tools were established alongside baseline positions for KPIs. The school self-evaluation tool “How good is our school?” was published in September 2015, and school inspections placed a greater emphasis on assessing how well young people are being prepared for work.

Careers advice was offered to young people at an earlier stage in school, funded by £1.5m from the Developing the Young Workforce implementation budget. A national parent stakeholder group – The National Parent Forum of Scotland – was formed. Parents were key partners in the National Learning events. They were involved in the development of key products such as the new Career Education Standard (3-18), and produced two further publications: Learning Pathways in the Senior Phase and beyond, and Career Education: A World of Possibilities.

- [2015-2016 Progress Report](#) Highlights

In 2014-15, 9% of school leavers attained vocational qualifications at SCQF 5 or above (a 1.7% increase across 28 of the 32 local authorities compared to 2013-14). Attainment of Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Awards, Skills for Work Courses, Personal Development Courses, National Certificates and National Progression Awards in total was up by 17.0% (to over 51,000) in August 2016 compared to August 2015.

The Guidance for School/ Employer Partnerships, the new Career Education Standard (3-18), and the new Work Placements Standard (developed in 2014) were promoted in schools through collaboration between Education Scotland, SDS and local authorities. [SQA Journeys](#), developed to support DYW and SQA, produced resources highlighting how SQA qualifications fit within the DYW programme. The revised [My World of Work](#) website was launched in March 2016. Exemplars of emerging practice were provided on the new National Improvement Hub, the monthly Education Scotland e-bulletin and the Education Scotland Learning Blog. DYW was also a main focus of activity at the Scottish Learning Festival in September 2016.

- [2016-2017 Progress Report](#) Highlights

In 2015-2016 data, the percentage of school leavers attaining vocational qualifications at SCQF level 5 rose from 9% to 10.7%. Overall, the attainment of vocational qualifications since between 2014 and 2016 increased by 3.4%. During this period, the percentage of vocational qualification attainment at all SCQF levels increased from 2% to 6%

The Scottish Government increased its commitment to deliver excellence and equity for every child in education through DYW, as laid out in the [Education Delivery Plan - Delivering Equity and Excellence in Scottish Education](#). To deliver on these aims of educational excellence and equity, the [National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan](#) was also developed in 2017, establishing national priorities for attainment levels, employability skills and well-being. The

Framework was accompanied by the [Education Governance: Next Steps](#) report, which outlined how everyone engaged in delivering Scottish education can contribute to the development of a school- and teacher-led education system.

- [2017-2018 Progress Report](#) Highlights

Since 2015-16, 2.1% more school leavers attained one or more vocational awards at SCQF 5 or above in schools, colleges or through independent training providers. The 12.8% total attainment figure for this period represents an overall 5.5% increase in attainment as compared with the 2013-14 baseline. In 2016-17, 4,510 young people were studying on these courses, up 2,101 from 2,409 in 2013-14. The total number of enrolments in STEM qualifications increased from 38,040 in 2013-14 to 39,315 in 2016-17.

To support and enable young people in considering their career pathways, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) delivered a [comprehensive range of career information advice and guidance \(CIAG\) services](#) including digital career education services delivered through [My World of Work](#) and school engagements such as group engagements at P7/S1 through to Senior Phase, parental engagements from P7/S1 to S6, career guidance 1:1 support at subject choice phase including 1:1 offer for parents/carers, and sustained 1:1 career coaching relationships from S3 to S6.

- [2018-2019 Progress Report](#) Highlights

In 2017-18, 14.8% of school leavers achieved a vocational qualification at SCQF level 5 and above; an increase of 2 percentage points since 2016-17, and 7.5 percentage points since 2013-14. Overall, 5,216 young people were enrolled on these courses, an increase of 3,101 since DYW was introduced. The number of 16-24 years old students enrolled on STEM-related courses in college increased from 39,315 in 2016-17 to 40,517 in 2017-18. This amounts to a total increase of 2,477 in enrolments on STEM-related courses (compared to the baseline figure of 38,040 in 2013-14).

The completion rates for Senior Phase pupils studying vocational qualifications at college and 16-24 year old college students who successfully completed a full-time course and then moved into employment or higher level study increased as well. In 2017-18, 66.9% of senior phase pupils successfully completed a vocational qualification at college; an increase of 3.6 percentage points since 2016/17 (when the figure was 63.3%), and an increase of 0.9 percentage points since 2013/14 (the baseline, when the figure was 66%). In 2017/18, 86.4% of college leavers who successfully completed a full-time course went into employment or higher level study. This is an increase of 1.1 percentage points from 2016/17 (when the figure was 85.3%) and an increase of 3.5 percentage points since 2014/152 (the baseline year, when the figure was 82.9%).

Highlights of 2018-19 activity included the [#MyLearnerJourney social media campaign](#) which was developed by YoungScot and the Scottish Government to

promote and celebrate the achievements and journeys of young people. The #MyLearnerJourney campaign delivered positive results, and its impact was evident in its Twitter engagement reports. #MyLearnerJourney gathered 450,521 Twitter impressions (the number of times #MyLearnerJourney appeared on someone's Twitter timeline) from 15 July through to August. Scotland's [Curriculum for Excellence](#), intended to support young people to engage with work-based learning through narratives embedded the curriculum, was also launched this year at the 2019 Scottish Learning Festival.

#### 4.3.2 Annual progress in colleges

- [2014-2015 Progress Report](#) Highlights

In 2014-15, a number of new approaches were tested via the Scottish Funding Council's 'early adopter' activity on school-college partnerships. Most notably, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) supported 7 college regions, in partnership with 9 local authorities and 61 schools, to develop 19 new courses at SCQF level 5 and above. 290 senior phase pupils were recruited through these courses.

In 2015-2016, this early adopter activity grew to include all college regions working with 24 local authorities across 223 schools. Estimated engagement figures suggested that over 170 courses were provided to over 2,500 senior phase pupils. In 2015, a total of 43,911 skills for life and work qualifications were attained. This represents an 18.3% increase in qualifications obtained since 2014.

- 2015-2016

In 2015-16, 2,393 senior phase pupils were enrolled in college courses in 2014-15 compared to 2,101 in 2013-14; an increase of 14% during this period.

Building on SFC's early adopted activity on school-college partnerships, college regions worked to deliver on their DYW plans by developing new senior phase vocational pathways with their partner local authorities. Colleges received a total of £1.5m from the DYW Budget up to 2016 in support of improving their capacity to develop opportunities for young people through targeted employer engagement and, to address gender under-representation in subjects.

- [2016-2017 Progress Report](#) Highlights

In 2016-17, the qualification completion rate in colleges increased from 73.1% to 73.9%, and the proportion of college leavers aged 16 to 24 years progressing to a positive destination of higher study, training or work, was up by one percentage point to 83.9%. Expansion targets for senior phase pathway enrolments were published in the [SFC College Outcome Agreements](#) for AY 17-18.

Results of the 2016 UK Employer Survey indicate that employers' views of college leavers' preparedness for work are positive: 80% of establishments who had recruited a Scottish FE college leaver found them prepared for work. Progress was



also recorded in the extent to which colleges engage with employers and industry groups.

- [2017-2018 Progress Report](#) Highlights

2016-17 saw an increase in the percentage of 16-24 year old college students who successfully completed a full-time course and who moved into employment or higher level study. In 2016-17, 85.3% of young people made this transition, an increase from 83.9% in 2015-16 and 82.9% in 2014-15.

67.8% of full-time college learners successfully completed their course. This is a decrease of 0.2 percentage points from 68% in 2015-16, and a decrease of 0.2 percentage points compared to the baseline figure (68%, 2013-14). 63.3% of senior phase pupils studying vocational qualifications delivered by colleges successfully completed in 2016-17, a decrease of 2 percentage points since 2015-16 and a decrease of 2.7 percentage points since 2013-14.

- [2018-2019 Progress Report](#) Highlights

Figures for 2017-18 show that 68.5% of college learners aged 16-24 successfully completed their course. This is an increase of 0.7 percentage points from 67.8% in 2016-17, and an increase of 0.4 percentage points compared to the 2012/13 baseline figure (68.1%). In addition, 66.9% of senior phase pupils at college successfully completed a vocational qualification; an increase of 3.6 percentage points since 2016/17 (when the figure was 63.3%), and an increase of 0.9 percentage points since 2013/14 (the baseline, when the figure was 66%).

This year, even more students successfully completed a full-time course and moved into Higher Education or employment: 86.4% of college leavers who completed a full-time course went into positive destinations. This is an increase of 1.1 percentage points from 2016-17, when 85.3% of young people made this transition, and an increase of 3.5 percentage points since the baseline year, 2014-15 (when the figure was 82.9%).

In September 2019, [a report](#) summarising the extent of employer engagement with colleges and areas requiring further work was published by SFC on the basis of their collaboration with Education Scotland. Several strengths of college-employer partnerships such as developing the curriculum in line with national priorities and DYW ambitions, and effective use of labour market intelligence to plan the curriculum, were identified. With regards to areas for improvement, a quarter of colleges recognised the need to involve employers more systematically in evaluation and curriculum planning processes, particularly in relation to identifying current and emerging industry skill requirements.

#### **4.3.3 Case study: work-relevant learning embedded in the curriculum across Scottish schools**

Schools featured on the Education Scotland's [practice exemplars page within the National Improvement Hub](#), or nominated for awards such as the Education Awards "Skills for Future Pathways" Award, are exemplars of good practice in embedding work-relevant learning in the curriculum in line with DYW objectives.

At St Modan's high school, young people report increasing confidence in understanding future pathways and enjoying innovative activities around skills development. Female pupils are supported into a wide range of careers through initiatives such as "Gears for Girls" workshops addressing gender imbalances in the automotive industry; "Painting and Decorating" courses aimed at girls; "Imagineers Club" which inspires girls to enter STEAM career pathways through a programme called "Design, Make and Sell". St Modan's also promotes unique opportunities involving animals. The school partnered with Canine Concern to adopt the "Reading with Dogs" programme, which transformed literacy for poor readers, and in doing so, widened access to the curriculum, and has a "Tiny Farm" on-site, which is Scotland's first secondary school farm. Pupils with autism/ASN have particularly benefitted from provisions around rural skills, horticulture and animal husbandry.

At Our Lady of the Missions Primary, there is an emphasis on the development and greater awareness of soft skills and their possible applications. Pupils co-plan learning pathways in social studies with teachers through plenaries on topics such as 'What skills will you/ have you used?' and 'How would you use those skills at work?', and participate in self-evaluation using "How good is our school" criteria. Imagination is fostered through playful pedagogy, a DIY classroom, and digital (Virtual Reality) exploration which feeds into writing assignments, and leadership is facilitated through pupil leadership groups (e.g. Eco and Fairtrade groups, Pupil Council) and pupil peer support groups (e.g. Digital Leaders, Literacy Buddies, Maths Partners, STEM Ambassadors). The school holds a database of visitors and visits linked to work-based skills, so that this information can be accessed anytime.

At Allan's Primary School, '5 Cs' of creativity – Collaboration, Communication, Critical Thinking and Curiosity – were identified following rigorous consultation with businesses, pupils and senior leaders across the council. These are the five key skills that the school wishes to develop in all learners. They are clearly displayed on large banners within the hall and during classes. Teachers are encouraged to consider which specific skills will be developed through their classes as part of the planning focus, and to identify links for these skills with the world of work. In some classes, the importance of skills is demonstrated through "Skill of the Week", where two learners are encouraged to consider what a specific skill looks like, when and how it's used in practice and which jobs use this skill. Parents and local business people are also invited to discuss their jobs and how the 5 Cs relate to their roles and responsibilities. This has helped to increase the value pupils place on developing such skills across all areas of their learning.

At Kingussie high school, profiling in line with DYW objectives is a key component of students' development. The school developed employability skills e-Portfolios through Google Sites which allow students to store various information about

themselves, their learning and their skill development, digitally. In order to support learners in articulating their skills and career aspirations, the school developed visual CVs linked to their skills framework, and stores records on pupils' wider achievements. Employability skills profiling has had a positive impact on learners, contributing to the reflection and career planning process of learners. It has provided them with a centralised record of the local opportunities they have participated in, and established a framework for self-reflection and improvement.

## **4.4 Apprenticeships**

### **4.4.1 Annual progress**

- [2014-2015 Progress Report](#) Highlights

In 2014-15, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) developed two pilot foundation apprenticeships (also known as “pathfinders”) in partnership with Fife and West Lothian College. These foundation apprenticeships offered young people the chance to start an apprenticeship whilst in school, alongside other qualifications and awards. A total of 75 pupils were recruited to these courses. In 2015-16, the number of foundation apprenticeships was expanded to 29 across 6 skills sectors. Around 300 senior phase pupils from across 20 local authorities were recruited, and 9 college regions were involved.

The number of Modern Apprenticeship opportunities increased from 25,000 in 2014/15 to 25,500 in 2015/16, supported by a £7.3m investment over 14-15 and 15-16 from the Developing the Young Workforce implementation budget for the purposes of expanding and developing the MA programme. More broadly, local authorities received £12.3m between 2014-2016 from the Developing the Young Workforce implementation budget to support young people into sustained pathways that align with local circumstances and the labour market.

- [2015-2016 Progress Report](#) Highlights

Foundation Apprenticeships were piloted in 2014-15, with two pathfinders in Engineering in two local authorities and involving two colleges, expanding in 2015-16 to five frameworks across 20 local authorities and involving 15 colleges. In 2016, more than 300 young people enrolled in Foundation Apprenticeships. Delivery covered 8 frameworks across 25 local authorities and involved 18 colleges. The pathfinder Foundation Apprenticeships in Engineering and Financial Services proved particularly successful. From these early pathfinders, of the 66 pupils who completed, 64 progressed into further education within schools, colleges, universities and Modern Apprenticeships. The delivery of Modern Apprenticeships exceeded the 25,500 MA target figure for new starts in 2015-16, providing 25,818 opportunities during this year.

The [apprenticeships.scot](http://apprenticeships.scot) website was launched to provide information to young people, employers and parents, and connected employers with potential apprentices by providing a platform for the advertisement of apprenticeship vacancies.

- [2016-2017 Progress Report](#) Highlights

In 2017, [SDS data](#) shows that more than 1,200 young people were enrolled in Foundation Apprenticeships. This means that there were three times more Foundation apprentices in 2017 compared to when Foundation Apprenticeships launched in 2016, when there were 346 new starts.

The number of MA opportunities rose from 25,818 in 2015-16 to 26,262 in 2016-17 as the next step toward the Scottish Government's commitment to increase the number of MA opportunities to 30,000 a year by 2020-21. 20,404 individuals achieved their Modern Apprenticeship – an achievement rate of 78% compared to 76% last year. STEM Frameworks attracted a significant number of young people: 37% of all MA starts in 2016/17 were in STEM frameworks.

In April 2017, the UK Government introduced a new way of funding apprenticeships through the [Apprenticeship Levy](#). This also applies to Scotland, which receives a per capita share as part of the block grant arrangements, largely replacing funds previously received. The introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy was a key development in the implementation of apprenticeship funding structures which secured long-term funding for apprenticeships and gave employers more opportunities to provide their staff with training opportunities.

- [2017-2018 Progress Report](#) Highlights

In 2017-18, SDS engaged with employers to develop a new apprenticeship opportunity at graduate level: the Graduate Apprenticeship (GA). Graduate Apprenticeships provide young people with an opportunity to participate in paid employment whilst gaining qualifications at SCQF levels 8-11. There were 277 GA starts in 2017-18.

In 2018, there was further progress in the expansion of Foundation Apprenticeship opportunities, with [SDS data](#) showing over 1,500 young people enrolled on a FA in 2018. This is an increase from 1,244 in 2017 and 346 in 2016.

The number of MA starts also increased in 2017-18. In 2017-18, there were 27,145 MA starts, an increase from 26,262 in 2016-17 and an increase from 25,284 in 2013-14. There was an expansion of opportunities in Construction & Related courses: the largest proportion of MA starts in 2017-18 (22%, or 6,104 starts) were in these frameworks.

- [2018-2019 Progress Report](#) Highlights

There was a record uptake in the number of apprenticeships in 2018-19. Overall, there were 28,191 starts in 2018-19, including 920 Graduate Apprenticeships. This is an increase of 27,145 on 2017-18 levels. In 2019-20, the number of GA enrolments rose to 1,157.

Out of these 28,191 starts in 2018-19, 27,750 were MA starts. This is an increase of 125 from 2017-18 (when the figure was 27,145), and an increase of 1,986 from the baseline in 2013-14 (when the figure was 25,284). An increasing number of young people started Foundation Apprenticeships this year as well. In 2018, [SDS data](#) shows that 1,535 young people enrolled on a Foundation Apprenticeship; this represents an increase of 291 since 2017 (when 1,244 people enrolled).

[A 2019 Skills Development Scotland \(SDS\) survey](#) of over 5,800 Modern Apprentices revealed that 96% of young people would recommend an apprenticeship to others. 79% of apprentices who participated in the survey reported a very high level of satisfaction with their apprenticeship, scoring it 8 or more out of 10.

#### **4.4.2 Case study: Foundation Apprenticeships in Aberdeenshire**

In 2019, Aberdeenshire Council became a lead provider of Foundation Apprenticeships, and launched its first FA frameworks. Success above the national average has been recorded for several of the success indicators for FAs. Since session 2019-20, there has been a significant increase in uptake from pupils: in 2019-20, there were 208 enrolments; in 2020-21, there were 430 enrolments; and in 2021-22 there were 660 enrolments. Across all Aberdeenshire school leavers, the average Insight Tariff Points is 940, whilst for pupils who completed a Foundation Apprenticeship, this figure increases by over 50 per cent. Nearly all (98.1%) Aberdeenshire FA leavers went into positive destinations, and the retention rate for FA courses in 2020-21 was 88.5%. When surveyed about their views on FAs, 88% of FA pupils were satisfied with their overall FA experience. 88% of parents felt that the overall FA experience for their child was good, very good or excellent, and 92% of parents would recommend the FA to others. 100% of Depute Head Teachers rated the effectiveness of the delivery of Aberdeenshire FAs as good or very good.

The success of FAs in Aberdeenshire can be attributed to several key factors. Of note, parity of esteem and equitable timetabling appear to be key precursors to high engagement. The Aberdeenshire Council FA delivery model ensures the FA has parity of esteem with Highers at Level 6 and Nationals at Level 4/5. FAs are a subject choice offer and are timetabled as a school would any other higher or senior phase course. All frameworks are delivered as a one-year FA model apart from the Engineering FA, which is a two-year model. This delivery model has proven attractive to senior phase pupils, as it has offered them the opportunity to mix work-based learning with their other subjects.

While the FA programme was significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic in session 2021-22, innovation in work placements has alleviated many of the potentially negative impacts. For example, Health & Social Care placements were not available in NHS wards due to the pandemic. A solution was found where FA students were allocated placements at the Vaccination Centres across the region.

## 4.5 Employers

### 4.5.1 Annual progress

- [2014-2015 Progress Report](#) Highlights

In 2014, the national Developing the Young Workforce Group, an expert group drawing expertise from industry, local government, education and trade unions, was launched. Regional DYW groups were established in Ayrshire, Edinburgh, East Lothian & Midlothian, Fife, Glasgow, North East, North Highland and West Region. Industry leadership and school-college partnerships were central to the development of these regional groups.

Employer engagement was supported by £2.6m from the Developing the Young Workforce implementation budget in 2014-15 and 2015-16. £0.75m from the DYW implementation budget in 2014-15 and 2015-16 has been invested in the Investors in Young People Accolade, and 193 employers were awarded the Investors in Young People award.

- [2015-2016 Progress Report](#) Highlights

In 2015-16, there was a continued establishment of industry-led DYW regional groups across the country. 17 additional groups were launched in Ayrshire; Edinburgh, Midlothian & East Lothian; Fife; Glasgow; North East; North Highland; West Highland; West Region; Borders; Perth and Kinross; Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire; Dumfries and Galloway; Forth Valley; Dundee and Angus; West Lothian; Moray; Inverness and Central Highland. At national level, the DYW National group met 12 times since its establishment in 2014.

The [Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board \(SAAB\)](#) was established to grow, widen and enhance the apprenticeship offer in Scotland through industry leadership. The Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board (SAAB) is an independent industry-led body which ensures apprenticeships are demand-led, fit for purpose and future orientated. As the voice of industry, SAAB is made up of leading employers and representatives from industry bodies across a range of sectors. It comprises five groups with policy, communications and funding responsibilities: Group Board; Standards and Frameworks Group; Employer Equalities Group; Employer Engagement Group; Apprentice Engagement Group.

Better engagement between employers, schools and colleges was facilitated through the creation and implementation of a digital matching platform called [Marketplace, an online tool connecting schools and colleges with business](#). Employers register using [Our Skillsforce](#) and start passing on knowledge of their sector through workshops, talks, workplace visits or placements. Schools and colleges use Marketplace to bring industry insight into the classroom. They can use Marketplace to search for opportunities posted by employers or invite local business leaders to events through [Founders4Schools](#).

- [2016-2017 Progress Report](#) Highlights

In financial year 2016/17, DYW regional group activity was supported by a budget of £3.7 million. Progress was made in the development of [Skills Investment Plans](#) and [Regional Skills Assessments](#). Skills Investment Plans (SIPs) are produced by SDS, which works on behalf of the Scottish Government with Industry Leadership Groups and other key industry players to develop these plans. SIPs describe the economic and labour market situation, trends in skills and qualification supply, and employers' perspectives on the big skills issues affecting sector growth. Regional Skills Assessments (RSAs) provide a coherent evidence base on which to base future investment in skills, built up from existing datasets. They highlight economic and labour market data, offering trends and forecasts at both regional and local authority level.

In 2016-17, there was continued employer and education engagement through [SDS's online digital platform Marketplace](#). Over 300 employers have registered with Marketplace since its launch to offer opportunities to schools across Scotland, and Marketplace was used by employer groups based in Edinburgh, East and Mid Lothian, Glasgow, North East, Ayrshire, Forth Valley, West Lothian and Dundee and Angus.

- [2017-2018 Progress Report](#) Highlights

In 2018, 358 employers achieved the Investors in Young People accolade, an increase of 14 from 2016 (344).

[Scotland's Employer Recruitment Incentive \(SERI\)](#) was a scheme set up to support the employment of targeted groups of young people by SMEs, which was valued by employers and local authorities for its simplicity and straightforward payment structure. SERI successfully supported 550 young people in 2016-17 before being replaced by the "No-One Left Behind Employability Funding Stream". [No One Left Behind](#) is the Scottish Government's strategy for placing people at the centre of the design and delivery of employability services. This sets out the Scottish Government's ambition for an approach to employability that builds on an individual's strengths and capabilities; is more joined-up, flexible and responsive to the needs of each person; and enables everyone to fulfil their potential.

Further supporting and enhancing DYW, in October 2018, the Scottish Government set out a new approach of [Fair Work First](#) that sought to agree fair work policies in procurement, grants and other support with business. This included commitments to investment in skills and training; banning exploitative zero hours contracts; action on gender pay; genuine workforce engagement, including with trade unions; and payment of the Real Living Wage. [Fair Work First](#) was developed to enhance outcomes for all Scots, and not just young people; it acknowledged the need to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth, and to support workers with good quality jobs and good working conditions.

- [2018-2019 Progress Report](#) Highlights

In 2018-19, DYW Regional Groups reported 2,350 partnerships at engagement level where employers engaged with schools to deliver one-off events (such as careers fayres), 1,099 partnerships at collaborating level, where employers and schools co-delivered projects, and 102 influencing partnerships, where employers participated in curriculum design and delivery. Based on this data, it was apparent that all schools had some degree of school-employer partnerships in place.

Building on '[Fair Work First](#)', a [Fair Work Action Plan](#) was published in February 2019. The strategic ambitions for Fair Work were originally set out in the [Fair Work Convention's Framework \(2016\)](#). In response to this, the Scottish Government set out the actions it will take forward to achieve this agenda in the [Fair Work Action Plan \(2019\)](#).

#### **4.5.2 Case study: employer engagement in Ayrshire**

As outlined in the DYW Ayrshire reports produced in [2017](#), [2018](#) and [2019](#), DYW Ayrshire's mission is to encourage and support employers to engage directly with education, whilst encouraging them to recruit more young people. In 2017, a range of employability partnerships were in place across Primary, Secondary & ASN schools in Ayrshire. These included workplace visits, career awareness events, mock interviews, real-life business tasks and mentoring.

When a S5 and S6 Employability and Enterprise class at St Joseph's Academy were looking to visit a series of local workplaces in 2018, they contacted DYW Ayrshire to help facilitate this. Many of the pupils in the class were unsure of the path they were looking to pursue after school, and staff looked to these workplace visits as an avenue for building confidence among the young people whilst allowing them to consider employment opportunities in the local area. The class firstly visited the local Tesco where they were given a tour of the store, and met employees from various departments who provided an insight into careers in retail. Next, the class visited Ayrshire College in Kilmarnock where they learnt more about the courses on offer at the new campus and the careers available within the College itself. Later, the class received a taste of the Sport and Leisure industry with a visit to The Galleon Centre where they were introduced to the career opportunities in the sector, and received a visit from the British Army at school, where they participated in a team building exercise and learnt more about careers in the Army.

Also in 2018, St. Joseph's Academy, St. Andrew's Nursery, Ayrshire College, Princes Trust and DYW Ayrshire formed a partnership leading to the delivery of a "Childcare with Outdoor Learning" course. Ten S3 pupils were given the opportunity to follow the course for 3 periods per week. A 'mini nursery' was set up in the school with financial support from DYW Innovative Projects and the Princes Trust. The lecturer led the class for a double period every week and the class worked towards their level 4 Childcare award. On the additional single period, the class were split into 3 small groups. In these groups, they led a group of 10 nursery pupils for 45-minute sessions supervised by members of St Joseph's staff and St.



Andrew's nursery staff. The S3 pupils planned and led activities including arts and crafts, puppet making, outdoor treasure hunts and parachute games. Their confidence in leading sessions grew each week as they became more confident in their leadership skills. 4 out of the nine pupils who completed the course then chose the Level 5 Early Years at Ayrshire College as part of the School College Partnership offer.

## 4.6 Equality and inclusion

### 4.6.1 Annual progress

- [2014-2015 Progress Report](#) Highlights

In 2014-15, SDS developed and published a “Modern Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan”, supported by £0.5m funding from the Government, setting out diversity improvement targets for the successful uptake of MA frameworks among disabled people, young people from BME communities and young care leavers. Gender segregation was also addressed in the “Modern Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan”. The Scottish Funding Council also began working on a “Gender Action plan for Further and Higher Education” that addressed gender imbalances in senior phase vocational pathways.

A partnership between Education Scotland, Skills Development Scotland and the Institute of Physics was formed in six school clusters to identify the most effective approaches for increasing girls' participation in STEM subjects. The [CareerWISE](#) project received £125,000 for their MA initiative to raise the profile of STEM MAs to young women and parents.

SDS further deployed five pilot projects to identify best practice activities relating to diversity and equality, such as targeted projects aiming to get more care leavers into Modern Apprenticeships with Who Cares Scotland, Action for Children Scotland, Barnardos and Quarriers.

- [2015-2016 Progress Report](#) Highlights

In August 2016, the SFC's “Gender Action Plan for Further and Higher Education” was published. This plan outlined a range of actions to address gender imbalance in subjects within Colleges and Universities. On the basis of the plan, SFC worked with national partners and schools to share and implement approaches to this issue.

Equality and inclusion was a key theme at the [2016 Scottish Learning Festival](#), where educational professionals engaged with colleagues and a diverse range of experts, colleagues and suppliers to envision ways to promote excellence and equity for all. The learning from the “Improving Gender Balance project” was showcased at the festival, highlighting how project officers have been working with primary and secondary schools in six school clusters to develop approaches to promoting gender balance in STEM.

To tackle the structural issues that underpin youth unemployment rates, [Employability in Scotland](#) devised dedicated employability programmes such as [Community Jobs Scotland](#) (CJS), which offer support and job training for up to 12 months for disadvantaged young people aged 16- 29 who are furthest from the labour market. Community Jobs Scotland (CJS) helps third sector employers across Scotland by providing funded opportunities to recruit a disadvantaged young person.

The [Improving Gender Balance Scotland \(IGBS\) project](#) – an innovative partnership between Skills Development Scotland, the Institute of Physics and Education Scotland – was piloted in April 2015 and ran for three years to March 2018. It worked to support schools and early learning and childcare centres (ELCs) to establish interventions to effect long-term cultural change with regard to gender stereotypes, unconscious bias and inequity.

- [2016-2017 Progress Report](#) Highlights

In December 2017, an [Equality Impact Assessment \(EQIA\)](#) reporting the progress of the DYW programme in the first three years was published. Equality impact was verified against the 39 recommendations of the DYW Commission. Positive impact for age, disability and gender themes was recorded for most recommendations. Where no impact was reported for a protected characteristic, this was partially attributed to the existence of activity in other DYW recommendations that was designed to positively impact on that protected characteristic.

In their [Modern Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan](#), SDS set out a range of actions to promote more diversity in the uptake of Modern Apprenticeship frameworks. They aimed to support young people with disabilities, reduce gender stereotyping and segregation in career choices, broaden the range of career pathways taken by young people from ethnic minority communities and support young people in care (or leaving care) through transition periods in their education and into employment.

To advance equality throughout the education system, local authorities devised tailored learning plans to young people under 16 years of age who have disengaged from education, or who were at risk of doing so. In colleges, institutional [Gender Action Plans \(GAPs\)](#) were submitted by all of Scotland's College Regions as well as from across the university sector. [The Raising Aspirations in Science Education \(RAiSE\) programme](#) aimed to encourage young people into science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) careers through the appointment of primary science development officers in each local authority. By 2017, staff in all nine local authorities participating in the RAiSE Programme had received Improving Gender Balance (IGB) training as part of the [Improving Gender Balance Scotland \(IGBS\) pilot project](#).

- [2017-2018 Progress Report](#) Highlights

Overall, the proportion of looked after children in positive destinations increased by 4.8 percentage points since 2015-16, and stood at 76% in 2016-17. The employment rate for young disabled people increased from 35.6% in January-December 2016 to 43.2% for the same period in 2017; this is an increase of 8.0 percentage points compared to the baseline figure of 35.2% (Jan-Dec 2014).

In 2017-18, several positive trends were recorded for the inclusion of under-represented groups in MAs; for instance, 11.3% of MA starts self-identified as having an impairment, health condition or learning difficulty in 2017-18 (2.7 percentage points higher than 2016-17). Over a third (38.1%) of all Modern Apprenticeship (MA) starts in 2017-18 were in STEM frameworks (an increase of 1.3 percentage points on 2016-17).

As summarised in SDS' second [Annual Progress Report](#) published in July 2018, several activities were undertaken to advance equalities across the apprenticeship family. Examples of such activity included:

- A partnership between SDS and Xtra-Mile.com, a training provider in Edinburgh, helping to improve the uptake of Modern Apprenticeships in the Hospitality sector from individuals from BME backgrounds;
- SDS working with OPITO and the OGTAP sponsors to carry out activities aimed to help employers engage more positively with young women and encourage more females to consider an apprenticeship within the industry;
- With support from SDS, a local consortium was formed by Fife Voluntary Action, Fife College, Fife Council and Department for Work and Pensions. The consortium developed Accessible Fife: a project that aimed to improve access to Modern Apprenticeships in Fife for disabled people and/or those with health conditions.

Enable Scotland built on existing approaches to support equalities activity by introducing the [Stepping Up Programme](#): an initiative to support disabled young people into education and employment. As of 2022, Education Scotland is working across 28 Scottish local authorities and supporting over 5,500 people each year. [ENABLE Works](#) – Enable Scotland's specialist employability service – have diversified their inclusive employment offer by introducing two further initiatives: [Breaking Barriers](#) and "Supported Employment - All In" which support disabled young people and young people with learning disabilities into higher education and fulfilling employment.

On 25 October 2018, SFC held the [National Gender Conference](#). This event united practitioners, researchers, academics, senior managers and policy-makers working in, or with, Scotland's colleges and universities, and focused on 'Intersectional Gender Equalities in Colleges and Universities'. Best practice in Gender Action Plans from across Colleges and Universities was showcased, and learning on topics such as "Enhancing Student Engagement in GAPs", "Preventing and Responding to Gender Based Violence" and "Addressing the Gender Pay Gap in Scotland's colleges and universities" was shared.

- [2018-2019 Progress Report](#) Highlights

In 2019, SFC published their latest [Gender Action Plan](#). In it, they report on their progress in tackling gender stereotyping within education, and on aligning their plans with the recommendations in the [A Fairer Scotland for Women: gender pay gap action plan](#).

As part of Education Scotland's STEM Strategy, the "Improving Gender Balance and Equalities" (IGBE) team that has been in place since January 2019 has begun to address challenges around equity in subject choice and learner pathways. The team's objectives were to identify and address the underlying causes of gender imbalances in participation and attainment at every stage for ages 3-18 years, and establish local networks of practitioners to enable the expansion of the programme. Up to 2019, over 500 practitioners attended Career-long Professional Learning (CLPL) events. The teams' engagement also included workshops for 470 learners led by an IGBE officer.

The DYW programme is committed to enhancing the experience of all learners within the education system, with a particular focus in supporting more disabled young people into employment. In accordance with this, in December 2018, [A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan](#) was published. This work contributes to the wider Scottish Government objective of reducing the disability employment gap by at least half by 2038. The plan identified three themes: supporting employers to recruit and retain disabled people; supporting disabled people to enter work, and young people and transitions.

In 2018-19, 41% of all MA starts were in STEM frameworks. This represents an improvement from 2017-18 levels, when the proportion of MA starts in STEM frameworks was 38.1%. Additionally, the proportion of MA starts self-identifying an impairment, health condition or learning difficulty was 14.1% (2.9 percentage points higher than 2017/18).

#### **4.6.2 Case study: alternative routes to positive post-school destinations in South Lanarkshire**

South Lanarkshire council is mindful of the need to increase the pace of change within schools, and support more young people onto positive post-school destinations. The Council has programmes in place to ensure equity of opportunity and attainment for all, and particularly for those learners across the 20 South Lanarkshire Council Secondary schools who may be at risk of leaving at the end of S2, S3 or S4 with no qualifications or negative post-school destinations.

To that end, schools in South Lanarkshire have arrangements in place for tailored work placements, work experience opportunities and alternative educational provisions. A few of their most popular programmes include:

- Top-up: programmes offered by the University of Glasgow, and targeted at learners from the lowest Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles who may wish to progress onto University level education. It provides learners

with support from tutors and experiences of campus life to help them develop the skills they need for Higher Education study.

- Gradu8: a programme designed to enable young people in S4-S6 who are considering a vocational pathway when they leave school to experience a college learning environment and achieve work-based qualifications. Young people can choose one of 12 subjects, which have been identified as providing sustainable employment opportunities in the local labour market.
- Aspire - Winter and Summer Leavers: a programme for Winter and Summer leavers who require an alternative curriculum as they approach their leaving date. Suitable work-based learning opportunities are identified and delivered in partnership with local colleges and training providers
- AspireWorks: a programme aimed at young people aged 16-19 (or older if care experienced) who have left school and require support to progress to employment or further learning. The programme operates across the employability pipeline including intensive one-to-one support for young people who are disengaged and more formal employability activity for young people who are closer to employment.

#### **4.7 COVID-19 and DYW-related activity 2019-2021**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there were [increases in youth unemployment](#) with [predictions of a disproportionate impact on employment for under 25-year-olds](#). Prince's Trust and YouGov's [Young People in Lockdown \(2020\) survey](#) of 1,022 16-25 year-olds in the UK found that 49% of young people worried that it would be harder for them to get a job. Based on the Learning & Work Institute and Prince's Trust's 2021 publication [Facing the future: Employment prospects for young people after Coronavirus](#), longer term structural changes in the labour market were projected to reduce young people's future employment opportunities, and youth unemployment was expected to have significant impact on the wider economy and finances. 55% of employers in Scotland predicted that COVID-19 would have a negative impact on medium-term job prospects of young people in their sector.

As summarised in [National overview of practice: Supporting the quality and effectiveness of the delivery of remote learning](#), remote learning became a key feature throughout education. Alongside education, concerted efforts were made by all DYW stakeholders to adapt their provisions to remote delivery both for teachers/practitioners and learners alike. Programmes such as the National eLearning Offer for Scotland ([NeLO](#)), [DYW-Regional Employer Programmes](#), [DYW Live](#), [e-Sgoil's](#) remote learning offers, [West OS](#) and SDS's CIAG online service are just some examples of the far-reaching online learning and support offers that were developed during the pandemic.

Some of the highlights of DYW-related activity during the COVID-19 pandemic were:

#### **2020**

- the Scottish Government announced details of the [Youth Guarantee](#), guaranteeing all 16–24 year-olds the opportunity of a place at “university or college, an apprenticeship programme, training, fair employment including work experience, or participating in a formal volunteering programme”.
- Young Scot launched Young Scot Next (#YSNext), a package of support for 16–25 year-olds not in employment, training or education, backed by Barclays 100x100 UK COVID-19 Community Relief Programme.
- SDS worked with Dundee City and Angus Councils and Dundee & Angus College to pilot a '[learner journey approach](#)' to skills profiling, from primary school through to college and beyond. The approach fit with Education Scotland's [Supporting young people in profiling their skills and achievements](#) and the [DYW Career Education Standard](#)
- ScotlandIS worked with [DYW Glasgow](#) to identify and match [tech industry mentors with computing science teachers](#) in Glasgow. The aim was to close the sector's skills gap by encouraging & enabling more young people to take the subject.
- Education Scotland published [Review of Career Information, Advice and Guidance services delivered by Skills Development Scotland 2014–2020](#), covering all 32 local authorities. There were examples of positive practice in all focus areas, and the quality of outcomes was good/very good in 28 authorities, excellent in one and satisfactory in three. Aspects for improvement included the variability of outcome within and between authorities and schools.

## 2021

- Education Scotland published [Virtual Work Placement \[VWP\] Guidance](#), advice and examples for teachers, employers and lecturers involved in planning, running and evaluating VWPs. It included information about safeguarding, certification and recognition of learning and achievements.
- SDS announced the inaugural [Scottish Careers Week](#) which took place from 15–19 November 2021, showcasing the wide range of careers support available to people of all ages. Online and in-person events were held for young people, adults, parents, teachers, employers and learning providers. The theme of the inaugural week was 'Shape the Future'.
- Prospects, part of JISC, published [Early Careers Survey 2021: Work experience during a crisis | Luminare \(prospects.ac.uk\)](#), of 7,189 UK school, college & university students, graduates, apprentices & unemployed in early 2021 aged 16-24. Findings indicated that the internet was the most common source of careers advice during the pandemic, followed by family, teachers, social media and friends. While careers services had moved to remote

provision, a significant number of students lacked confidence in using digital services and digital exclusion was a concern.

#### **4.7.1 Education**

##### **Senior Phase Headteacher Survey – Scottish Government 2019**

The 2019 Senior Phase Headteacher Survey gathered information on the provision and design of the Senior Phase curriculum across Scotland. 45% of all headteachers (159 out of 357 Secondary Schools in Scotland) responded to the survey.

Most headteachers (85%) reported achieving an integrated, progressive and coherent experience for young people in the Senior Phase. 77% of them were “very confident” or “confident” that their school provided a sufficient variety of learning pathways to meet the needs of all their young people across the Senior Phase, and 88% felt that they had sufficient autonomy to determine the pathways that their school offers in the Senior Phase.

Almost all headteachers (95%) indicated that young people can shape their Senior Phase through pastoral support discussions. Most headteachers also indicated that Careers Fairs (84%), and discussions between career advisers and young people (75%) provide opportunities for young people to shape their Senior Phase.

The survey also revealed curricular provisions of qualifications across education:

- In S4, over 90% of schools reported offering National 3, 4, 5 and Duke of Edinburgh Awards
- In S5, over 90% of schools reported offering National 4, 5, Highers, Foundation Apprenticeships and College provision
- In S6, 90% or more schools reporting offering National 5, Higher, Advanced Higher, Foundation Apprenticeships and College provision (at a College).

##### **The Impact of Scotland’s Developing Young Workforce Strategy on Education – Scottish Government, 2023a**

In 2022, The Lines Between was commissioned by the Scottish Government to research the status of DYW and work-based learning in schools. Their study involved interviews with 14 national and local stakeholders and 67 staff from 15 schools across Scotland, as well as an online survey of school staff.

Overall, there was improved awareness of the importance of work-based learning among education professionals, parents and young people. Almost two thirds (65%) of survey respondents reported that DYW has positively impacted views of work-based learning among parents, and almost all (92%) of survey respondents agreed that DYW has helped to enhance the status of work-based learning among

young people. 73% of survey respondents reported that DYW has positively impacted views of work-based learning among staff. However, interviewees noted that some parents are still keen for their children to focus on traditional academic learning with the aim of progressing to university, and may value formal education more than work-based learning opportunities.

Interviewees felt that DYW has had a positive impact on young people, affording them access to a much broader range of work-based learning opportunities, better preparing them for the world of work, improving their prospects of achieving positive destinations and becoming more engaged in their own education. They also described how the implementation of the DYW strategy has helped to address educational and workplace inequalities relating to gender inequality, the poverty-related attainment gap and additional support need provision through targeted interventions. 73% of survey respondents felt that this was the case to a large or moderate extent.

An analysis of the facilitating elements which support DYW implementation within schools identified five overarching themes:

- staff and leadership: the extent of implementation of DYW linked strongly to how it is valued and prioritised by the school's senior leadership
- teamwork: there were many benefits to having a staff with diverse DYW focused roles, a strong sense of teamwork, good communication and shared goals and responsibilities
- monitoring, resources and funding: data collection and monitoring supported meaningful embedding of work-based learning
- partnerships with employers and colleges: supportive employers aided the implementation of DYW
- parental and community involvement: support and involvement from parents and other community members were seen as key for DYW implementation

Challenges to embracing DYW and embedding work-based learning also fell into five overarching themes:

- staff capacity, skills and funding: capacity issues were cited as the biggest challenge to implementing DYW. 77% of respondents reported difficulties finding time for DYW due to other responsibilities.
- co-ordination and information management: some interviewees described being overwhelmed with DYW information and needing a centralised resource such as a DYW hub to help manage this information
- geography and school type: rural and island schools faced unique challenges such as employer partnership limitations (due to lack of career options in their area), limited travel links and high travel costs, low pupil confidence to travel away from home, IT issues preventing online engagement and staff shortages
- pupil needs: some interviewees described pupils not wanting to be different, or away from their friends, as a disincentive to participation in DYW activities



- barriers to partnerships with employers and colleges. Several such barriers were listed, including: a lack of employer awareness, proactivity or buy-in to DYW; competition for, and limited availability of, work experience placements and apprenticeships; red-tape and health and safety constraints; communication issues and lack of a shared language; misunderstanding among employers about school contexts and academic requirements; over-reliance on individual staff contacts; issues facing businesses, such as takeovers.

## 4.7.2 Employers

### Scottish Employer Perspectives Survey 2021

The 2021 Scottish Employer Perspectives Survey (EPS) survey comprised 1,000 telephone interviews with employers across a range of sectors, regions and establishment sizes.

Overall, 35% of employers had recruited an employee in their first job directly from education. Recruiting directly from education increased with employer size, ranging from 22% of employers with 2 to 4 employees to 84% of employers with 100 or more employees. A fifth (21%) of employers recruited from a Scottish secondary school, 15% recruited from a Scottish college and 14% recruited from a Scottish university.

While 59% of employers thought work experience is 'critical' or 'significant' when recruiting, and the majority of employers found education leavers to be 'well' or 'very well' prepared for the workplace, only 8% of them had provided work placements or work inspiration activities to young people at school in the last 12 months. Only a half of employers (approximately 50%) were aware of Foundation Apprenticeships, and only 19% of employers offered apprenticeships to young people. Following the pandemic, employers were around half as likely to offer work inspiration activities (8% in 2021 compared to 15% in 2019). There were reductions in the proportion of employers providing placements for people at school (8% compared with 20% in 2019); placements for people at university (8% compared with 11%); and placements for people at college (7% compared with 12%).

The main reasons mentioned for not offering work placements or work inspiration activities included: COVID-19 pressures such as a lack of work or site closures (37%), not having suitable roles available (30%), and not having the time or resource to manage these activities (12%). Relatively common were also reasons relating to a lack of awareness (15%) including employers not knowing how to organise these activities, not having had anybody approach them, or not having thought about doing these before. The top three skills that young recruits were perceived by employers to lack remained the same irrespective of the education they entered work directly from. These were: lack of life experience (17% secondary school leavers; 8% college and university leavers); a poor attitude (13% secondary school leavers; 4% college leavers and 4% university leavers); and a

lack of required skills or competencies (6% secondary school leavers; 8% college leavers and 3% university leavers).

15% of employers had heard of the DYW Regional Groups (1% up since 2019); among those aware, 15% had engaged with a DYW Regional Group. Awareness of DYW Regional Groups generally increased with employer size; the largest employers with 100 or more employees were three times as likely to be aware (36%) than the smaller employers with 2 to 4 employees (12%). Awareness and engagement with DYW Regional Groups were most common in the Non-market Services sector (33%). In terms of regionality, the Highlands and Islands region was most likely to be aware, or to have engaged with DYW Regional Groups (at 21% engagement). Employers that had engaged with DYW Regional Groups were more likely to have provided work inspiration activities (53% compared with 8% overall) and work placements (55% versus 27% overall), with a third having provided placements for people at school (32% versus 8% overall).

### **Scottish Employer Skills Survey 2020**

The Scottish Employer Skills Survey (ESS) 2020 was a large-scale telephone survey of 3,497 employers in Scotland. It provided labour market information on the skills challenges faced by employers in Scotland.

Overall, one-in-nine (11%) employers had a vacancy at the time of the survey. This is a decrease from 2017, when 20% of employers reported having a vacancy. This decrease can be attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employers; indeed, 76% of employers had accessed some form of government-backed support in response to the pandemic, and nearly two-thirds (65%) of employers had furloughed at least one member of staff in response to the pandemic. 21% of all vacancies were skill-shortage vacancies – that is, they were hard to fill due to a lack of skills, knowledge or experience among applicants. 74% of employers anticipated a need to upskill their staff in the coming year, and 59% had provided training to staff in the previous year.

The most common reported skill shortage was in the specialist skills or knowledge required for the job in question (58%), and almost half of skill-shortage vacancies were caused by a lack of knowledge about the organisation being applied to, whether that was the products and services offered or how the organisation works. Complex analytical skills were lacking among applicants for 44% of skill-shortage vacancies, and over a third of skill-shortage vacancies were due at least in part to a lack of applicants with basic IT or numeracy skills (37%), and digital skills (35%). The most common soft skill lacking among applicants was self-management, with 58% of skill-shortage vacancies caused at least in part by this. Around half (51%) of skill-shortage vacancies were caused by an inability to find applicants who can manage their own time and prioritise tasks, work in a team (37%) and apply creative or innovative thinking to workplace tasks (36%).

The most common impact of skill shortage vacancies was an increased workload for other staff, reported by 83% of establishments. The next most common impact

was difficulties meeting customer service objectives (49%). The most common causes of skills gaps were staff members being new to the role (64% of all skills gaps) and that staff training was only partially completed (63%). 34% of skills gap causes were attributed to difficulties adapting to workplace changes during COVID-19. A fifth (22%) of employers said that the COVID-19 pandemic had affected their training plans, most commonly because planned courses were suspended or otherwise not available.

This survey provides an indication of the skills that need to be developed in young people and the future workforce through education, work experience or formal workplace training.

### **[The impact of Scotland's Developing Young Workforce Strategy on Employer Engagement – Scottish Government 2023b](#)**

In 2022, the Scottish Government, on behalf of Scottish Ministers, commissioned Rocket Science to undertake an impact evaluation of the employer engagement approaches undertaken in the delivery of DYW.

The impact evaluation found that employers are motivated to support young people's education and employment by a sense of social responsibility and a drive to address their recruitment and retention challenges. The main limitations on employers engaging or doing more around the DYW agenda are: a lack of staff time and opportunity costs; communicating with schools; COVID-19; and negative perceptions of young people.

Most employers interviewed reported a sufficient understanding of the qualifications on offer and they felt a lot of work has been done to simplify the qualifications system. Nearly all employers also emphasised the importance of the development of meta skills and soft skills.

Employers preferred having a more strategic and long-term relationship with schools, with better planning and commitment from schools to make sure that meaningful engagement was possible. During the pandemic, they carried out a range of different types of engagement virtually, yet they held mixed views regarding the usefulness of remote engagement.

In terms of supporting young people with the greatest barriers to employment, practitioners thought there was a lot more to do to address parity of esteem and access to opportunity for SEN groups, and employers felt they needed more support and information to make sure they are better able to support educational and workplace needs and adjustments.

Overall, employers saw DYW as making a difference to their organisation. DYW increased their reach to a more diverse range of young people, and helped them build stronger connections with schools, colleges and other employers.

#### **4.7.3 Young people**

In 2021, the Health Foundation published [Not just any job, good jobs! Youth voices from across the UK](#), by Institute of Employment Studies based on the views of 1,345 16–25 year-olds in the UK, including 21% in Scotland. Survey results suggested that 63% of young people see work experience, networks and knowing the right people as key factors in accessing good quality work, and 42% believe that apprenticeships are very useful. However, the pandemic has affected young people’s confidence (62%) and how they value the quality of work (46%). 57% said that their mental health had an impact on their ability to access good quality work.

#### **4.7.4 The future of DYW**

##### **The future of Developing the Young Workforce, Education Scotland 2021**

In Education Scotland’s 2021 vision paper “The future of Developing the Young Workforce” (Unpublished, available on request), future actions related to the DYW offer were outlined. One of the key future actions was the implementation of Scotland’s Young Person’s Guarantee with the overarching aim that “within two years, everyone young person 16-24 in Scotland will either be in paid employment for a period of 16-24 months, enrolled in education, actively involved in an apprenticeship programme, engaged in formal volunteering or supported activity programme”. Another key future action was to extend the support for learners and their parents or carers, particularly for those at risk of not reaching a positive destination. The paper also acknowledged that there are some remaining challenges for the Scottish youth skills agenda. The challenges highlighted in the paper included:

- Equalities and inclusion. Learners with a minority ethnic background, additional support needs or who are care experienced still face significant barriers in realising their full career potential. More focus is required on those learners who are at risk of not securing a positive destination.
- Developing Scotland’s curriculum. Although significant progress has been made in implementing DYW across education sectors, [HMIE school inspection findings \(2018-2019\)](#) indicate that the pace of development of the curriculum continues to be too slow, and early implementation is still inconsistent across schools.
- Enhancing skills as an integral part of learning and teaching. A number of innovative approaches have been taken to systematically develop and progress learners’ skills including establishing ‘skills academy’ programmes, skills frameworks or methods of recognising, recording and profiling (e.g. similar to the Kingussie high school case study on p.23 of this evidence review). There needs to be a more consistent and holistic approach to the development, recognition and measuring of skills throughout the learner journey.
- Professional learning and development of teachers. In order to create the responsive education system required to prepare learners for the unprecedented social, economic and environmental challenges teachers and

practitioners will need to be empowered to implement career education in an even more innovative, informed and labour market-orientated way.

- Partnership working. Despite significant effort to advance effective school-employer partnerships, most schools have yet to fully embrace genuine, sustained partnerships.
- Digital service delivery. Online engagement has the potential of significantly expanding the opportunities for learners to access work-related and work-based learning offers previously not available to them due to locality restrictions or a lack of partner connections. Lessons from the pandemic show that virtual sessions can also remove some barriers to participation such as timetable restrictions or lack of employer commitment. Online learning, virtual work placements and other types of employability-focussed engagements can be further developed as long as digital poverties are addressed.

## **The Scottish Government's vision for the future**

In line with the planned conclusion of the DYW programme in 2021 and looking ahead, the Scottish Government has set out future areas of strategic focus, to ensure that young learners receive continued support to reach positive destinations.

In November 2020, the Scottish Government introduced the [Young Person's Guarantee \(YPG\)](#). YPG was introduced in response to challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic, and carries forward many of the ambitions of DYW. An [update report on YPG](#) was published in early 2023, highlighting progress and setting out future ambitions. This includes a focus on sustaining the positive relationships developed through DYW and YPG, utilising the network of employer-led DYW Regional groups to enhance employer leadership across the system.

Work on the broader Scottish skills agenda and other elements of Scotland's youth employability strategy such as CfE continues as well. In September 2021, the Scottish Government published Scotland's [Future Skills Action Plan](#) which detailed Scotland's ambition for an agile and flexible skills system able to changing labour market conditions. This entails continued support for industry-led DYW Employer Groups alongside broader strategic objectives such as increased investment in workforce development. The [OECD report "Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence into the Future"](#) was also published in 2021. The OECD review recognised CfE as an inspiring example of curriculum design, although now requiring more of a focus on the learner's journey. [The Scottish Government accepted all 12 recommendations](#) from the OECD. There are opportunities in the response, under many of the recommendations, to fully embed DYW as part of any curriculum improvement, fully realising the key DYW principles to create an enhanced curriculum offer for young people in schools.

## 5. Conclusions

This evidence review provided an overview of key DYW initiatives and milestones, and highlighted the successes and remaining challenges within the Scottish skills and education landscape. For the purposes of this evidence review, DYW evidence in six key areas was accessed and reviewed:

- Key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Work-relevant learning in schools and colleges, and across ages 3-18
- Apprenticeships (Foundation, Graduate and Modern)
- Employers
- Equality and inclusion
- COVID-19 and DYW-related activity 2019-2021

Overall, the headline target of the programme to reduce youth unemployment (excluding those in full-time education) by 40% by 2021 was achieved, with a decrease of 23,000 (47.8%) since 2014 ([Scottish Government, 2021a](#)).

In schools, there were year-on-year increases in the attainment of vocational qualifications at SCQF 5 or above (from 9% in 2014-15 to 17.1% in 2018-19). School staff and DYW stakeholders surveyed and interviewed in 2022 thought that DYW has afforded young people access to a much broader range of work-based learning opportunities. In colleges, there were increases in the number of senior phase pupils who enrolled on, and completed, college courses, and who progressed into positive destinations between 2014 and 2019. In 2019, 86.4% of college leavers who completed a full-time course went into positive destinations and by 2021 this figure was 91% ([SFC, 2021](#)).

The provision and uptake of apprenticeship opportunities grew between 2014-19: Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) enrolments increased from 346 in 2016 to 1,535 in 2018, Modern Apprenticeship (MA) enrolments increased from 25,284 in 2013-14 to 26,262 in 2016-17, and the number of Graduate Apprenticeship (GA) starts increased from 277 starts in 2017-18 to 1,160 starts in 2019-20.

Following the development of the national Developing the Young Workforce Group, the [Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board \(SAAB\)](#), and the [digital matching platform Marketplace](#), and the establishment of a multitude of regional groups across Scotland, there were improvements in the extent of employer engagement with DYW between 2014 and 2019. All schools had some degree of school-employer partnerships in place by 2018-19.

In support of the DYW equality and inclusion agenda, equality-based apprenticeship action plans and gender action plans were published, and projects to increase under-represented groups' participation in vocational education and the labour market were introduced. As per the 2017 [Equality Impact Assessment \(EQIA\)](#), the DYW programme had equality impact across most of the 39 recommendations of the DYW Commission.

There were a number of challenges and lessons stemming from the implementation of DYW which call for further attention:

- In schools, there were some barriers to embracing DYW, such as staff capacity, skills and funding; co-ordination and information management; geography and school type; pupil needs; barriers to partnerships with employers and colleges such as those relating to a lack of employer awareness or buy-in to DYW.
- In 2021, only 8% of employers provided work placements or work inspiration activities to young people in school, and only 19% of employers offered apprenticeships to young people. The main hindering factors cited by employers with regards to providing such opportunities were: a lack of staff time and opportunity costs; communicating with schools; COVID-19; and negative perceptions of young people.
- More work is required to meet the DYW equality and inclusion targets. Occupational gender segregation appears to be the most difficult to address: male pupils are much more likely to pursue construction, engineering, and computing careers, whereas female pupils are more likely to pursue creative industries, medicine/health, teaching, hospitality and caring careers.
- According to the Health Foundation's 2021 report [Not just any job, good jobs! Youth voices from across the UK](#), the pandemic has affected young people's confidence (62%) and how they value the quality of work (46%). Most young people are likely to require enhanced support in reaching positive destinations.

**How to access background or source data**

The data collected for this social research publication may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact [ruth.mckenna@gov.scot](mailto:ruth.mckenna@gov.scot) for further information.



# Appendix 1

## KPIs and Progress of Analysis

KPI	Description	Progress
1	Be one of the top five performing countries in the EU for youth unemployment by reducing the relative ratio of youth unemployment to 25-64 unemployment to the level of the fifth best country in the EU by 2021	Analysis underway
2	Be one of the top five performing countries in the EU for youth unemployment by reducing the youth unemployment rate to match the fifth best country in the EU by 2021	Analysis underway
3	Increase the percentage of school leavers attaining vocational qualifications at SCQF level 5 and above	Preliminary analysis
4	Increase the percentage of 16-24 year old college students who have successfully completed a full-time course moving into employment or higher level study	Preliminary analysis
5	The number of Modern and Graduate Apprentices at SCQF Level 6 above to be increased	Preliminary analysis
6	Increase the percentage of employers recruiting young people directly from education to 35% by 2018	Preliminary analysis
7	Reduce to 60% the percentage of MA frameworks where the gender balance is 75:25 or worse by 2021	Analysis underway
8	Increase by 5 percentage points the minority gender share in each of the 10 largest and most imbalanced superclasses among 16-24 year olds by 2021	Analysis underway
9	Increase the number of minority ethnic MA starts to equal the population share by 2021	Preliminary analysis
10	Increase the employment rate for disabled young people to the population average by 2021	Preliminary analysis
11	Increase positive destinations for looked after children by 4 percentage point per annum resulting in parity by 2021	Analysis underway



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