



**Briefing 15/03    January 2015**

## **Developing the Young Workforce: Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy**

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland

For information only to England, Northern Ireland and Wales

### **Key Issues:**

The purpose of this briefing is to advise APSE members on a new Scottish Government report entitled 'Developing the Young Workforce: Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy'.

This report includes findings on:-

- The implementation plan for creating a world class vocational educational system
- The key challenges the Scottish Government faces in implementing the plan
- The 11 key performance indicators drafted to measure the programme's success

### **1.0 Introduction**

The recently published 'Developing the Young Workforce: Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy' report sets out the implementation plan for a new seven year national programme designed to enhance our young workforce and increase youth employment in Scotland, with £12m of implementation funding in 2014-15 and a planned £16.6m in 2015-16's draft budget. The ultimate goal of the programme is to create world class vocational education for our young people, and to "focus on creating, promoting and incentivising opportunities that avert the risk of young people becoming unemployed" with a target of "reducing 2014 levels of youth unemployment by 40 per cent by 2021". This fully collaborative effort is said to have a central role for local government with its responsibility for schools and key role in local economic development. The plan, which involves "Curriculum for Excellence, a regionalised college system, an expanded Modern Apprenticeship programme and employer engagement", shows how the Government plan to meet the goals and targets above. The Government have also committed to publishing an annual report detailing their year on year progress.

The full report is available here: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0046/00466386.pdf>

### **2.0 Key Findings**

#### **Responding to the recession and the improving economic picture**

Being unemployed while young can have significant effects throughout a person's working life including lower average wages, lower life satisfaction, lower job satisfaction, poorer health and higher risk of depression; this negative effect is greater the longer a young person is initially unemployed. In response to this, the Government are taking action to "permanently and significantly reduce youth unemployment" and to address the inequalities different groups face in moving into the workforce. This is in line with the

Government's *One Scotland* vision of achieving "a prosperous and fair country" where "growth is evenly distributed across different regions of Scotland and whose benefits are widely shared". This also led to the creation of the Fair Work, Skills and Training portfolio (formerly Training, Youth and Women's Employment) and the promotion of Roseanna Cunningham MSP to this position. The Government and COSLA are now in the process of jointly implementing the Commission's report, and have developed 11 key performance indicators on their areas of focus which are detailed in the table below.

<b>Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) based on those proposed by the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce</b>	
<b>KPI 1</b>	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.
<b>KPI 2</b>	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.
<b>KPI 3</b>	Increase the percentage of school leavers attaining vocational qualifications* at SCQF level 5 and above by 2021.  *Vocational qualifications: for the purposes of base lining, we are interpreting this as National Certificates, Higher National Qualifications, Scottish Vocational Qualifications, National Progression Awards, and Skills for Work at SCQF Level 5 and above but recognise that this should evolve to fully reflect vocational qualifications valued by employers. We will consult further with stakeholders on this.
<b>KPI 4</b>	Increase the percentage of young college students moving into employment or higher level study by 2021.
<b>KPI 5</b>	The number of Modern Apprentices at level 3 and above to be increased. The target is for 20,000 out of a total of 30,000 MA starts to be at this level by 2021, i.e. two-thirds.
<b>KPI 6</b>	Increase the percentage of employers recruiting young people directly from education to 35 per cent by 2018.
<b>KPI 7</b>	To reduce to 60 per cent the percentage of MA frameworks where the gender balance is 75:25 or worse by 2021.
<b>KPI 8</b>	Increase by 5 percentage points the minority gender share in each of the 10 largest and most imbalanced superclasses* by 2021.  *Superclasses are subject groups in colleges.
<b>KPI 9</b>	Increase the number of MA starts from minority ethnic communities to equal the population share by 2021.
<b>KPI 10</b>	Increase the employment rate for young disabled people to the population average by 2021.
<b>KPI 11</b>	Increase positive destinations for looked after children by 4 percentage point per annum resulting in parity by 2021

Source: [DTYW, 2014](#)

### **3.0 Implementation**

The full implementation plan along with yearly milestones for the programme in each section (schools, colleges, apprenticeships, employers and equality) is available on [Pages 8 to 32](#) of the report. Below is a short summary of the context for each section and what the Government intend to do in 2014-15 to meet key challenges.

#### **Schools and work relevant learning from 3-18**

With schools, the key challenges for the Government are:

- increasing the number of routes available straight to employment into good jobs and careers
- engaging directly with 'young people, parents, teachers and practitioners, partners and employers'
- supporting teachers and practitioners in developing learning about the world of work
- providing earlier, quality labour focused careers advice when necessary
- involving employers in a meaningful way in the process

- strengthening partnerships with colleges and training providers

Their response to these issues during 2014-15 will include:

- putting an Attainment Advisor in place in every Scottish local authority 'to build capacity in our schools'
- launching the new Insight benchmarking tool designed for schools and local authorities to help bring about improvements for S4 to S6 pupils
- undertaking apprenticeship engineering pathfinder projects in Fife and West Lothian
- testing out a new early adopter approach via the Scottish Funding Council exploring senior phase vocational pathways aiming to bridge the gap between school, college, university and employment for 15-18 year old students in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Dumfries & Galloway, Edinburgh, Fife, Central, Glasgow and West Lothian
- evaluating secondary school's starting position with regards to vocational qualifications
- engaging with parents, teachers, practitioners and young people to develop their understanding of the available routes into work

### **Colleges: A valued and valuable choice**

With colleges, the key challenges for the Government are:

- increasing access to vocational options through partnerships between schools, colleges, local authorities and other partners
- ensuring the provision of opportunities is in line with economic and regional requirements
- reducing the gender imbalance on the take-up of vocational opportunities
- supporting college staff in the development of skills required to meet the overall ambitions of the programme
- developing college outcome agreements to reflect these improvements and to measure progress

Their response to these issues during 2014-15 will include:

- the development of school-college partnership that provide routes into further vocational learning and training or work in seven college regions
- the agreement of key performance measures with the sector and the development of outcome agreements with local authorities
- supporting the use of Skills Investment Plans (SIP) and Regional Skills Assessments (RSA) through a joint plan between Scottish Funding Council and Skills Development Scotland
- reworking Service Level Agreements between the Scottish Funding Council and both Education Scotland and College Development Network to address the Commission's objectives

### **Apprenticeships**

With apprenticeships, the key challenges for the Government are:

- determining the demand for apprenticeships so any expansion is targeted correctly
- developing and testing foundation/advanced apprenticeships and other new approaches/initiatives to widen the representation of different groups in these schemes

Their response to these issues during 2014-15 will include:

- implementing an initial equalities pilot to create opportunities for underrepresented groups
- putting foundation apprenticeship pathfinders in place in Fife and West Lothian

- launching the New Modern Apprenticeship Identity to raise awareness and the perception of the MA offer; this new consistent branding is the beginning of a concerted effort to encourage more employers of all sizes and young people to get involved
- putting Skills Development Scotland's contracting strategy in place so that key changes each year take into account SIPs, RSAs and the expansion plan

### **Employers: Their investment in the young workforce**

With employers, the key challenges for the Government are:

- forming stronger partnerships between education and employers to ensure employers can more easily influence the education system and be more active in the delivery of education
- establishing new industry-led groups in the regions where they do not exist
- ensuring the recruitment of young people is an important part of workforce planning across all sectors (particularly in the public sector)
- enhancing industry engagement and leadership in Modern Apprenticeships

Their response to these issues during 2014-15 will include:

- establishing Regional Invest in Young People Groups
- launching the new Investors in Young People accolade
- agreeing commitments with public sector employers to develop the young workforce
- Education Scotland forming a reference group in partnership with industry to develop inspection/review processes in the education sectors

Further plans include a new employer-led supervisory board that will first meet in 2015-16 to ensure Modern Apprenticeships continue to be linked to areas of economic growth.

### **Equality**

With equality, the key challenges for the Government are:

- working with local government and delivery partners to ensure that all careers can be open to young people, opening up new gainful pathways for Scotland's black and minority ethnic communities, young disabled people and young care leavers
- reducing gender stereotyping in education and gender segregation in the occupations where there is an imbalance

Their response to these issues during 2014-15 will include:

- an initial equalities pilot action implemented which will create new opportunities for those from underrepresented groups

## **4.0 APSE Comment**

APSE is encouraged by the commitment shown by the Scottish Government to providing a world class vocational education system that will give all young people of Scotland new pathways into gainful employment. APSE is dedicated to the aims of reducing youth unemployment (having published the 'Tackling Youth Unemployment – Local authorities leading the way' report in March 2013) and to celebrating the achievements of young people who have taken vocational pathways through our annual Apprentice of the Year Awards both in Scotland and the rest of the UK. Our report made the case for local authority leadership and the development of local solutions to youth unemployment, so APSE appreciates that the Government has provided a central role for local authorities in its collaborative process. Our survey

identified initiatives already taking place in many local authorities to reduce youth unemployment such as mentoring schemes, work experience programmes, apprenticeships, job creation and the insertion of social benefit clauses into service delivery contracts. APSE hopes that this new commitment to developing our vocational education system and providing employers with a more active role in creating the talent pool they need will address one of the major findings of our research, that 76.6% of local authorities surveyed perceived a lack of employment opportunities for young people as the main reason for youth unemployment. As an Investors in People organisation, APSE supports the creation of the Investors in Young People accolade and the launch of the Regional Invest in Young People Groups that will work in partnership with local authority education teams across Scotland.

**APSE Scotland recently announced the finalists for our Building and Housing Apprentice of the Year 2015 Awards. [Click here](#) or visit the News section of the APSE website to see the shortlist - [www.apse.org.uk](http://www.apse.org.uk).**

Garry Lee  
Research & Coordination Officer

Louise McMillan  
Principal Advisor (Scotland)