

Published response to the Refresh of Scotland Youth Employment Strategy Survey

May 2015

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Introduction

Following the publication of the report *Education Working for All!* from the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce on 3rd June 2014, the Scottish Government (SG) embarked on planning a seven year national programme to implement the Commission's recommendations. On the 24th June 2014, the then Cabinet Secretary for Women and Youth Employment announced the SG intention to refresh its youth employment strategy to reflect the changing economic conditions and the publication of the Commission's report. The Cabinet Secretary for Fair Work, Skills and Training launched Developing the Young Workforce – Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy on 15 December 2014. The strategy contains plans, agreed with local government, detailing how we will take forward the Commission's recommendations.

The Commission's own work over 18 months forms an extensive part of the consultation with individuals and organisations on which the strategy draws. Additionally, as part of the planning and consultation process the SG conducted small scale, explorative surveys of young people, employers and other stakeholders. The objective of the surveys was to gather initial views on SG's youth employability/training programmes and to stimulate early debate which would then supplement further engagement plan with stakeholders.

This further programme of engagement included an event for young people on 19 August 2014, a series of bilateral discussions with individuals and groups of stakeholders and a Scottish Chambers of Commerce business event on 29 October 2014. The responses gathered helped shape the refreshed youth employment strategy.

This report summarises the responses and key themes that emerged through the surveys and discussions with stakeholders that took place between June 2014 to November 2014, and also indicates sources of information which were considered during the desk based review of published material.

Discussion events and individual stakeholder meetings

As part of the engagement plan the SG also held events, involving over 150 people. These included:

- Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development group away day (SLAED)
- Princes Trust Ministerial roundtable
- Inspiring Scotland roundtable
- Scottish Council for Voluntary organisations (SCVO) roundtable
- Young People Ministerial event (supported by Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP); STUC Youth Committee, & YoungScot) and
- Scottish Chamber of Commerce Ministerial event.

In addition to these events, SG officials held bi-lateral meetings with a range of key stakeholders. (To note - all discussions during these meetings took place on the basis that comments would not be attributed to specific individuals or organisations.)

This report seeks to provide a general summary of stakeholder views expressed during these discussions and events, taking account of areas of consensus, highlighting areas where there were differences of opinion and summarises the suggested solutions which were proposed.

Summary of responses:

Q1. How can we improve existing policies?

Modern Apprenticeships (MAs)

All groups recognised MAs as an important intervention for young people and employers. There were a number of suggestions about how the current programme could be improved and links were made with the Commission's recommendations. Comments included:

- There should be a national campaign to encourage more employers to become involved.
- There should be support to help overcome travel cost barriers.
- More development of frameworks in the Health and Social care.
- MAs should be promoted widely in schools.
- Young people who have completed an apprenticeship should be encouraged to go back into schools to help promote and

encourage other young people to consider vocational opportunities.

- More needed to be done on raising awareness among teachers, parents and careers staff on the value of MAs.

Employer Recruitment Incentives (ERIs)

There were diverse views on the effectiveness of recruitment incentives. The majority of responses suggested that employers are confused by the range of incentives available and that, in some cases, they were not the appropriate mechanism for encouraging employers to recruit young people. Comments included:

- Better targeting to support young people with the greatest need was crucial.
- Future investment in HR services (such as pre recruitment, recruitment and in work support) for small employers instead of the wage incentives was suggested as a better use of resource.
- Some stakeholders felt that future programmes needed to be more flexible to the needs of both businesses and the employees, for example help to pay to remove barriers to employment and support the employee while in employment.
- Another suggestion was that SG needed to measure the effectiveness of the incentive schemes currently being delivered to learn the lessons moving forward.

Work Experience/Volunteering

There was a clear consensus that work experience and volunteering was seen as being beneficial for young people in terms of building confidence and commitment. A number of stakeholders commented that care should be taken to ensure that work experience did not lead to exploitation and that in many cases it should be a paid opportunity.

Comments included:

- Work experience offered through schools should be longer in duration.
- Work experience should expose individuals to different skills, environments and types of jobs.
- More choice should be available with the young person having greater input and influence.

- Some suggested a national standard to achieve a level of consistency across the country.

Community Jobs Scotland (CJS)

There were mixed views of CJS. Some stakeholders felt that it was an expensive form of recruitment incentive rather than a paid training opportunity. However other stakeholders were very passionate about the merits of CJS and its value in providing a supported employment opportunity to vulnerable young people.

Careers Information Advice and Guidance.

The majority of young people were clear that we need to improve quality, quantity and consistency of advice and that it should begin earlier in school life. Comments included:

- Ensure that careers advisers have a better awareness of the vocational opportunities.
- Vocational routes should be promoted as a positive choice.
- There should be more face to face engagement time with advisers.
- Industry experts should be engaging and working with young people.
- Some believed that some of the school qualifications were out of date and not fit for the current labour market particularly those related to computing and technology and that it would be more appropriate for these skills to be taught in a work based environment.
- Pastoral Care teachers and parents should be trained to support Careers Advisors in order to provide a more person centred approach.

Employability Fund (EF)

The majority of stakeholders thought that the EF was an improvement on previous programmes. There was also a range of views about how delivery could be improved or refined:

- Greater flexibility in order to reflect needs of individuals.
- Funding should be longer in duration.
- Many stakeholders recognised that EF mechanism was still relatively new although some felt that the balance between local and national priorities should be reviewed.

- Some felt that short term evaluation of programme outcomes impacted on the following year's funding allocations.
- More consistent approach adopted by DWP advisers in the use of discretion.

Q2. What steps need to be taken to achieve our vision?

There were a variety of comments in relation to how all partners could help achieve higher levels of youth employment. Comments included:

- There was agreement that the college reform agenda was starting to have a positive impact on youth employment and the move towards outcome agreements is a positive step.
- Ensuring consistent measurement of outcomes.
- More work on improving our understanding of those young people not in education, employment or training and taking a more flexible and person-centred in the response.
- The importance of early identification at schools.
- Ensuring that there is consistency in employer/third sector engagement by or with schools/education departments.
- Producing a skills development plan for Scotland in partnership with all relevant partners in Scotland.
- Local employability partnerships should have access to resource over a 3 year period.
- Encouraging geographical mobility in the young workforce / fund incentives to make young people more geographically mobile.
- Creating an employment agency for Scotland and one central website where all jobs, volunteering and work experience opportunities across Scotland would be shown; and
- A need for a job creation programme to sit alongside conventional economic development.

There was a mix of views on the merits of providing more localised/regional offers to employers and young people. However on the whole there seemed to be more support for this approach with a view that national standards should be set to remove issues surrounding post code lottery.

A few stakeholders commented that more funding should be available for stages 1 & 2 of the employability pipeline.¹

Employer Engagement

Employers thought there were too many schemes/initiatives and the landscape should be de-cluttered. There was a widely held view that the different eligibility rules for each programme meant that we were responding to the needs of the programme rather than that of the young person. Comments included:

- Recognition of the need to tailor engagement to meet the needs and size of the employer and that a one-size-fits-all approach would not be appropriate.
- We should utilise existing networks as a model of good practice such as Business Gateway, Barnardos, Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI) & Clyde Gateway.
- The recommendations contained within Education Working for All!, the report from the Commission to Develop Scotland's Young Workforce, in particular that the planned regional approaches, should be integrated with existing partnership arrangements to avoid duplication and ensure added value.
- Single point of entry and better alignment of existing offers would address some of the challenges on consistency and availability of the offers to employers.

Regional Invest in Young People Groups

Many stakeholders thought that the idea of regional groups could significantly help with the engagement of employers. There are currently a number of providers (e.g. schools, colleges, local authorities, Department for Work and Pensions, other delivery agencies and training providers) approaching employers and that the regional groups could help to co-ordinate the approach and better articulate the ask of employers. Comments included:

- SG should trust the regional groups and give them responsibility and accountability for the delivery of solutions.

¹ <http://www.employabilityinScotland.com/employability-pipeline/the-employability-pipeline/>

- The groups should be given a budget in order to fund innovative solutions and pilots within their own local areas.
- A number of stakeholders thought that there needed to be a programme to inform employers i.e. a campaign to inform them about the benefits of employing of young person.
- As a condition of support from public funds we should ask employers to sign up to a National Framework of Standards.
- Third Sector Framework document for improved engagement with schools and Directors of Education should be developed in partnership with the third sector.

Alignment of national and local priorities.

Funding and data collection were areas that featured strongly in the discussions. There was recognition of the need to balance the design of programmes and services to meet business needs as well as addressing the needs of the young people. Again further calls on services to be better aligned with a suggestion for a single service.

It was felt by some stakeholders that there are too many players and intermediaries on the employment landscape. In particular the role of the public sector agencies needs to be revisited as they are trying to do the same job. A single service could help to resolve the mismatch between the availability of jobs and the labour market.

A number of ideas were suggested to make it easier for young people to access employment these included:

- Earlier and better preparation at school.
- A need to reach young people that are disengaged.
- Improve careers advice in schools.
- Better work preparation in schools.
- Improve transitions from school.
- Creating an employment agency.

It was felt implementation of the Commission's recommendations should address this in the long term. However there was a view that more thought needed to be given to how we could increase the mobility in the young workforce to seek employment in areas where there are

employment opportunities and we should incentivise young people and employers to encourage greater geographic mobility.

Some stakeholders mentioned making better use of existing tools such as Scottish Enterprise's Organisational Development Review tool. Similarly other stakeholders commented on the positive impact the new Investors In Young People (IIYP) accolade could have.

Several stakeholders submitted proposals for the creation of an employment agency model. These proposals highlighted the potential benefits of having a third party conduct pre-recruitment, recruitment and in-work support for young people. They also recognised the need for ensuring the support (whether funding and/or training) for a young person was flexible enough to address any barriers that the young person might face in obtaining sustainable employment. The proposals also identified the need to support employers through the recruitment process and then in helping to sustain the young person within the job. There was agreement that better use of procurement could lead to increased sustainable employment, training, job taster and or work experience opportunities for young people.

Q3. How do we target support to young people?

Most stakeholders agreed that the Commission's recommendations had the potential to make longer term improvements and provide clear pointers on how future support should be targeted.

- SG and partners should develop a better understanding of the different groups of young people they are trying to help.
- funding models should reward long-term positive outcomes.
- funding models should allow organisations to reinvest in those hardest to reach.
- SG and LAs should be more active as employers in offering work placements and that they should pay the going wage rate for the job.

Q4. How do we encourage entrepreneurship?

There was a consistent message that Scotland needs to develop more young people with an entrepreneurial mind-set and ambition, with a

greater appetite for risk and reward, people who can create new products and services and grow companies of international scale. All stakeholders felt that our education system is key to realising our ambition in developing young entrepreneurs. Through Curriculum for Excellence, teachers and others who support young people's learning can help to inspire and unleash the potential of our next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs. Curriculum for Excellence's framework for learning and teaching has enterprise as one of five cross-cutting themes which underpin learning across the whole curriculum.

Comments included:

- Teaching entrepreneurship in primary school and building upon these skills through secondary school, college and university.
- Identifying schools where there are good models.
- Provide practical interactive workshops.
- A plea not to create a new programme but instead to give more funding to the existing ones that work.

Q5. What should a European Youth Guarantee (EYG) look like in Scotland?

The majority of the stakeholders engaged in the refresh discussions supported the principles of the EYG and the need for early intervention. There was also agreement that the needs of young people should be at the heart of the guarantee. Comments included:

- EYG should be targeted at those who are furthest from employment
- We need to include UK, SG and LA offers developed in partnership with business.
- Local delivery of services should fit a set of national standards.
- We need to provide better information on the EYG to those involved and to work towards a simplified landscape for young people and businesses.

Online Questionnaires

The survey questionnaires were developed in partnership with SG Analytical Services Division and sought views on the following aspects of youth employment:

- The most effective ways of reaching employers.
- The knowledge and experience of SG funded programmes.
- Targeting of resources.
- At what stage of unemployment should SG funding be used?
- What support should be more widely available to young people wanting to start their own business?

The survey period for the online questionnaires was 12 weeks. SG worked with a range of representative bodies, including YoungScot, Youthlink, the SYP, Confederation of British Industry (CBI) Scotland, Federation of Small Businesses, Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI), Institute of Directors (IoD) Scotland and other partners involved in employability, to increase awareness of the strategy refresh to encourage responses to the questionnaire.

Summary

We received 187 responses to the online questionnaires and agreed to publish a summary of the responses. The following, which is not ranked in any particular order, summarises the views of those who participated in the survey.

Young People

1. Work experience and skills were seen as most useful to finding a job.
2. Responses pointed to a lack of knowledge of the different role and purpose of support services.
3. Around two thirds of the respondents are aware of Modern Apprenticeships.

Employers and other stakeholders

1. A majority of respondents told us that from their experience “attitude” was very important to employers when hiring a young person.
2. There was a very high level of awareness of all of the national programmes and all respondents were aware of MAs.
3. MAs were most likely to be described by respondents as the most effective of all of the national programmes.
4. A number of comments suggested that face to face engagement with employers is very important.
5. The majority of respondents felt that funding should be focussed on young people who had been unemployed for less than 3 months.

Literature Review

To supplement the evidence gathered during the stakeholder engagements process, officials from the SG also conducted a literature review. This included the following published reports:

1. Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce – interim report (5 September 2013) and final report (3 June 2014)
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/edandtrainingforyoungple/commissiondevelopingscotlandsyoungworkforce>
2. Saga Generations report, 'Supporting employment across the UK economy' (June 2014)
[http://www.cpa.org.uk/cpa-lga-evidence/Saga/Saga\(2014\)-TheSagaGenerations-Supporting_employment_across_the_UK_economy.pdf](http://www.cpa.org.uk/cpa-lga-evidence/Saga/Saga(2014)-TheSagaGenerations-Supporting_employment_across_the_UK_economy.pdf)
3. Working Links research, in partnership with Glasgow University and Space Unlimited, to explore young unemployed people's perceptions.
http://workinglinks.co.uk/media_centre/latest_news/louder_than_word_s.aspx
4. Delivering Change – Cities and the Youth Unemployment Challenge
<http://www.centreforcities.org/publication/delivering-change-cities-and-the-youth-unemployment-challenge/>
5. SCDI & SDS Skills Pulse survey summer 2014
<http://www.scdi.org.uk/images/document/PDFs-2014/SkillsPulseSurvey-SCDI-SDS- June2014.pdf>
6. FSB report, Micros Untapped, Realising the employment potential of micro-businesses
http://www.fsb.org.uk/policy/rpu/scotland/assets/publi_spec_micro2012.pdf

7. Scottish Business In The Community, The Responsible Business Journey for Scotland
http://www.sbcscot.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/SBC-Call-To-Action_Digital.pdf

8. Industrial Communities Alliance, Re-Building the Economy of Scotland's Industrial Communities. http://www.industrialcommunitiesalliance.org/uploads/2/6/2/0/2620193/ica_action_plan_scotland.pdf

9. The GMB Scotland –Young Members Network report “The employment journey a fresh perspective to employment in Scotland ”
<http://theemploymentjourney.com/>



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