

Opportunities for All

**Supporting all young people to participate
in post-16 learning, training or work**

SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION

Context

The Scottish Government recognises the disproportionate impact that weak economic conditions have on young people, particularly those who are furthest from the labour market. We also recognise that staying in learning or training is the best way for young people to develop the skills they need to progress towards and into employment. With this in mind, the Scottish Government is seeking to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to enable Scotland's young people to take advantage of job opportunities now and in the future.

Opportunities for All brings together a range of existing national and local policies and strategies as a single focus to improve young people's participation in post 16 learning or training, and ultimately employment, through appropriate interventions and support until at least their 20th birthday.

This builds on and adds impetus to existing entitlements and commitments to support youth employment through the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence, including the development of skills for learning life and work, robust transitions through 16+ Learning Choices and the targeted support offered through More Choices, More Chances (MCMC).

The Commitment

Opportunities for All is an explicit commitment to offer a place in learning or training to every 16-19 year old who is not currently in employment, education or training. It requires the post-16 learning system to re-engage young people who are not currently in education, employment or training appropriately with learning or training between their 16th and 20th birthdays and to enable support to be offered to young people more effectively beyond that age.

The Aim

Opportunities for All ensures access for all Scotland's young people to a range of opportunities, including staying on at school, national training programmes, university and college courses, Activity Agreements and additional opportunities offered through Inspiring Scotland, Community Jobs Scotland and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Jobcentre Plus.

Principles

The Government's aim is to enable all young people to access and progress in learning and to equip them with the skills, knowledge and positive attitudes they need to participate and progress, where possible, to employment. In this way we look to improve the life chances of all of our young people, including those with additional support needs, through the provision of learning and training opportunities and the personal support they need to help them achieve and progress.

Through Opportunities for All, we will continue to work with key national and local partners to ensure:

- earlier identification of need, through needs-led assessment (where appropriate) leading to staged intervention and a continuum of appropriate support;
- a clear rationale for a young person pursuing any learning/training route, with a defined end point, outcomes and identified progression route, taking account of and managing expectations of young people and their parents/carers;
- that learning is appropriate to local, regional and national labour markets and contributes to local economic development;
- that all learning is planned and accredited as appropriate;
- that provision offered by colleges and our national training programmes are prioritised for 16-19 year olds, paying particular attention to those at risk of disengaging after school; and that any offer is appropriate and offers progression;
- tracking and monitoring by key partners of young people as they move through the learning system: this will be supported by Skills Development Scotland but led by individual institutions improving data collection, collation and sharing;
- in delivering provision for young people, partners comply with the Additional Support for Learning Act and reflect the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) Practice Model to ensure consistent, timely, post-16 transition planning;
- that relevant local and national delivery partners work together to make Opportunities for All available to young offenders, in particular to ensure their transition from custody to community is appropriately supported; and
- that outcome measures and related funding recognise the need for more tailored provision and, often, longer timescales for the desired outcomes to be achieved.

Participation

Opportunities for All acknowledges that all participation is positive and, in the period between a young person's 16th and 20th birthdays, should be regarded as transitional. Education and training are important phases in a young person's life which improve their lifelong career options. Through active data sharing across partners, the 16+ Learning Choices Data Hub will enable Skills Development Scotland to monitor and track young people's participation across the post-16 learning system.

Youth Employment Strategy and Strategic Employability Pipeline

Action for Jobs - Supporting Young Scots into Work: Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy, recognises that different young people will require different interventions in order to support them as they move along the Strategic Employability Pipeline towards and into work. This requires that engagement with young people, the interventions made to support them into a course of learning or training and the provision itself are meaningful, constructive and appropriate to the individual.

Tracking, monitoring and engagement

Effective delivery of post-16 opportunities is underpinned by tracking and monitoring of individual young people. Opportunities for All requires tracking and monitoring supported by improved data sharing processes to enable appropriate identification and intervention for those young people who need an offer of learning or training.

Skills Development Scotland's 16+ Learning Choices Data Hub will support the planning and articulation of the post-16 learner journey; and allows current data to be shared between partners, enabling them to target support to those who need it most in a timely, cohesive and collective manner.

Partners are expected to feed data into the hub. Further information on the process and requirements of partners is set out in the Data Practice Framework. Work will continue to improve data sharing processes and structures through the National Reference Group for Data Governance.

Delivery of Opportunities for All

The Scottish Government

The Scottish Government is continuing to prioritise young people: working strategically across Government and national partners and supporting local delivery partners to achieve better outcomes for Scotland's young people through whole-system improvements. The Scottish Government provides a package of financial and practical support for local partners, including:

- specific grant funding in 2012-13 for local authorities to co-ordinate local delivery of Opportunities for All (building on previous 16+ Learning Choices and Activity Agreement funding);
- a Post-16 Transitions Policy and Practice Framework which reflects the importance of robust transition planning at both initial and subsequent transitions and providing greater clarity on how we support effective transitions for young people with additional support needs;
- a Data Practice Framework that provides detail on how we ensure the consistent identification, tracking and monitoring of all 16-19 year-olds;
- a package of support for local partners through the Employability and Tackling Poverty Learning Network to provide a co-ordinated learning approach to support local partnerships, working with Education Scotland and Skills Development Scotland;
- bringing together local Employability and MCMC Partnerships to focus on improving youth employment through the Employability National Delivery Group; and
- capacity building support, through Education Scotland, to improve partnership practice.

Building on the Integration of Employment and Skills (IES) agenda, we will encourage further development of strong working relations between Skills Development Scotland and DWP Jobcentre Plus Scotland as a platform to support young people in Scotland.

Building on Curriculum for Excellence

In the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence, schools and their partners are building a flexible system that offers personalisation and choice to meet the needs of all young people, wherever their learning is taking place. During this phase it will be increasingly common for a young person to learn through a range of providers, including schools, colleges, universities, Community Learning and Development and other less formal settings.

Local authority multi-agency partnership

This partnership-led model is tried and tested and is recognised as being crucial to ensuring effective post-16 transitions. In supporting Opportunities for All, local partnerships should extend their reach beyond the 16-18 age group defined by 16+ Learning Choices. As such, local partners should build on existing systems and

approaches in order to cover both initial and subsequent transitions for young people until their 20th birthday. This will require:

- systematic planning for transitions, at local partnership level, that is timely, proportionate and appropriate;
- working with a wide range of providers to ensure sufficient appropriate, high quality learning/training opportunities and supports are available locally;
- defining and supporting delivery for young people with additional support needs;
- ensuring that all relevant partners (in all sectors) identify, track and monitor their young people up to their 20th birthday;
- partners collectively reviewing their systems and processes to ensure they are cohesive and complimentary and facilitate continuous improvement; and
- partnerships ensuring that every transition a young person is making is supported by the most appropriate partner.

Opportunities for All Co-ordinators within local authorities (formerly 16+ Learning Choices Co-ordinators), working with their authority and external partners will continue to focus on collaboration, planning and support for subsequent transitions, to ensure ongoing participation for individuals and ultimately employment.

Through Single Outcome Agreements, local authorities, and their community planning partners, will continue to have the lead role for progress on the National Indicator on increased participation.

Authorities should lead on the development and delivery of Youth Employment Action Plans, working collaboratively with Skills Development Scotland and other partners to clarify roles and expectations; to identify the priority cohort of young unemployed people; where they are geographically; who is delivering what for them; and referral arrangements between partners.

Colleges

In order to ensure sufficient provision across the learning system, Ministers have asked Colleges to prioritise their provision for young people. As colleges evolve as part of the Post-16 Reform, they will develop Regional Outcome Agreements that will outline how they will contribute to Opportunities for All and work with partners to engage young people seeking learning or training opportunities.

The college regionalisation agenda involves the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) re-purposing the funding for colleges, via outcome agreements. This aims to ensure that colleges are better placed to respond to the needs of young people and are better supported to fulfil their major role in the delivery of Opportunities for All. The SFC has appointed outcome managers to work alongside colleges and their local partners so that available courses offer what young people want and what employers need. By supporting regional structures, the SFC and the college sector will enable young people to become better qualified and progress through the education system in an efficient and flexible manner. At the same time, colleges will be better able to respond to the needs of the local, regional and national economy to equip young people with the skills and knowledge needed to get and sustain employment.

Colleges have committed to prioritise opportunities for young people and will make available a range of full-time course informed by both the needs of local employers and the

national key industry sectors. Colleges and other providers will deliver pre-employment training aimed specifically at 16–19 year olds who have little or no formal qualifications and who face significant barriers to employment.

The move to outcome based funding is a major cultural change for both SFC and colleges and it is recognised that this new approach will take time to become embedded. The new approach should be fully embedded by the Regional Outcome Agreement negotiations planned for Autumn 2013 which will influence provision in the following Academic Year 2014-15.

Skills Development Scotland

Skills Development Scotland deliver a wide range of services to young people and has a key role to play in the delivery of Opportunities for All through modernising the career services, developing new services and refining existing provision. This includes:

- Providing a single phone number for young people to call and get more information on the opportunities available to them;
- Working with key partners such as local authorities, colleges, the voluntary sector and the Department of Work and Pensions to ensure Youth Employment Actions Plans are in place;
- Developing frontline services, including through the introduction of Career Coaches in school; Work Coaches providing 1:1 intensive coaching post-school; mentoring and employability support, working with DWP to ensure coherent support to individuals;
- Providing support to all local authorities, including schools, to facilitate access and use of My World of Work and working to ensure that all young people have opportunities to develop career management skills;
- Making best use of data tracking and monitoring mechanisms through the Data Hub and improving data sharing with strategic partners including Department for Work and Pensions, schools and local authorities, colleges, universities and the Student Awards Agency for Scotland;
- In contracting for Modern Apprenticeships and pre-employment training, Skills Development Scotland will maximise opportunities for 16-19 year olds;
- In partnership with Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and employers, developing a national certificate of work readiness which is valued by employers and recognises the work readiness of 16-19 year olds; and
- Sign-posting advice and guidance, in liaison with local authorities and DWP, to 18 and 19 year olds who make contact with a Skills Development Scotland Centre.

Through Service Delivery Agreements, Skills Development Scotland will explore with local authorities and Community Planning Partnerships the processes required to develop co-commissioning and co-investment arrangements.

Department for Work and Pensions Jobcentre Plus

In serving the interests of young people, the Scottish Government is committed to working with the UK Government. This involves collaborative working between SG and DWP to ensure that the programmes DWP provides in Scotland deliver positive outcomes for young people. These services include:

- enhanced Adviser Support for 16-17 year olds claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) which will sit alongside the support they will be receiving from Skills Development Scotland;
- sign-posting advice and guidance, in liaison with local authorities and Skills Development Scotland, to 16-17 year olds who make contact with a Jobcentre Plus office;
- as for all 18-24 year olds, some 16-17 year olds will come into contact with Jobcentre Plus for additional help and advice that will support their move into education, training or work. Jobcentre Plus districts will have access to the District Flexible Support Fund to purchase support such as confidence building provision or CV writing. The type and length of provision is for the District to decide;
- access to the Work Programme for 18-24 year olds who have been unemployed for 9 months and Day 1 entry to the Work Programme for those aged 18+ leaving prison and signing on to JSA;
- early entry to the Work Programme at 3 months for young people leaving care and those making claim at age 18 who have been unemployed for the previous 6 months and early entry at 3 months for 18 year olds making a claim to JSA who previously claimed JSA whilst 16-17 on grounds of hardship;
- wage incentives offered to employers who recruit 18-24 year olds from the Work Programme to a job expected to last at least 26 weeks; an
- Work Trials to overcome any remaining suitability doubts an employer and/or disadvantaged claimant may have following a formal interview for a vacant post.

Sector led Skills Academies

Business led skills academies seek to meet the specific, niche skills needs of individual sectors through training for those already in the workforce and for those seeking to move into work. Specific developments in this area include:

- The Nigg Skills Academy focuses on manufacturing and engineering training largely for the oil/gas and renewables sectors. Funded through a public/private sector partnership, the academy is currently recruiting 270 Modern Apprentices and 50 Training for Work trainees. Demand has been high with over 3,000 online applications.
- The Renewable Energy Steel Trade Academy (RESTA) in Renfrew is in the pilot phase of development. The model at this academy aims to provide training for up to 60 Modern Apprentices in its first year and is expected to be able to offer training for more than 120 people over the next 2 years, supported by Skills Development Scotland,

Anniesland College, DWP and the local authority. TRESTA has received over 200 applications in its first month of advertising.

- In the Budget Statement on 20 September 2012, the Scottish Government committed to establishing an Energy Skills Academy supported by funding of £3.25m. Increasing collaboration with employers of all sizes across the energy sector, and supported by the Government's skills and enterprise agencies, the Academy will seek to maximise the impact of available resources and stimulate employer investment in skills.

These developments are notable among a wider range of academies which seek to align training with the needs of participating employers. While there are limitations in terms of scale and geographic spread, the academy model provides a good basis upon which to work collaboratively with the private sector in the development of national and regional training provision which by its design is aligned with the needs of employers. As the Nigg Training Academy example demonstrates, the close link between training and job opportunities is attractive to learners.

The engagement model

The Youth Transitions Policy and Practice Framework provides a full overview of the roles and responsibilities of partners to support young people to participate in learning and training until the age of 20.

Local authorities and schools

At the point of transition from school to post-school, local authorities and schools are responsible for ensuring that young people at risk of disengaging from further learning or training are identified and that their support needs are assessed and addressed.

GIRFEC and the Additional Support for Learning (ASL) Act provide the framework for schools and their partners working with these young people. Additionally, the related ASL Code of Practice includes guidance on how a school and appropriate agencies should work together to plan to meet the transitional needs of these young people.

Where young people feel they may not yet be ready to engage in formal learning, local authorities and their partners should consider offering an Activity Agreement. Young people taking this path will often require sustained support from a suitable professional. Their progress will be tracked and monitored by Skills Development Scotland.

Skills Development Scotland

Skills Development Scotland will work with Education Scotland and schools to support all young people to use My World of Work from S3. This will give all young people (and their parents and carers) access to SDS products and services to assess and develop their career management skills.

Those young people whose needs are so complex that they will require partner support to address other issues which are preventing them from focusing on employability will in the first instance be referred to partner agencies that provide the specialist support they require. Others will require sustained career support to achieve a successful transition and will work with a Work Coach to:

- identify their own strengths and weaknesses;
- develop a Career Development Plan and commence an appropriate employability programme such as the Certificate of Work Readiness or other pre-employment training to prepare the young person for the world of work; and
- sustain an opportunity by evidencing that they now have the skills and resilience to succeed in the workplace.

Skills Development Scotland Careers Coaches also support 18 year olds leaving school, including those who have had an offer but did not sustain it. For this older group, SDS will work with DWP as the young person may be eligible for DWP support.

Department for Work and Pensions Jobcentre Plus

Young people contacting the Jobcentre will be referred to an adviser who will provide advice dependant on their individual circumstances, and may include signposting to other specialist organisations. Claimants will receive a diagnostic advisory interview to identify any barriers to employment and agree an action plan with the adviser. Following this, regular enhanced interventions will provide on-going support and may also include case conferencing with other partner organisations. This will ensure that the young person is receiving cohesive advice and guidance from all partners.

Encouraging young people to access support and developing engagement models

Most young people progress successfully from school into lifelong learning and work. For those who don't, partners across SDS, DWP and the wider Community Planning Partnership will work together to identify the young person and provide effective support to re-engage them in learning.

Young people can access the Opportunities for All offer by making contact with any of the partners noted in this document. Partners will then work together locally to identify the most appropriate provision.

To make access to Opportunities for All as simple and straight-forward as possible, the Scottish Government has asked Skills Development Scotland to be the first port of call for Opportunities for All nationally and locally. Any young person can access Opportunities for All by phoning 0800 917 8000.



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The Scottish Government
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