

15-24 Learner Journey Review

Engagement with College Regions – May to August 2017

Background

1. The 15-24 Learner Journey review is a programme of work, being led by the Scottish Government in partnership with others, to review the effectiveness and efficiency of the 15-24 Learner Journey for all 15 to 24 year olds. There are two drivers for the review: learner personalisation and choice, and system efficiency. The review is considering the 15-24 Learner Journey from the senior phase (S4-S6) leading to employment, including the stages of further and higher education in college, higher education in university, vocational training and apprenticeships.
2. Stage 1 of the 15-24 Learner Journey Review is underway. It commenced in September 2016 and will report by the end of 2017. The purpose of this stage is to gather evidence and ideas from across the system. From this, policy ideas and proposals will be developed and will be published. We will then move into a stage of further engagement and implementation, as appropriate.
3. As part of the evidence gathering we ran extensive engagements with our stakeholders, including representatives drawn from public bodies and agencies, the third sector and private organisations with expertise of the learning system, as well as organisations representing the interests of parents, young people and employers.
4. This report sets out the findings from the programme of regional events that was undertaken across college regions from May to August 2017. The engagement took the form of workshops with a total of 18 taking place nationally. The findings from the engagement are qualitative in nature, aimed at seeking the views of colleges and wider stakeholders to gather perspectives at a regional level.

Scope/Aim

5. We all have a personal experience of the learning system and it can be too easy to extrapolate general truths from that subjective experience. It is also the case that parts of the system perhaps hold different data on the learner- journeys. The workshop-looked closely at what is valued in the current system, what are the challenges, what does success look like and what improvements could be explored.
6. To begin with the groups were asked to start thinking carefully about the consequences of any measures we might propose, and any 'trade-offs' that might need to be balanced.
7. The groups were then asked to consider how the system could better support learner choice; maximise skills; and meet employer needs; whilst retaining all the best aspects of the current system which recognise the returns to individuals and the economy from different levels of study. The groups also considered-the need to ensure choice is maximised, while safeguarding support for all protected groups of learners.
8. The feedback from the workshops has been captured with duplication removed and is set out at **Annex A**.

Approach

9. A total of 18 engagement workshops were held across the college regions. These were initiated by a request from the Scottish Government to colleges to host an engagement event for regional stakeholders. The invitation was also sent to appropriate college staff with responsibility for curriculum design and delivery, learner progression and transitions and a range of external and regional stakeholders who have views and expertise on key aspects of the Learner Journey Review. Overall levels of engagement were good; however, there was a noticeable lack of engagement from universities but high levels of engagement from employability training programmes. Sandra Gunn, Faculty Director, City of Glasgow College and secondee to Scottish Government, supported and facilitated these meetings as a representative of Scottish Government.

Format of the Events

- The meetings were held for approximately 1.5 to 2.5 hours
- The meetings were facilitated by a Scottish Government representative.
- Each meeting was attended by around 15-20 attendees, with the exception of the meeting held in the Highlands, which had around 50 attendees to ensure this event accommodated the large number of colleges in the region.
- Participants were invited to discuss the challenge questions (of their choice)
- Views/key discussion points were collated at the close of the meeting and will continue to Scottish Government's overall review process

Key Findings

10. Each event was set out into two discussions with each discussion focussed around answering the following specific questions:
 - What do we value most in the current system?
 - What are the challenges in the current system?
 - What does success look like?
 - What needs to change within the current system to achieve success?

Discussion I

What we value the most in the system?

11. Discussion I asked two questions; what do we value in the current system? And what are the challenges in the current system?
12. The key outputs from this discussion were wide ranging and acknowledged the many positives in the current education system we have in Scotland. In particular, most of the regions noted the successful partnerships that have been fostered between colleges, schools and industry. The regions also valued the number of young people who are achieving successful outcomes from school, college and university. However, there remained a consensus that more can be done. The consistent feedback from participants across all regions considered the following points to be what they valued or felt worked well in the current system, these are:
 - Colleges provide appropriate academic support to matches learners needs;
 - College partnerships with Industry;

- College partnerships with Schools; and
- College offer to learners by supporting and enabling learners in choosing vocational pathways.

13. The groups were then asked to consider what the challenges are in the current system. While the groups noted the expansion of the offer with Foundation Apprenticeships they felt there is still work to be done to create a parity of esteem between the vocational and academic offer. Participants fed back what they saw as challenges in the current system, these are:

- Addressing the appropriate provision of the college offer;
- Parity of esteem between vocational qualifications and academic qualifications;
- Clarity and understanding of the offer of pathways for learners and those advising and influencing learners;
- Qualifications at Higher National level not aligned with entry requirement for university and the employer market; and
- Perception that university is the preferred destination when the offer is wider and may not be the best option for most learners.

Discussion 2

14. After discussing what we value and what are the challenges in the current system, to the second discussion focussed on what would success look like and what would need to change in the system, for this to be achieved. Almost all regions were unanimous in what they viewed as success, in that ultimately it is to achieve a positive and sustained destination for all learners.

Key Findings: What does success look like?

15. Participants fed back what they saw as successes in the current system. These are:

- Positive and sustained destinations for all learners;
- Parity of esteem between vocational qualifications and academic qualifications;
- Flexible learning offer;
- Easy to navigate through the system for learners and stakeholders; and
- Data sharing between institutions across the system.

Key Findings: What needs to change?

16. The final question asked was what needs to change in the system to achieve the success that had been previously discussed. Feedback from the group varied in this respect, with regions in rural areas describing changes to meet the needs of learners who do not have to travel long distances to study combined with providing courses that attract learners and meet the needs of employers within that region. This was in comparison to urban regions that broadly focussed discussion on flexible qualifications and more collaboration between institutions and employers.

Participants fed back what they felt needs to change in the current system. These are:

- Substantive, additional work experience that is employer focussed;

- Career Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for staff across all sectors to support the learner journey;
- An effective process to ensure qualifications are flexible enough, are current and relevant to meet the needs of employers and learners; and
- Parity of how success is measured at a cross-sector level.

Conclusion and Next Steps

17. Through the college region engagement events, a number of consistent messages were identified from a regional view of the education system. However, it was also noted that whilst the above feedback can be broadly attributed across all the regions, there are examples across the system of what some participants considered as successes in their regions that others viewed as challenges which influenced participants views on what needs to change to the system at a national level.
18. The Scottish Government will consider the output from these workshops as part of the evidence gathered during Stage I and continue to engage closely with stakeholders and delivery partners on the implementation of the Review. Our findings, evidence and thinking to date will be published by the end of the year.

Advanced Learning and Science Directorate

ANNEX A

What do we value?	What are the challenges?	What would success look like?	What needs to change?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCQF provides a framework to provide a recognised comparison of qualifications within the system. • That there is an educational pathway from Primary - Secondary, FE and HE which is funded for learners. • Opportunities to study to degree level at college or study locally at college and then move with Advanced Standing to degree programmes. • That there are currently more pathways than traditional routes. DYW approach is becoming embedded into the system. Vocational pathways in schools have been developed. Schools are now teaching pupils to be more work ready or aware. • Improving collaboration between schools and colleges with further opportunities to co-design and co-deliver more curriculum offerings. • There is more of a parity of esteem between academic and vocational options than in previous years. • College is working more closely with employers. • Curriculum areas are getting better at embedding essential employment skills in the delivery of the curriculum. • Learner voice is listened to in the college sector. • Pastoral and academic support is provided for all students. This includes guidance onto right courses at colleges. • It was believed that employers were beginning to recognise Vocational Pathways and Academic Pathways as having more equity than had been previously understood. • College Advisors were attending some schools to provide current information. • Provision of CPD courses in some regions, in specific vocational areas for secondary teachers this was positive as it built relationships and increased understanding of the offering of the college sector. Through this relationship building and greater understanding of the learners expectation of what tertiary education required and also of the expectations of learner needs by college staff. This was recognised as good practise. • Fewer school pupils were without an offer for further training or tertiary education. • 2+2 degree provision was working between colleges and some universities in certain disciplines. • Good employment progress from FAs and MAs • SDS partnership agreements were working well • In some regions college & university integrated progress – transition was effective and not bolt on. This was evidence in the Outcomes in terms of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving parity of Esteem between academic and vocational education remains a challenge • Complicated educational landscape which causes confusion for parents and young people in the selection of the appropriate route for young learner. • There is limited data on forecasting future skills gaps which can cause difficulties in providing advice and curriculum planning. • Limited number of offerings/choice at SCQF Level 4 - often leading to repetition at SCQF Level 4 at school and college. Vocational studies at school can be repeated at colleges. The opportunity to co-design and co-delivery these would be welcome. • SQA programmes are not always considered current and relevant and can take time to be updated. There is no agility in their systems to make quick changes in response to industry needs. A number of vocational areas have transferred to City and Guilds qualifications as they are more current in their content. • No 'learning journey' profile of learners as they transition from early years/primary/secondary/FE/HE etc. If a profile record could move with learners from one institution to another it would streamline the system. This could highlight early in a learners experience of any new institution that particular needs the learner may have and cut the number of diagnostic testing etc undertaken. The new institution could address learner needs early and could mitigate early withdrawal from courses. • Current academic calendar does not provide opportunities for work placements. Some suggestions were to have longer block release or to utilise the summer vacation to for work placements. Suggestion that work placement should be paid which would incentive learners to complete and see the relevance to their formal studies. • As Employment is the ultimate destination for 15-24 year olds this posed a particular challenge in some regions in terms of the economic climate of the region. • Career pathways were maybe not always in place locally. This is a challenge for everyone - those in education and who manage funding in terms of what information is available and how best its shared. • Young people from rural regions find moving to the city for Higher Education an attractive option. • Rural location means that transport issues and cost for this are significant for learners and college • Concern re the perception that degree were the primary aspiration for young learners and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every young person reaching their full potential • Straightforward navigation through the system • Young people understanding what they have achieved in education, being happy and valued in society and young people who are ready to enter the world of work through a seamless journey through the educational system • Learner focused approach enacted in all institutions • Flexible learning packages for learners • Collaborative working between local governments, educational institutions. . • A single system of education and seen as such by all education current sectors and employers • Equity given to different pathways • Successful, sustainable employment in chosen field whatever the learners' ability • Work Ready Young People • Young people who understand their journey and their own skills and qualities and are well informed in their choices and opportunities. • Improved learner attainment • Multiple qualifications – potentially a portfolio of qualifications which can be achieve concurrently. • Transformation of opportunities through education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common or integrated formal teacher training/CPD offerings which would go to professionals in the education sector who worked or planned to work in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary education to address parity of esteem and enhance understanding of the requirements the each sector which would support more seamless transitions for learners. This would include the sharing of resources across Regional Educational hubs. • Set up/Award of Centres for Excellence for key vocational area which employers and learners would recognise as a first choice for study or recruiting of employees. • Funding - let the funding follow the learner who can decide where and when to 'spend' his or her learning funds. • Multi agency co-ordination to streamline activities. The development of more active collaboration between sectors. • Sharing pedagogical approaches with a sharing of good practise across sectors to ensure all areas understood different approaches and their benefits. • Time and Funding to allow open dialogue and working up of models for the sectors to work collaboratively. • Review the balance between value and change which should involve joint operational planning. This would include new level of collaboration with key target or agreed focus for example - women in STEM, Enterprise awareness - behaviours and attitudes. • Enhancing the relationship with school teachers to improve the learner journey could include a number of new approaches these would include: A placement of secondary teacher for short periods in colleges, CPD events in colleges for teachers, shadowing experience at all educational levels for trainee teachers/lecturers, streamlining of teacher training to provide insight into all levels and styles of learning and teaching in primary, secondary and college. This would ensure far better understanding of the different stages of formal education. • Developing pedagogical models to overcome geographical access: especially at FE and school levels. • Create more explicit links between employer and curriculum at all levels. Review and update. • Desirability for formal strategic regional planning

<p>multiple qualifications and the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific focus on those from whom there are fewer progression choices in learning the “forgotten middle” • Opportunities to create real pathways for young people that lead to sustained positive destinations • Different entry levels for those entering FE in particular with significant range of opportunities for all learners on all stages, and abilities • Learning for all irrespective of background – second chances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other challenges outlines were: Sustaining students in college, keeping people in the region and also encouraging them to come back. • Practical barriers due to the wide spread population over a large landmass - small number of learners for some disciplines created challenges due to economy of scale and related funding issues which are related. Therefor it was not possible to offer equity of access. • Articulation college to university was still problematic due to differences in the curriculum which did not to allow advanced standing for those wishing to progress. • Influencer and advisors to young people sometimes don't understand the landscape has changed. The challenge was to change mind-sets to ensure parents/schools understood that getting into employment was not necessarily a linear route. That the learner had to be at the centre and focus on the appropriate pathways for them. Learners should also be in a culture where lifelong learner was recognised and that learners could return to formal education on a regular basis. • There is a focus on qualifications not the whole learning experience and transitions. • Equality of access • Communication between partners - getting the information to individuals - sources of information • Better articulation is required. Young people aspire to University rather than other options as their first choice. • Articulation agreement with University - dealing with multiple separate agreements with different Universities and different department within Universities. 		<p>with lead organisations and wider stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create one measure for counting students across HE and FE
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