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Young People's Pathways: a progress report on Developing the Young Workforce



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Education and Skills Committee

To consider and report on matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills.



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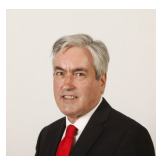
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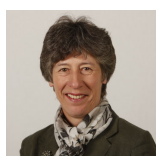
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Conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

1: The Committee wishes to thank all those that provided views in writing and in person to the inquiry. The Committee would also like to thank YouthLink Scotland, YoungScot and the Scottish Youth Parliament for helping to design and promote the survey that led to this inquiry being undertaken.

Developing the Young Workforce

2: The intentions of the Developing the Young Workforce programme received wide support in 2014 and evidence to the Committee confirmed that this support remains. Much progress has been made towards implementing recommendations since 2014. The Committee's role has been to ascertain where barriers to progress remain or where the pace of change needs to be increased. This is to ensure that the significant structural and cultural shift required to embed DYW recommendations, such as those related to the senior phase, is achieved.

Parity of esteem

3: A key indicator of a culture shift generated from DYW would be if, by the end of the programme, young people consider there is parity of information provision on all the options available to them. The Committee recommends that the Government undertakes a large-scale quantitative survey of young people to seek to establish whether DYW has sufficiently progressed the culture shift towards achieving parity of information on options. The survey should take place by the end of 2021.

Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) - One-to-one advice

4: The Committee welcomes the Scottish Government's review of careers information as an opportunity to further improve provision of one-to-one careers advice. The Committee considers that, now that Skills Development Scotland has completed much of the work establishing elements of the DYW structure, its resources should be redeployed to increase its focus on the provision of one-to-one advice for young people. The Committee recommends that the Government makes clear, including in its next letter of guidance to SDS, and in associated funding allocations, that a key priority for SDS in schools is increasing the provision of high quality and sustained advice.

5: The Committee considers the careers information review should focus on increasing the level of advice available on a universal basis and also to target groups. To ensure mutual understanding of what young people want and need from careers advice, young people should be central to this review. Any changes that need to be developed, for example to expand the 'universal offer', should be co-designed with young people. Finally, the review should seek the views of young people as to whether they require careers advice at an earlier stage, and in what form.

CIAG - Online resources

6: The Committee considers that the value of one-to-one advice exceeds that of online resources particularly for some target groups such as disadvantaged young people who often require the most support. This can include those living in low income households that

do not have digital access outside school. Progressing personal online accounts for young people, however sophisticated, will not have the same impact on certain target groups as one-to-one advice. The Committee recommends that where there are funding or other resource allocation decisions to be made between progressing online work and increasing one-to-one advice, there should be a significant weighting towards one-to-one provision.

The role of parents and carers

7: Parents and carers are key influences for young people, and it is apparent that most do not have sufficient information on post-school options other than university. The level of awareness raising work targeted at parents should reflect the level of importance and influence of parents when young people are deciding which path to take. In the absence of a systematic delivery of information on less traditional options, university will, understandably, remain the most well understood post-school option, and therefore the logical next step. The form of information and support provided to parents should focus on the benefits of the less recognised pathways, including vocational pathways, in recognition of their variety and complexity. Information on career pathways should be provided to parents at a sufficiently early stage.

8: The Committee recommends the Scottish Government explores the extent to which implementation of the National Action Plan on parental involvement in their children's learning could usefully include further work to assist parental involvement in careers advice.

The role of schools - Resources

9: The Committee recognises the considerable amount of positive work being undertaken at school level towards DYW implementation. The Committee considers that realistic expectations for this work should be placed on schools at the present time given the resource constraints highlighted in evidence to the Committee, and the multiple policy initiatives schools are implementing at the present time. In this context, fresh consideration needs to be given to the adequacy of available funding and staff time for schools given their key role in the delivery of DYW. The Committee reiterates its view from its previous inquiry reports that a continued emphasis on reducing teacher workload is vital.

10: The Committee recommends that the expectation that resourcing for DYW will be met from school core funding should be revisited to assess:

- whether it is realistic that DYW can be fully implemented in schools by 2021; and
- whether the expectation DYW will be met from core funding diminishes the likelihood of a focus on implementing DYW in the longer term.

The role of schools - Performance indicators

11: The production of performance indicators on vocational pathways was central to a DYW recommendation aimed at ensuring vocational pathways from schools are established in a meaningful way. 4 years into the DYW programme, the Committee is frustrated at the distinct lack of progress. In the absence of information collated against performance indicators there is no way of knowing, at secondary school level, the number and form of vocational pathways being provided. There is no way of assessing how individual schools, or different education authorities, are progressing with establishing and promoting different vocational pathways.

12: The Committee requests a detailed update from the Scottish Government and Education Scotland on work towards creating new performance indicators on vocational pathways that are to be measured and published alongside other school performance indicators. The Committee wants to know why performance indicators have not been produced by this stage. The Committee also wants to know what resources have been allocated to this work and which part of Education Scotland is responsible for the delivery of work towards milestones. The Committee requests this update, including a timeline with milestones for delivery, in formal responses to this report from the Scottish Government and Education Scotland.

The role of schools - Personal and Social Education

13: The Committee has agreed that Personal and Social Education, including the variability in the time it receives in schools, and the importance placed upon it in schools, is a priority for further scrutiny. Once the Scottish Government's PSE review is complete the Committee will undertake further work on this important issue.

The role of schools - Time allocated in school for support with applications

14: The Committee considers that there should be equal support provided in schools for making applications regardless of the route a young person plans to take. The Committee highlights to the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland the potential unintended consequence of the lack of an equivalent to the UCAS process for those going to college or direct into employment. Cohorts of students may feel at a disadvantage, or less of a priority, compared to those who are applying through the UCAS process during lesson time. The Committee recommends that, where resources allow, schools are seeking to ensure that students who do not want to apply to university are also being supported in progressing their career pathways during the lesson time used for the completion of UCAS forms.

The role of schools - Timetabling

15: The Committee recognises the need for different school timetabling models in distinct areas. The Committee will reflect on this in future work, including taking evidence from schools directly.

Work placements

16: The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government instructs an amendment to the Work Placement Standard to include a module on 'what to expect on work placements'. The Committee seeks further information from the Scottish Government as to whether consideration has previously been given to this proposal made by Sir Ian Wood, including whether any education authorities undertake work of this kind that could be highlighted to others as best practice.

17: The Committee was struck by the importance placed by young people on practical experience through work placements and the range of benefits work placements, based on young people's preferences, can have. Evidence reflected the fact that early and varied work placements can be of particular importance and value for those who choose to leave school on the statutory date. The Committee recommends that, where it is possible to identify in advance students who are clear that their intention is to leave school at this stage, these young people should be offered an enhanced opportunity for work placements.

18: Where appropriate and practical, young people termed 'statutory leavers' should take priority in opportunities for work experience of their choosing. In addition, SDS and schools should ensure that, where possible, work experience for these students should be in excess of what is provided for in the Work Placements Standard, with the assumption being they will have the chance to undertake at least two work placements.

19: Evidence reflects positive examples of where schools have sought to personalise the placement service, ascertaining when during the week or the school year work placements would suit particular employers and young people. The Committee highlights this good practice to ADES, SDS and the Scottish Government and encourages the sharing and adoption of this best practice elsewhere.

Key performance indicators - Vocational pathways

20: The Committee recognises the considerable amount of positive work being undertaken, including by colleges, to ensure that the DYW target of 7,000 pupils taking part in senior phase vocational pathways by the 2019-20 academic year will be achieved.

Key performance indicators - Foundation apprenticeships

21: The Committee highlights to the Scottish Government and SDS the amount of evidence it has received on barriers to the increased provision and uptake of foundation apprenticeships. It welcomes assurances from SDS that 5,000 foundation apprenticeships will be available for the 2019-20 academic year and requests an update from SDS on the actual number available and the uptake achieved in due course.

Key performance indicators - Care experienced young people and young people with a disability

22: The Committee is concerned that KPIs on positive destinations for care experienced young people and on the employment rate for disabled young people are not being met. This is the case despite a focus from SDS, Education Scotland and schools to provide targeted support.

23: The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government commissions an independent piece of research to establish why the targeted work is not resulting in the percentage increase in positive destinations and employment rates for young people as intended in the Government's milestones for DYW. This should have a specific focus on young people with disabilities and also care experienced young people.

24: The Committee further recommends that the review focuses on qualitative evidence gathered from young people to gain their perspective on the support received and on what further support would have been beneficial.

The role of employers in delivering Developing the Young Workforce

25: The Committee commends the work to establish 21 DYW regional groups. This is a complex process to establish entirely new infrastructure to provide an important function in the delivery of DYW at a local level across Scotland. The Committee appreciates the work of DYW regional groups is at a relatively early stage but highlights to the Scottish Government and SDS the extent of the responsibilities that sit with these groups. These groups require levels of support from SDS, and associated funding and support from the Government, to give them the local profile and leverage required to perform their functions effectively.

26: The Committee notes the emphasis and importance placed on DYW regional groups in engaging with SMEs. The Committee recommends that the Government ensures that trade bodies have a stronger presence on regional groups, to seek to improve the links between DYW groups and small to medium sized enterprises.

27: The Committee is concerned that the key performance indicator target on increasing the percentage of employers recruiting young people directly from education has not been achieved, with recorded performance against this target remaining the same since 2014.

28: The Committee recommends that SDS assesses whether the progress made by Marketplace, the online platform, is sufficient at this stage of DYW implementation. SDS should then publish an action plan, included with its formal response to this report, setting out when Marketplace will be rolled out to all 21 DYW regional groups and including targets for the number of organisations it expects to see signed up as members of Marketplace by the end of 2021.

29: The Committee also recommends, in addition to work by DYW regional groups, that SDS should report to the Committee on how it can enhance its own efforts to provide direct support to SMEs. In relation to apprenticeships, the Scottish Government and SDS are invited to set out their perspective on the benefits of an online advisory service for businesses on recruiting, managing and developing apprentices, as recommended by the Federation of Small Businesses.

30: The Committee highlights to the Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee the issues raised in relation to SMEs for consideration as part of that Committee's inquiry into business support for small and medium sized enterprises.

Island and rural communities

31: The Committee invites the Scottish Government to set out in its response to this report what work is underway at a national level to assist rural and island communities in:

- generating opportunities locally with an emphasis on transferable skills; and
- ensuring young people are aware of and able to take part in national initiatives, such as opportunities generated by the STEM strategy.

The Learner Journey Review and Developing the Young Workforce

32: The Learner Journey Review has linked policy intentions with DYW, shares certain funding streams and has the same support team within the Scottish Government. It will also run concurrently with DYW implementation, for an extended period if implementation of DYW extends beyond 2021 which appears likely. The Committee does not dispute the benefit of a joined up approach between initiatives. However, given the importance of DYW, the value of the work underway and the widespread support for its intentions, the Committee recommends that the Government takes steps to guard against any focus of resources on the Learner Journey Review leading to a dilution of efforts being made towards the successful delivery of DYW.

33: The Committee notes the recommendation in the Strategic Plan on the Enterprise and Skills Review on accelerating work on the Learner Journey Review. The Committee seeks an explicit assurance that the required timeline and draft guidance will stipulate work specifically aimed at the delivery of DYW.

34: As highlighted in this report, the pace of progress in implementing DYW is not presently sufficient to ensure the programme will be fully embedded by 2021. The Committee highlights this risk to the Government at this mid-way stage in the programme to enable it to look at ways for the programme to find a renewed emphasis in the next three years. While the priority must be on increasing momentum to deliver the programme by 2021, the Committee also recommends that the Scottish Government gives early consideration to contingency planning, including producing milestones for DYW that extend beyond 2021.

Introduction

1. The Committee began its work on young people's pathways by surveying young people between 15 and 24 in Spring 2018. The broad purpose of the survey was to assess what information and options young people felt were available to them in the senior phase. The Committee was aware of the long-standing societal issue of parity of esteem between academic and vocational pathways. The Committee wanted to assess through the survey the extent to which university is promoted to young people over and above other options. Linked to this, the Committee was considering undertaking inquiry work on the progress of the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) programme that has been in existence since 2014. One of its aims is ensuring that pathways other than university are available and highlighted to young people.
2. The Committee agreed that it would base its inquiry on the issues raised by young people in response to the survey. The survey received nearly 900 responsesⁱ. One question posed was about what option young people get the most information about at school. This question was intended to assess whether all options available to young people are being highlighted to them without bias towards particular options.
3. Just over 60 per cent of young people felt that they were told more about university than other post-school options. The survey was answered by those aged 15-24. As such capturing views from those aged 21 and over; who would not have been affected by DYW activity which commenced in 2014. To consider this point, Table 1 looks at the responses to this question, by young people in different age bands: 15-17 years; 18-20 years; and 21-24 years.

Table 1: Information about post-school options

Which of these were you told more about at school than the others?	Age bands: Total			
	15-17	18-20	21-24	Total
How to find a job	7.8%	3.8%	4.1%	5.7%
How to get into college	20.8%	16.5%	9.2%	15.8%
How to get into university	42.6%	66.5%	78.2%	60.1%
How to get onto a training programme	5.1%	0.5%	1.7%	3.0%
Same amount of information about all options	23.7%	12.6%	6.8%	15.5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

An extract of the SPICe analysis of the survey results relating to this question states:

ⁱ Over two thirds of respondents (70%) were female; while 28% were male; and 2% reported their gender as non-binary. The vast majority (89%) attended a mainstream state school. Responses were received from people living in all ten SIMD deciles. Responses were received from people living in all 32 local authority areas. People living in the two largest urban areas of Scotland, Edinburgh and Glasgow, were most likely to complete the survey.

” Table 1 shows that there was a difference in the responses to this question depending on the age of the respondent. Those aged 15-17 years were the least likely to say that they were told most about university (42.6%ⁱⁱ), while around two thirds of those aged 18-20 years (66.5%) and almost four in five (78.2%) of those aged 21-24 years felt that they were told most about university. This does suggest that younger respondents recognise being told about a wider range of options than their slightly older peers.

Source: Scottish Parliament Information Centre, [Education and Skills Committee survey analysis](#) (May 2018)

4. The survey shows that university remains the option that the biggest proportion of young people are likely to hear more about at school. However, it also suggests that a young person attending school at present, is less likely to receive information with an emphasis on university than was previously the case. It is reasonable to assume that progress of the DYW programme is a contributing factor in this shift. The survey also asked young people why they felt they were told about specific post-school options.

” ...over two thirds of respondents to this question (67.3%) agreed with the statement: “it was what the school thought most people would do next”. Fewer agreed that they were told more about specific post-school options because “it was the option school thought would be best for me” (38.5%). And only one in five agreed that they were told about specific options because: “the school knew this was the option I was most interested in” (20.7%).

Source: Scottish Parliament Information Centre, [Education and Skills Committee survey analysis](#) (May 2018)

5. The Committee agreed to undertake a piece of work in direct response to issues raised by young people in the survey, specifically to analyse the progress being made by two of the Developing the Young Workforce programme (DYW) recommendations that related to the senior phase. These are:

ii Although it remained the most popular option cited by young respondents (aged 15-17), far more than how to get into college (20.8%) or that they received the same amount of information about all the above options (23.7%).

” Senior Phase Vocational Pathways

Recommendation 1: Pathways should start in the Senior Phase which leads to delivery of industry recognised vocational qualifications alongside academic qualifications. Those pathways should be developed and delivered in partnerships with colleges and, where necessary, other training providers. Their delivery should be explicitly measured and published alongside other school performance indicators.

Preparing Young People for the World of Work

Recommendation 2: A focus on preparing all young people for employment should form a core element of the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence with appropriate resource dedicated to achieve this. In particular, local authorities, Skills Development Scotland and employer representative organisations should work together to develop a more comprehensive standard of careers guidance which would reflect the involvement of employers and their role and input.

Source: Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, [Education Working For All](#) (June 2014)

6. The Committee's work in this area was informed by written views received from organisations and individuals. All written submissions are available on the inquiry [website](#). This includes views of bodies representing employers, teachers, parents and young people. Informal work included a focus group with Young Women Lead and a visit to Shetland where the Committee heard from young people, school and college staff, local authority representatives, local businesses and third sector organisations. *Official Reports* of all oral evidence sessions are also available on the website. The Committee heard from the key delivery agencies, including Education Scotland and Skills Development Scotland. The Committee also heard from Sir Ian Wood, the Chair of the Commission that produced the Developing the Young Workforce recommendations. The Committee closed the inquiry with evidence from Jamie Hepburn MSP, the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills.
7. The Committee wishes to thank all those that provided views in writing and in person to the inquiry. The Committee would also like to thank YouthLink Scotland, YoungScot and the Scottish Youth Parliament for helping to design and promote the survey that led to this inquiry being undertaken.

Membership changes

8. The Committee's membership changed between the start of the inquiry and report publication. Ruth Maguire MSP was replaced by Gordon MacDonald on 7 June 2018. George Adam MSP, James Dornan MSP (previously the Convener), Richard Lochhead MSP, Gillian Martin MSP were all replaced as members on 6 September 2018 by Clare Adamson MSP (new Convener), Alasdair Allan MSP, Jenny Gilruth MSP and Rona Mackay MSP. Mary Fee MSP was replaced by Iain Gray MSP on 3 November 2018.

Developing the Young Workforce

9. The Scottish Government established the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce in January 2013, chaired by Sir Ian Wood. Building better relationships between industry, schools and colleges was a key priority for the Commission "both to enhance the quality of the education experience and provide better knowledge of careers and the workplace, as well as offering more young people employment straight out of education".¹
10. The report from the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce (DYW) was published in June 2014 and was entitled 'Education Working for All!' ("the Wood report").¹ In December 2014, the Scottish Government published its response to the Wood report, setting out its commitment to improving youth employment through reforms to both the education and skills systems in Scotland. The Youth Employment Strategy: Developing Scotland's Young Workforce is an overarching youth employment strategy including specific activities that would be taken forward to meet the recommendations in the Wood report. Specifically, its response to the recommendations stated:

” In setting out our initial response to the report, the Scottish Government committed to its headline target to reduce youth unemployment by 40 per cent by 2021. We have also, in line with the Commission's proposed approach, developed 11 key performance indicators reflecting those areas where we particularly need to focus our efforts.

Source: Scottish Government, [Youth Employment Strategy](#) (December 2014)
11. The 11 key performance indicators (KPIs) are complemented by a number of milestones across the five themes that frame the work being taken forward by the Scottish Government and its partners. The Scottish Government reports annually on progress of the DYW programme, which is a 7 year programme running from 2014 to 2021. The most recent Scottish Government [progress report \(for 2016/17\)](#) reported the achievement of the programme's headline target, to reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021, as having been achieved four years ahead of schedule. Official statistics show that youth unemployment in Scotland, excluding those in full-time education, had reduced from 52,000 in 2014 to 27,000 in 2017.
12. Terry Lanagan from the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) set out the scale of the challenge of implementing all DYW programme recommendations but also the positive work underway:

” The one point that I want to stress is that we are just past the halfway point in a seven-year programme of significant ambition. If the DYW programme's aims are achieved and the recommendations in the Wood commission report, “Education working for all: developing Scotland's young workforce”, are overtaken, we will have successfully transformed Scottish society, including the relationships between schools, employers and colleges and the preparedness of our young people for the world of work. Scotland has been struggling with that agenda during the entire time that I have been involved in education. For the first time, we are seeing real progress towards achieving those goals.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 06 June 2018, Terry Lanagan (Association of Directors of Education in Scotland), contrib. 6²

13. DYW focuses on improving links between schools, vocational training and industry. Since 2014 work has included the establishment of:
- the Career Education Standard and the Work Placements Standard setting out the resources, including professional support and online resources, that young people should receive in the senior phase
 - My World of Work, an online tool to support career decisions and planning
 - senior phase vocational pathways from the senior phase in all colleges
 - increasing numbers of vocational pathways from school (7,000 anticipated by 2019-20)
 - increasing numbers of foundation apprenticeships, the aim being to provide up to 5,000 in academic year 2019/20
 - Marketplace, an online tool helping businesses engage with schools and colleges
 - governance at a local level, with 21 DYW regional groups covering the whole of Scotland
 - governance at a national level including an advisory group, a programme board and the 'National Invest in Young People Group'
 - monitoring mechanisms including an annual progress report by the Scottish Government
14. DYW is now four years through a 7 year programme. Therefore the Committee is seeking to scrutinise progress of a programme that is still in the process of implementation. James Russell from Skills Development Scotland highlighted to the Committee, in relation the DYW work specifically on foundation apprenticeships, that the Committee should not expect to see linear progress against KPIs and other targets for DYW:

” I assume that everybody will be familiar with exponential curves in change programmes. You get the foundations in place; you build the networks and partnerships; and you understand what works and what does not. That gives you an opportunity to scale at a pace that is different from when you are trying to build the foundations.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 26 September 2018, James Russell, contrib. 53³

15. The intentions of the Developing the Young Workforce programme received wide support in 2014 and evidence to the Committee confirmed that this support remains. Much progress has been made towards implementing recommendations since 2014. The Committee's role has been to ascertain where barriers to progress remain or where the pace of change needs to be increased. This is to ensure that the significant structural and cultural shift required to embed DYW recommendations, such as those related to the senior phase, is achieved.

Parity of esteem

16. Parity of esteem, in the context of young people's pathways, is to value post-school options equally. The desire to achieve parity of esteem in society is a longstanding issue. The Committee is aware that there is an unease about using the terms 'vocational' and 'academic' but in the absence of other widely recognised terms, for ease of reference these terms are used to describe post-school options in this report. In his foreword to the interim report by the Commission, Sir Ian Wood noted the importance of bringing vocational education into line with the high status given to higher education:

” To ensure there is no misunderstanding, we believe Scotland has deservedly an acclaimed higher education sector. This is good news, but not within our remit. What our report is clearly saying is that we must now place the same focus on significantly enhancing our vocational education to achieve the same acclaimed status.¹

17. This section on parity of esteem focuses on the ability to access this vocational education. However, the Committee wishes to highlight from the outset that there are also disproportionate barriers for some to accessing university, for example for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Separate to this inquiry the Committee has undertaken work with a particular focus on widening access to university and continues to monitor the annual progress made by universities and the Government in this area.
18. The [Scottish Government Learner Journey Review](#), a more recent policy initiative with some significant overlaps with DYW, included some qualitative research produced in 2017 by YoungScot and SQW on the experiences of young people. One of the key findings was:

” **Overcoming bias of choices** – young people are aware of biases surrounding different post-school routes. University is positioned as the 'gold standard' for those who achieve well academically, with alternative options and routes rarely considered or discussed with this cohort. Vocational pathways, including apprenticeships and other types of training, were perceived as being a lesser option. Young people said that they would like to be given impartial information on all available pathways in order to make informed choices.

Source: YoungScot and SQW, [Young people's experience of education and training](#) (September 2017)

19. The research was qualitative in nature and highlighted the need for a large-scale quantitative survey to get a sense of the extent of the issues it raised being reflected across Scotland. Some of the answers to the Committee's quantitative survey and also views from the focus group the Committee held with the Young Women Lead group reflected this finding. Below are comments from the Young Women Lead group, made up of young women from across Scotland:

” My teachers didn't push me towards university but I don't really remember there being any other options discussed for what we would do for when we left school. There wasn't anything obvious but there was definitely a very subtle emphasis on the grades that you get at school and where these could take you. I worked hard at school and followed the path that was expected of me by going to study law at university. Once I was at university, it quickly became clear that this wasn't something that was for me and I experienced severe stress. (18 year old from Young Women Lead, extract of a case study to promote the Committee's survey)

The first comment was from a young woman in S4 at school who suggested that they had decided through consulting friends and parents that they wanted to go to college and raised this with the school as an option. It was not an option that had been covered at school and when the young woman sought advice the school suggested remaining at school was the best option...She said the reason she was still at school was because she does not know what to do next.

Another young woman had completed S5 and had been strongly encouraged to stay at school through S6 and go on to university. She suggested that most of her teachers told her to stay on at school and get more advanced Highers. However after work experience with MSPs she had decided she wanted some more life experience before she decides on a university course and goes to university. She heard of adult learning by word of mouth and is now undertaking it. She suggested her school wants 95% of people to go to university so that the school's positive destination statistics will make it an appealing school to attend. Modern apprenticeship information was provided at her school however there could have been more information on the range available.

Source: Education and Skills Committee, [Young Women Lead focus group note](#) (May 2018)

20. There appears in some of the evidence received to be a disconnect between the perceptions of service providers, including schools, and the experiences of young people in relation to parity of esteem of options. The Scottish Guidance Association states in its submission that:

” We were very surprised by the suggestion that schools are putting undue pressure on pupils to apply for university. All the teachers at our meeting agreed that they take an individualised approach, as do their colleagues, and a sustained positive destination that suits the pupil is what is sought.

Source: Scottish Guidance Association, [written submission](#) (June 2018)

21. Evidence from Terry Lanagan from ADES acknowledged the issue of parity of esteem but suggested the situation was improving:

” Historically, in Scotland, we have tended to value academic qualifications and university entry above all else. Changing the culture around anything is the most difficult thing to do.

I will make one point about the feedback from young people. I would argue that the situation is definitely improving and that the balance is beginning to shift to a more equal view of vocational and academic qualifications.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 06 June 2018, Terry Lanagan, contrib. 93⁴

22. A number of submissions and oral evidence highlighted the range of activity being pursued to meet the DYW commitments, the progress that is being made with rolling out activity and the extent of positive partnership working and innovative practice taking place across Scotland. There was also a focus on progress towards encouraging 'parity of esteem' for the various pathways.

23. The Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills was asked whether some young people effectively have the decision made for them on what they will do from school. He responded:

” I would absolutely concede that I have heard the same point made. Young people often feel that they are not given the fullest information that they need to make subject choice decisions that will allow them to proceed through school and get the qualifications that they require for their choice of career, or they are not made aware of the different career options available to them.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 03 October 2018, Jamie Hepburn, contrib. 54⁵

24. The Minister went on to set out what the fundamental aim for DYW is to be in terms of supporting young people:

” The fundamental issue goes back to the culture of our educational environment. It is about ensuring that parents, teachers and young people are all aware of the variety of options and pathways. As the developing the young workforce group in Glasgow said, there is no wrong path. We need to make it very clear early on that each of the options available is of equivalent value to the others.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 03 October 2018, Ross Greer, contrib. 55⁶

” The way I look at it is that we need to ensure that young people are as informed as possible of all the options that they have before them, can make informed decisions and explicitly recognise that each of those options is as valid as the next.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 03 October 2018, Jamie Hepburn, contrib. 50⁷

25. The Committee agrees that the starting point for good decision making is having the necessary information readily accessible on all options to reach an informed view, and quality options to choose between. The results of the Committee's survey show that, while the picture is improving, university is still, more often than not, prioritised in terms of the amount of information that is given to young people on their options. This includes where the option promoted is not reflective of the ambitions of the young people concerned.

26. A key indicator of a culture shift generated from DYW would be if, by the end of the programme, young people consider there is parity of information provision on all the options available to them. The Committee recommends that the Government undertakes a large-scale quantitative survey of young people to seek to establish whether DYW has sufficiently progressed the culture shift towards achieving parity of information on options. The survey should take place by the end of 2021.

Careers Information, Advice and Guidance

One-to-one advice

27. In its [written submission](#), Education Scotland notes that it and SDS have worked closely with partners and stakeholders (young people, parents, employers, school, college and local authority practitioners) to design and develop the Career Education Standard (CES) to address DYW recommendation 2 that focuses on preparing young people for the world of work. The [Career Education Standard](#) (CES) was published in September 2015 along with the [Work Placements Standard](#) and the [Guidance on School/Employer Partnerships](#). The Careers Education Standard intends that:

” ...children and young people will be able to use all of the support available to them from online and other resources and from professional staff in a way that meets their needs. They will better understand the job market and how they can develop their strengths to be successful in developing their careers. The ambition for children and young people set out in this standard will be achieved by real and effective partnership working between parents/carers, local authorities, teachers/practitioners, SDS employers and others.

Source: Education Scotland, [DYW Career Education Standard](#) (September 2015)

28. At the school level, SDS offers direct engagement from professional careers staff in schools. This includes group sessions in S2 or S3 and again in S4 to discuss subject choices and senior phase choices. There is also an entitlement to a one-to-one session in S2 or S3 that is focused on subject choices. Those who need more intensive support also have access to one-to-one coaching guidance one or more times during the period S3 to S6 and advice is also available for those that need support with transitions at S4-S6. The Committee sought information from SDS on the amount of adviser time spent with a young person for one of the one-to-one sessions outlined above. The [response](#) suggests a standard session is around 45 minutes long.
29. In terms of one-to-one delivery of career services each school has a School Partnership Agreement with SDS, which details how that service offer will be delivered across the academic year. The Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) report on careers advisor services, specifically those provided by SDS, reflected that:

- ”
- 84% of students making subject choices in S2/S3 had one-to-one support
 - 80% of S3 pupils with the greatest need received extra one-to-one support

Source: Skills Development Scotland, [Delivering Scotland's Careers Service](#) (September 2018)

30. Committee members spent some time analysing what, in practice, the 'universal offer' for all pupils from SDS constituted and also what young people who are identified as needing more targeted support received. In considering this, a distinction needs to be made between face-to-face advice, which can in practice

mean a presentation to a class of people, and one-to-one advice which should mean a careers adviser and an individual. A distinction must also be made between information and support that is available but needs to be requested by an interested young person and information that is actively offered to all young people as standard.

31. The starting point for requesting advice is being aware of your entitlement to it. The review of the Career Education Standard, Work Placement Standard and guidance on School/Employer Partnerships, published in May 2017 found that:

” Almost all young people have little or no knowledge of the standards. In particular, almost all of them are unaware of their entitlements.

Source: Education Scotland, [Review of the implementation of the Career Education Standard \(3-18\), the Work Placement Standard and Guidance on School/Employer Partnerships](#) (May 2017)

32. It should be noted at this point that while CIAG is delivered by SDS much of the evidence received by the Committee commented on careers guidance in schools in general. This evidence does not always differentiate between SDS or school staff as the source of advice. The wider role of schools in supporting young people is considered in more detail later in this report.

33. The National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFs) suggested that SDS advisors should be involved in schools at an earlier point. Colleges Scotland's submission noted the importance of the stage at which advice is received

” school pupils require better information advice and guidance about the pathways available to them, and at an earlier stage than they currently receive it.

Source: National Parent Forum of Scotland, [written submission](#) (May 2018)

34. Views of young people to the inquiry have also highlighted a desire for careers advice at an earlier stage. For example, during a focus group session with young women, the following suggestions were made:

” A second young woman in S4 suggested they had received guidance in PSE on how to write a CV. She said you get much more information in S5 but this information should be provided earlier as selecting subject choices should be more linked to the consideration of information on future career choices. They added that websites were shown to them during Personal and Social Education lessons and the young people are required to navigate this information themselves.

A young woman whose job involves speaking to young people about the option of university suggested there is a wide variety of responses when she asks what advice and support has been received. This ranges from people who have not had any conversation or information about their future at school to people who have received lots of support and advice. She also suggested that advice should happen before 5th year to ensure it feeds into subject choices and that it should not just be about destinations, but the logistics of how to get yourself there. She considers that careers advice needs to be multifaceted and holistic - with information about different options, realistic financial advice and practical application support.

Source: Education and Skills Committee, [Young Women Lead focus group note](#) (May 2018)

35. Both [Education Scotland](#) and [SDS's written submission](#) pointed to the enhanced career information, advice and guidance on offer in all secondary schools for the start of 2016-17, including earlier intervention for young people at the P7/S1 transition stage, at S2 and S3 and enhanced support at S3 for those that need it. This reflects an increased focus on early interventions. However, in the 15-24 Learner Journey Review (Stage 1 report) five recommendations are presented under the theme of information, advice and support. These highlight the need for "greater levels of personal support". The aim being:

” ...for young people to understand their learning and career choices at the earliest stage and providing long term person-centred support for the young people who need this most.

Source: Scottish Government, [15 to 24 Learner Journey Review phase one: analysis](#) (March 2018)

36. SDS witnesses were asked about the results of its senior phase survey work on careers guidance, in particular the difference in percentage ratings about how the careers adviser came across (90% presented as friendly and approachable) versus the guidance received (70% being happy with both their ability to access support and the support that they accessed).
37. When asked why one in five young people has that 'gap in experience' James Russell from SDS explained the difference as in part relating to a desire for more one-to-one guidance than had been provided. This suggests, along with other pieces of evidence outlined above, that there is an appetite among young people for personal advice exceeding that offered to them:

” When we drill down into the survey, we see that the results for universal customers—those who are receiving only the face-to-face engagement or the subject choice one-to-one—is starkly different from the results for those who are receiving targeted support. We often find that the satisfaction of those young people who receive the universal support drops because they are not getting more, but we are obviously limited in the services that we deliver. We deliver against the expectations in the letter of guidance and through the CIAG strategy. With our resources, we deliver what I feel is the right mixture of services.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 26 September 2018, James Russell, contrib. 87⁸

38. The availability of one-to-one advice was pursued with the Minister. In particular the barriers faced by young people of not being aware of their entitlement to one to one advice and not feeling comfortable actively requesting such advice. The suggestion was that those most in need may be least likely to ask for help and this could compound disadvantage. The Minister highlighted a planned review of careers information in the Programme for Government and stated that:

” I would be very happy to take on board the specific points that you raised, although I would want them to be evidenced. I agree that we need to make sure that the young people who most need the information and advice feel confident enough to ask for it. Of course, that should involve reminding them that they are entitled to ask for it, and if that is not happening we need to look at why. We need to make sure that our systems work. I have spoken several times now about making sure that young people are as informed as possible, and ultimately the fact that they are entitled to this form of guidance has to be part of the information that is relayed to them.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 03 October 2018, Jamie Hepburn, contrib. 68⁹

39. The Committee sought [supplementary information from SDS](#) on this issue. The response included details of the percentage of young people in the senior phase who are targeted for one-to-one support that involved coaching guidance (96% in 2017/18). The percentage in the senior phase with the 'minimum service offer' receiving this advice and guidance is (21.1%). This appears to demonstrate a notable disparity in the level of support provided, between those targeted for support and those expected to seek it for themselves.
40. Quality one-to-one advice is often the form of support that has real impact for young people reaching difficult decisions on what path to take. The evidence received by the Committee reflects the value young people place on advice and the influence it can have on their decision making. The Committee considers that a high standard of advice is that which is offered without a person needing to ask or seek it out, in a setting that respects the personal nature of these discussions, with sufficient time available for in-depth conversations. It also needs to be backed up by additional advice available on a responsive basis whenever someone is grappling with difficult decisions about what to do next.
41. The Committee acknowledges that CIAG has advanced the quantity of careers advice received by young people in the senior phase, and appreciates that the resources available to SDS must be a key factor in the overall amount its staff can offer. However, the Committee's evidence demonstrates that some young people still feel they have not received any careers guidance or that what they received was insufficient. The evidence suggests a variability in provision of advice between schools and an appetite from young people for more personal advice and support. While the amount of advice available is clearly increasing, demand for one-to-one advice clearly exceeds supply.
42. The Committee welcomes the Scottish Government's review of careers information as an opportunity to further improve provision of one-to-one careers advice. The Committee considers that, now that SDS has completed much of the work establishing elements of the DYW structure, its resources should be redeployed to increase its focus on the provision of one-to-one advice for young people. The Committee recommends that the Government makes clear, including in its next letter of guidance to SDS, and in associated funding allocations, that a key priority for SDS in schools is increasing the provision of high quality and sustained advice.

43. The Committee considers the careers information review should focus on increasing the level of advice available on a universal basis and also to target groups. To ensure mutual understanding of what young people want and need from careers advice, young people should be central to this review. Any changes that need to be developed, for example to expand the 'universal offer', should be co-designed with young people. Finally, the review should seek the views of young people as to whether they require careers advice at an earlier stage, and in what form.

Online resources

44. My World of Work is the main digital mechanism for online delivery of careers advice both at school and beyond. It offers various online tools to support career decisions and planning. The Committee received mixed evidence as to how useful young people found it, with a number suggesting it was very helpful. Examples from Shetland focus groups included:

” *MyWorldofWork* was praised for CV support and giving ideas to one of the apprentices. Another said it was not very helpful, it depended what career you wanted to focus on. (Focus group of apprentices)

MyWorldofWork was considered to be a useful tool because staff had been trained on it and promoted it to parents at dedicated parents' evenings where parents could have a go. However, the search engine was criticised as requiring very specific often slightly unpredictable wording to find different roles. (Focus group of Anderson High School students)

Source: Education and Skills Committee, [focus group notes from visit to Shetland](#) (June 2018)

45. [Dr Pete Robertson's submission](#) noted that the current reliance on online service delivery is useful for reaching the wider Scottish population and offers a pragmatic response to resource constraints. He caveated this by highlighting American research suggesting that individual face-to-face guidance is the most effective way to support young people to make careers choices. [EIS](#) also highlighted concern about the impact of the 'erosion' of face-to-face contact between pupils and careers guidance staff in favour of online career platforms such as My World of Work.
46. The 15-24 Learner Journey Review recommended that every learner in Scotland has an online learner account to link their skills and attributes to better course choices by the start of 2019. This was described as “a greatly improved digital experience, building on and extending My World of Work”.¹⁰ Related to this, SDS's submission stated:

” ...we will further enhance My World of Work to link fully with existing digital services in schools. This will deliver an online learner account that enables learners to record their attributes, skills and qualifications in a way that follows them beyond school and helps them plan their learner journey into work.

Source: Skills Development Scotland, [written submission](#) (May 2018)

47. When asked about the potential risk of increasing digital exclusion by increasing the emphasis on online resources, Euan Duncan from the Scottish Guidance Association noted that anyone with access to a mobile phone or the internet can gain access to the tools on offer through My World of Work.¹¹

48. In its submission to the Committee's recent inquiry into attainment and achievement of school-aged children experiencing poverty, YouthLink Scotland highlighted increased access to school and community premises for learners out of usual school hours. This was recognised as offering learners opportunities to get access to a reliable internet connection and IT equipment. Their submission highlighted that:

” ...we cannot assume that young people living in poverty have digital access; and increasingly class content, advice and support is being communicated via digital education platforms and social media.

Source: YouthLink Scotland, [written submission](#) - submissions pack, page 243 (April 2018)

49. The response from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to the inquiry report, where digital exclusion was highlighted as an issue, stated:

” The Scottish Government considered socio-economic circumstances in our Equalities Impact Assessment when developing the Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy (DLT) in 2016. It noted the potential negative impact of increasing use of digital and made sure that the strategy sets an expectation on schools/LAs that all pupils have equity of access to digital when in school. The scope of the DLT Strategy does not extend to digital access outside of school. [emphasis added]

Source: Scottish Government, [response](#) to Education and Skills Committee report on Attainment and Achievement of School Aged Children Experiencing Poverty (11 September 2018)

50. The Committee appreciates the merits of the Learner Journey Review recommendation on enhancing what is currently available for all young people online through My World of Work by creating a more sophisticated tailored online account. However, the Committee considers that there may be potential for digital exclusion as young people are likely to want to access online resources on their future options during free time outside school. Those without a smart phone or internet access at home could be at a disadvantage. Given one of the central aims of DYW was to support 'the neglected 50%', work to progress online resources must take the potential for digital exclusion into account.

51. The Committee considers that the value of one-to-one advice exceeds that of online resources particularly for some target groups such as disadvantaged young people who often require the most support. This can include those living in low income households that do not have digital access outside school. Progressing personal online accounts for young people, however sophisticated, will not have the same impact on certain target groups as one-to-one advice. The Committee recommends that where there are funding or other resource allocation decisions to be made between progressing online work and increasing one-to-one advice, there should be a significant weighting towards one-to-one provision.

The role of parents and carers

52. Parents, carers and guardians have a major influence on young people's perceptions and understanding of the relative merits of different career paths. Where references are made to parents in this section, it should be taken to include parents and carers. Sir Ian Wood highlighted parents as the most influential group in influencing a young person's perspective on which route they are able to take or should take from the senior phase.¹²
53. NPFS's submission noted that the Career Education Standard includes expectations on parents. It also highlighted the importance of ensuring parents are informed of the benefits of alternative paths in education given the influential role they play in decision-making. [Research from the Progressive Partnership](#) commissioned by the Scottish Government and SDS, published in January 2018, found that parents and carers had a relatively limited understanding about the range of post-school options facing current school leavers with little understanding of the detail of the different options available. University and college were the most well understood, and most preferred routes.
54. The Committee's visit to Shetland College, including a focus group with staff, captured similar observations:

” On *parity of esteem*, one member of the group suggested that schools were measured on their successes and on that basis they prioritised university, including to parents... Another attendee agreed and also suggested that it was hard for parents as routes other than university can seem complicated. It was highlighted that some parents visiting the college are so pleased when they realise their son/daughter can do a year in college then on to university in second year. College staff considered that apprenticeships should have a bigger appeal, not least because of the financial pressure of university compared to an apprenticeship, but parents, it was suggested, do not necessarily know this.

Source: Education and Skills Committee, [focus group notes from visit to Shetland](#) (June 2018)

55. University was often cited in evidence as the option that is most tangible, that most parents and carers are most familiar with and that has the least complex application process. The newer less traditional routes are many and varied making them more time consuming to come to understand. As highlighted below in the section on performance of DYW work against KPIs, there are five major groupings of qualification type for vocational pathways. The SCQF Partnership reported that there is a wealth of programmes other than Foundation Apprenticeships that are recognised on the Scottish Credits and Qualifications Framework. Its submission outlined how these contribute to developing vocational pathways for young people and suggested that more needs to be done to promote these. For example the NPFS highlighted the lack of awareness around National Progression Awards (NPAs), stating that:

- ” Unfortunately, they do not seem to be promoted or made use of enough. In a recent group of 23 parents from different local authorities across Scotland, only one parent was aware of NPAs.

Source: National Parent Forum of Scotland, [written submission](#) (May 2018)

56. DYW activity cited in evidence reflects many and varied efforts to broaden awareness of other options, including marketing campaigns. The Minister highlighted the presence of SDS at parents evenings on an increasingly frequent basis to highlight the options available. NPFS stated:
- ” We are heartened to hear of some schools involving SDS advisors at parents' evenings from S1. However, many NPFS volunteers have said that although career opportunities are being highlighted more frequently in schools, particularly the promotion of apprenticeships, this tends to be focused in years S5 and S6. This is not early enough.
- Source: National Parent Forum of Scotland, [written submission](#) (May 2018)
57. In terms of timing, orientation towards certain pathways from school often starts early, at primary school age, meaning early experience of different learning and employment environments is important. Examples in evidence included open days at a college or a particular employer to help young people envisage their options. Sir Ian Wood spoke of the importance of this process from S1, suggesting certain routes have often been dismissed as options later in secondary school when careers advice is offered and choices require to be made.¹²
58. Following this logic parents should be receiving details of the options that will become available to their children from this earlier stage too, to ensure their input to influential discussions with their children reflects the most up to date range of options. However, the Committee does not underestimate the scale and complexity of the task of conveying an increasingly wide variety of pathways to parents in enough depth that their respective values are fully understood.
59. The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills announced in August 2018 *Learning together: Scotland's national action plan on parental involvement, parental engagement, family learning and learning at home 2018 – 2021*. The purpose section of the action plan states: "parents are the primary educators of children." "We would like to see further involvement of parents in meaningful ways from the beginning of key processes...".¹³ The plan covers early years up to age 18 and has £350,000 funding associated with it. To ensure career paths are positioned as an important part of young people's learning at school, the Committee considers that work on promotion of an understanding of vocational pathways could usefully be incorporated into work on the national action plan.
60. Parents and carers are key influences for young people, and it is apparent that most do not have sufficient information on post-school options other than university. The level of awareness raising work targeted at parents should reflect the level of importance and influence of parents when young people are deciding which path to take. In the absence of a systematic delivery of information on less traditional options, university will, understandably, remain the most well

understood post-school option, and therefore the logical next step. The form of information and support provided to parents should focus on the benefits of the less recognised pathways, including vocational pathways, in recognition of their variety and complexity. Information on career pathways should be provided to parents at a sufficiently early stage.

61. The Committee recommends the Scottish Government explores the extent to which implementation of the National Action Plan on parental involvement in their children's learning could usefully include further work to assist parental involvement in careers advice.

The role of schools

62. SDS careers advice receives focus earlier in the report, however the priority a school as a whole places on DYW and the resources dedicated by school staff is central to the effective delivery of DYW in schools. This includes the role of schools in providing pastoral care, careers guidance and also in being part of the establishment of vocational pathways in the senior phase. The challenges faced by schools in achieving this are explored further below.
63. Colleges Scotland was of the view that the current offer to school pupils is "variable and inconsistent" across the country.¹⁴ The reasons for this include: the complexity of timetabling; the value placed on vocational education and training by the school; the school's relationship with their local employers; and the school's relationship with their local college.
64. James Russell from SDS stated in evidence to the Committee in relation to careers advice:

” The point was made earlier that delivery of career information, advice and guidance services does not lie solely with SDS. Teachers are required to be engaged in that, using the same methodology. A lot of our focus is on building capacity to embed career management skills into the curriculum so that there is a common thread that runs through the support that a young person gets and the language that careers advisers use as well as the support and the language that the teacher is using.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 26 September 2018, James Russell, contrib. 85¹⁵

65. Education Scotland pointed to the steady progress that is being made with implementing the Career Education Standard, with work ongoing to support its implementation. Information on the consistency of implementation was contained in the May 2017 Education Scotland report: Review of the implementation of the Career Education Standard (3-18), the Work Placement Standard and Guidance on School/Employer Partnerships. The report noted considerable variation in the progress made by schools in using the career education and work placement standards and guidance, and incorporating these into the curriculum and learning and teaching approaches. It also noted that the offer of work-based learning pathways in schools varies significantly, including how well teaching and pastoral staff promote different opportunities (e.g. college programmes, Foundation Apprenticeships and Modern Apprenticeships) to parents and young people.¹⁶
66. ADES noted in its submission: “the challenge now is to ensure that the recommendations contained in the three documents are implemented consistently across the country.”¹⁷
67. The focus group held by the Committee with Young Women Lead captured a range of different experiences and comments reflecting this variation in approach in schools. There was support in the group with the proposition that the variation of experience of young people of careers advice was largely down to the personality of the school staff. In relation to careers advice one woman suggested:

” ...we talk about schools speaking to pupils but in reality it is individuals speaking to individuals so there is a big inconsistency.

Source: Education and Skills Committee, [Young Women Lead focus group note](#) (May 2018)

68. Submissions received to the Committee were positive about the policy intentions of DYW, including its requirements on schools. However there were a number of themes in evidence about how implementation is working in practice in schools. For example, Connect's submission notes:

” While DYW is embraced by many as a concept, the reality is somewhat different from the vision; again, this is due to lack of clear direction and leadership so that the entitlements young people have (e.g. career guidance) have no equivalence to the requirement for exam passes and a 'positive destination'. Skills Development Scotland has no authority to push change through our school system or make schools take cognisance of the market intelligence held regarding future workforce requirements. A small number of individual schools have implemented creative approaches and some local authorities have produced positive policies and working models in an attempt to shift practice in schools, but a search of the National Improvement Hub demonstrates how limited and early-stage these approaches are.

Source: Connect, [written submission](#) (May 2018)

69. Connect suggested that a lack of leadership and clear direction in relation to delivery of DYW in schools impacts on the ability to deliver change. The submission also highlighted other priorities to be delivered by schools such as achieving qualifications and positive destinations for leavers. Similar points were made by the Scottish Guidance Association which stated that:

- ”
- DYW is a huge undertaking in practice - there is a need for a consistent approach within schools regarding this. For example some schools have new posts for DYW, and in others, it appears to be added on to existing remits.
 - National frameworks are needed to implement the suggested strategies - the continual push of new strategies is currently having a demoralising effect on staff who are unable to keep pace due to the increasing demands of the role.

Source: Scottish Guidance Association, [written submission](#) (June 2018)

Resources

70. A clear theme in evidence focussed on schools is the impact of resource limitations on delivery, as well as the need to also deliver other policy priorities. Submissions from both the EIS and [SSTA](#) suggested that additional resources are needed in schools to enable careers guidance teams to work more effectively. EIS stated:

” It has been clear to the EIS from the outset that the ambitions of DYW cannot be delivered with existing levels of resource. The reductions in terms of careers service delivery cannot be compensated by schools in which teacher workload has for some time been at an unsustainably high level. Both the careers service and secondary schools, especially Pupil Support/ Guidance teams in relation to this agenda, require additional staffing resource in order to address fully the aspirations of DYW.

Source: EIS, [written submission](#) (May 2018)

71. This view was shared by Dr Pete Robertson who noted that the level of guidance and pupil support at Scottish schools has reduced post-McCrone “leaving staffing resources for support for career choices competing with the pressing demand for pastoral care”.¹⁸
72. In relation to careers advice SSTA suggested additional teachers were required. Scottish Chambers of Commerce stated: “Protected time for teachers to engage with DYW / employability initiatives was identified as a challenge across many regions”.¹⁹
73. In the first two years of DYW there was specific financial investment (£12 million in 2014-15 and £16.6 million in 2015-16) to enable partners to build capacity and test out new approaches in the development phase of the programme. That budget came to an end, as planned, in financial year 2015-16. Several submissions suggested that there is a need for longer term funding commitments to support implementation of DYW. For example, Head Teacher Louise Moir’s submission states:

” There is the challenge of ensuring that the provision is as cost-effective as possible. Here clarity is required going forwards as to where this funding is going to come from – are schools going to be control over this within already limited budgets or are local authorities going to continue to commit budget to this agenda?

Source: Louise Moir, [written submission](#) (May 2018)

74. In terms of other priorities facing schools, the 2016-17 DYW progress report referred to DYW being framed by the current activity to review educational governance in Scotland. Councillor McCabe, Children and Young People spokesperson for COSLA, highlighted concern that these changes will need to be accompanied by additional resources and efforts to progress DYW, rather than DYW activity being disrupted or displaced by these developments.²⁰
75. Education Scotland’s submission, reflecting its review and inspection activity, highlighted good progress on vocational pathways and stated that “most secondary schools in the sample were developing flexible learning pathways in the senior phase. Almost all reported increasing partnerships which are supporting this work”.²¹ However, Education Scotland also noted that “time and staff availability” can be a constraint in making DYW happen. The findings of the review of the Career Education Standard, Work Placement Standard and guidance on School/Employer Partnerships included:



- Senior staff in all schools were aware of the standards and most were working to embed them. However, almost all subject staff in secondary schools do not yet use the standards to inform their teaching or the development of the curriculum.¹⁶

76. The Minister told the Committee that a planned pilot in Glasgow would have a member of school staff that is not a teacher taking on primary responsibility for overseeing DYW in each secondary school.²² All teachers however have a role in DYW if it is to be meaningfully integrated into curriculum for excellence. In addition, guidance teachers have an additional importance as the staff primarily responsible for providing pastoral care. The caseload of guidance teachers has a bearing on their ability to provide support to individual pupils and the Committee was concerned to note evidence from Phase 2 of the Scottish Government's PSE review reflecting an average caseload for guidance teachers of 200 pupils with caseloads as high as 280 being cited.²²
77. The Committee has considered the evidence on progress of DYW in schools, in the context of evidence it has heard throughout this parliamentary session on the pressures experienced by schools, including wider workload and resource issues. It has also been mindful that implementation of the DYW programme is taking place at the same time as the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence and policy initiatives including changes to education governance, the roll-out of Pupil Equity Funding and widening access.
78. At a time of teacher shortages in some areas and subjects, the time available for continuous professional development, including focussing on DYW, can be constrained. Based on this context, the Committee is unsurprised to hear from Education Scotland that while senior management understand and support the principle of embedding DYW, it remains very much a work in progress to assimilate the programme recommendations into day to day life of all secondary schools at classroom level.²³

79. The Committee recognises the considerable amount of positive work being undertaken at school level towards DYW implementation. The Committee considers that realistic expectations for this work should be placed on schools at the present time given the resource constraints highlighted in evidence to the Committee, and the multiple policy initiatives schools are implementing at the present time. In this context, fresh consideration needs to be given to the adequacy of available funding and staff time for schools given their key role in the delivery of DYW. The Committee reiterates its view from its previous inquiry reports that a continued emphasis on reducing teacher workload is vital.
80. The Committee recommends that the expectation that resourcing for DYW will be met from school core funding should be revisited to assess:
 - whether it is realistic that DYW can be fully implemented in schools by 2021; and
 - whether the expectation DYW will be met from core funding diminishes the likelihood of a focus on implementing DYW in the longer term.

Performance indicators

81. A theme of contributions from young people to one question in the Committee's survey was the suggestion that schools still prioritise the promotion of university as an option because the school's performance is assessed on how many of its students go to university. The Committee's survey, as cited above, found that most people believed they were told the most about a particular option because 'it was what the school thought most people would do next'. A number of the respondents chose to give their own reasons for why they were told more about one option than the others. The full range of comments is listed at Annexe C of the survey analysis. The information provided indicates that many felt that university was prioritised at the expense of other options. 10 of over 60 comments indicating this are detailed below:

” My school did not have any support for pupils like me who wanted to leave school early - Teachers were not interested unless you were staying on to complete Highers

[Uni] was expected of us all - school was a bit of an exam factory and lots of pressure to get all As and go to uni because of the fees

From what I understood there was definitely a push from the school to get as many pupils into further education as possible, which in some cases was not helpful for all students.

It was what the school wanted most people to do so that they would look better in performance tables.

More interested in children going to Uni - I didn't know what I wanted to do so no help given

I believe the school were interested in their school leavers statistics, trying to increase the number of students they sent off to higher education in order to better their rating.

The school administration wanted to be able to have favourable statistics that showed their students went to university.

I feel my school was more concerned with how good they look on paper than helping signpost students into different directions. University was presented as the next natural progression and did not give a great deal of support, if any, to students seeking employment, apprenticeships or college places.

They seemed to focus on it more and if you needed help with finding a job or applying to college it was up to you to seek the correct members of staff (as opposed to the information about university being a whole year assembly)

The school was focused on their stats and reputation - they needed to get a higher percentage of their students into university than the other local schools.

Source: SPICe, analysis of [Education and Skills Committee survey - annexe C](#) (May 2018)

82. DYW recommendations acknowledged that setting performance indicators on vocational pathways alongside other performance indicators would aid the status

given to these pathways by schools. Recommendation 1 stated that senior phase vocational pathways should be "explicitly measured and published alongside other school performance indicators". Sir Ian Wood reflected the need for this focus in evidence to the Committee on the Commission's initial work:

” We visited a lot of schools, in which we were very well received and looked after. In essence, the first 10 minutes of those visits was taken up with the schools telling us all about their academic achievements and how well they were doing in, for example, achieving 80 per cent higher passes.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 13 June 2018, Sir Ian Wood, contrib. 3²⁴

83. In response to a question on the progress of developing the performance indicators under recommendation 1, Joan Mackay from Education Scotland stated:

” It is quite a mixed picture at the moment. We work with data from a range of sources. We look at the data that the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council has to tell us about the trajectory and how the take-up of vocational pathways is going. We do not have all that information in one place yet, so it is a work in progress—we know that we need to bring that together. We are testing that out at school level at the moment and during this year, so we will be able to come back with more information on that.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 26 September 2018, Joan Mackay (Education Scotland), contrib. 6²⁵

” We are timing it with the life of the programme. We had to get to a point at which we were seeing significant progress at school level. We are beginning to see that and, through inspection, we are picking up the story and the narrative of the change, but we have not yet collated the data in one place so that it is easy to make sense of. From the point of view of timescale, I guess that we will not get to that stage until the latter part of the programme. We have just started exploring that work with all our partners.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 26 September 2018, Joan Mackay, contrib. 8²⁶

84. In relation to vocational pathways, Alan Armstrong from Education Scotland then stated:

” I am very comfortable with the progress that we are making. We are talking about a significant change. The senior phase as it is conceptualised is radically different from what was previously in place. Schools have had to take a significant amount of time to look closely at what they were doing and how they were doing it, and to co-design what the offer should be, taking account of their young people.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 26 September 2018, Alan Armstrong, contrib. 10²⁷

85. The experiences of many young people shared with the Committee points to some schools continuing to prioritise university as an option on a blanket basis, as opposed to tailoring to an individual student's preferences. Education Scotland has a crucial role in ensuring schools are prioritising establishing vocational pathways, appreciating their value and highlighting them to students alongside the option of university. Clear leadership in progressing the development of performance indicators on vocational pathways is an important element of this. The work

undertaken by Education Scotland on performance indicators appeared to be at a surprisingly early stage given DYW is 4 years in to a 7 year programme.

86. The production of performance indicators on vocational pathways was central to a DYW recommendation aimed at ensuring vocational pathways from schools are established in a meaningful way. 4 years into the DYW programme, the Committee is frustrated at the distinct lack of progress. In the absence of information collated against performance indicators there is no way of knowing, at secondary school level, the number and form of vocational pathways being provided. There is no way of assessing how individual schools, or different education authorities, are progressing with establishing and promoting different vocational pathways.
87. The Committee requests a detailed update from the Scottish Government and Education Scotland on work towards creating new performance indicators on vocational pathways that are to be measured and published alongside other school performance indicators. The Committee wants to know why performance indicators have not been produced by this stage. The Committee also wants to know what resources have been allocated to this work and which part of Education Scotland is responsible for the delivery of work towards milestones. The Committee requests this update, including a timeline with milestones for delivery, in formal responses to this report from the Scottish Government and Education Scotland.

Personal and Social Education

88. Personal and social education or 'life skills' lessons are often the setting for informing young people about future career and study options. Examples of support offered in this time in schools included young ambassadors speaking on paths they took, employers, colleges and universities visiting schools to deliver talks, coaching sessions and computer time to make the most of the My World of Work website, jobs and careers fairs based at schools.
89. The Committee survey responses show that work experience is the most common support recognised as on offer at school (69.7% of respondents), followed by advice and support on what to do after leaving school (66.3% of respondents). Fewer respondents agreed that their school offered 'life skills' support (47.7% of respondents) or access to additional support services inside or outside school (52.3% of respondents).
90. The [Committee's inquiry into PSE](#) found that the time spent on PSE and the quality of information provided in schools was patchy across Scotland. The time set aside by schools for personal and social education impacts on the time available for discussion and exploration of options from the senior phase. Where insufficient time is set aside for personal and social education, there is an increased chance of insufficient focus being placed on the less well understood future pathways.

91. The Committee has agreed that Personal and Social Education, including the variability in the time it receives in schools, and the importance placed upon it in schools, is a priority for further scrutiny. Once the Scottish Government's PSE review is complete the Committee will undertake further work on this important issue.

Time allocated in school for support with applications

92. One barrier identified to considering options on an equal footing can be the difference in the ease of applying for different routes. Evidence suggested that there is one clear process in place for applying to university which is easier to understand than the processes for applying to different colleges or applying for different roles in employment.
93. Scottish university applications and applications to universities and also colleges in England and Wales take place at the same time in all Scottish secondary schools through the UCAS process. Time is often allocated in class for the completion of UCAS forms. The university application process also starts earlier in the academic year than when college applications or job applications would be made. Scottish colleges do not share the same timescales for applications or the same process.
94. Potentially students who do not want or need to complete the UCAS process may feel like a lesser priority for a school if time is not set aside to focus on their future pathways. There were numerous comments in focus groups and in response to the survey from young people to suggest that some young people did not question whether to apply to university and this may in part be due to the focus in their schools on university applications. The SSTA submission stated:

” The nature of the UCAS application process, which can be quite intensive, we can understand why some young people might feel that university has a particular focus in schools. Each UCAS application takes several hours of work to complete, both from the applicant and the referee, and UCAS deadlines fall before application deadlines for college or training programmes. The first question asked as pupils move into S5 and S6 is who is interested in making an application for university, because a late application is not guaranteed for consideration, and we can see it is entirely possible that it could be construed that university might be a school's first interest. However, by the time they leave school many young people will have already have had the opportunity to experience a range of wider learning opportunities by attending college courses, engaging in work shadowing and work experience, and volunteering. There is strong evidence for this in the wide range of opportunities available in course choice forms shared with parents and pupils in S3, S4 and S5.

Source: SSTA, [written submission](#) (May 2018)

95. SQW and YoungScot research on young people's experiences of education and training indicated that schools have good systems to support young people with completion of university application forms but that the same cannot be said for

those who are undecided or who wish to pursue certain other post-school options.

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96. This was a point picked up by Jennifer Craw, who supported Sir Ian Wood as part of the Commission's work. She noted that systems are long established for schools to support school pupils with processing university applications through UCAS. However, she highlighted that those taking other paths face a more fragmented system, suggesting it is not as easy to navigate the other options; there is no simple system to support them.¹² This perspective was also reflected during discussions with the Shetland DYW regional network.

” In terms of **parity of esteem**, it was widely felt that schools could appreciate more that apprenticeships are as valued as degrees. For example, it was suggested engineering apprenticeships give as good a qualification as university but the pressure is to apply to university. TrainShetland suggested there was little emphasis in schools on how to fill in CVs the emphasis was applications for colleges and universities. It was suggested by another attendee that SDS support CV work sometimes where schools do not provide it. (Shetland DYW regional group focus group note)

Source: Education and Skills Committee, [focus group notes from visit to Shetland](#) (June 2018)

97. The Learner Journey Review has explored in detail the extent to which college processes can be aligned, and agreement has been reached that the form and process applications should follow should be better aligned to prevent students potentially having to become familiar with multiple processes. The possibility of undertaking college applications at the same time, for example to align with the UCAS process for university applications, did not receive overall support during consultation as part of the Review. This was in part a reflection of a desire that the college application processes can remain as flexible as possible, for example to ensure that those who do not get their first choice of a particular college or a university can then apply quickly to a college.

98. The Committee considers that there should be equal support provided in schools for making applications regardless of the route a young person plans to take. The Committee highlights to ADES the potential unintended consequence of the lack of an equivalent to the UCAS process for those going to college or direct into employment. Cohorts of students may feel at a disadvantage, or less of a priority, compared to those who are applying through the UCAS process during lesson time. The Committee recommends that, where resources allow, schools are seeking to ensure that students who do not want to apply to university are also being supported in progressing their career pathways during the lesson time used for the completion of UCAS forms.

Timetabling

99. Evidence received by the Committee suggested that timetabling vocational pathways in an effective way can be challenging. This includes ensuring sufficient time is available for school based subjects such as Highers to be factored into the

timetable effectively whilst ensuring equal importance is given to allocating a meaningful amount of time to a vocational pathway based at a college. Terry Lanagan from ADES set out the extent of the challenge and the positive work underway:

” Essentially, timetablers and headteachers need to change their mindset. The traditional approach to timetabling, especially in the senior phase, was that we offered a young person a menu and they literally chose a course from each column. If their choice did not fit the timetable, that was tough.

When I was working with headteachers and timetablers, I argued that that had to change and we had to start with the individual young person. I said that we had to identify what the young person saw as their plan for their journey through the senior phase and look at how we could accommodate that. That involves not just timetabling, but talking to other schools and colleges and coming up with a system that maximises the choice for young people and the number of young people who get the choices that they want. It is a challenge because it involves a much more difficult approach to timetabling, but it is possible.

As Alison Henderson said, there are many good examples across the country whereby people, often with colleges, have ripped up the timetable as it does not fit the needs of young people, and said, “This is what we need to do.” We need to use good practice to ensure that that approach is rolled out more consistently across the country.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 06 June 2018, Terry Lanagan, contrib. 62²⁹

100. A focus group of staff from Shetland College highlighted the issue of timetabling from a college perspective:

” When asked what the key issue was for college staff a number of staff highlighted timetabling. College staff are part of a group with schools and they liaise throughout the year. College staff did not consider their courses were fully part of **school timetabling** and were keen to become a fully integrated “part of the columns”. One suggestion was a full day in college as opposed to two half days would be easier for the young people and would give the college more dedicated time overall. Two thirds of the group suggested that high schools thought a full day would not be compatible with their processes.

Source: Education and Skills Committee, [focus group notes from visit to Shetland](#) (June 2018)

101. An issue associated with timetabling is the relative ease with which school delivered qualifications such as Highers courses can be accessed. These are normally within the school the young person attends, whereas those undertaking vocational pathways usually need transport to and from school to college and or the relevant employer. This can be a particular issue in rural and island communities (see the relevant section later in this report). The Committee hopes that as DYW continues to embed in schools, there will be an increasing number of vocational courses available where schools are used as the base for this training.

102. The Committee recognises the need for different school timetabling models in distinct areas. The Committee will reflect on this in future work, including taking evidence from schools directly.

Work placements

103. Education Scotland released a Work Placements Standard in September 2015. This provides support and guidance for everyone involved in the process (pupils, parents/carers, school staff and employers). It is important to note that the Standard refers to 'work placements' as opposed to the term 'work experience'. This change of terminology reflects the change in approach to one that is more personalised and flexible, with a greater focus on project based learning whilst in a workplace setting.

104. The value of work placements was highlighted by lots of different young people, and their perspectives reflected the range of benefits people can gain from it. This included: those learning more about what is expected from the workplace; those able to discount certain options or career disciplines that they tried on placements; those identifying the career they wanted to pursue. Some seeking entry to competitive university courses highlighted the need for work experience in the relevant specialism as a pre-requisite of being offered a university place:

” On work experience [one person] suggested more **work experience** would be useful. One highlighted two friends who did not get into university as they did not realise they needed work experience to gain entry to practical courses like physiotherapy. (Shetland focus group with apprentices)

Source: Education and Skills Committee, [focus group notes from visit to Shetland](#) (June 2018)

105. Some young people found that work experience was such a positive experience with a particular employer that work experience led to an apprenticeship with them and/or employment straight from school. No-one sharing experiences with the Committee suggested they did not gain anything at all from work placements that reflected their interests. Numerous young people suggested they would have liked to have undertaken more work placements.

106. Sir Ian Wood made much of the value of offering young people access to work placements during school years. His view was that these opportunities should be multiple, involving several employers and in different roles:

” I do not think that we can give young people too much work experience. We also have to ensure that their educational requirements in school are met, but the more work experience that we can give them, the better. The problem is that only about half of those youngsters get work experience. However, if we had a good system that gave young people three work experiences in different companies and environments, that would be great. Frankly, though, even going to college is helpful because they get to handle plumbing or joinery tools there, for example.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 13 June 2018, Sir Ian Wood, contrib. 78³⁰

107. The value of receiving work placements at an earlier stage than some young people had experienced was also highlighted in evidence:

” The group was also in agreement around the suggestion that **careers guidance** on the basic options and maybe providing experiences for young people should start at a younger age. One attendee suggested that by early teens people have already started to ‘close the door’ on certain options. The attendee from TrainShetland suggested most advice starts in S4 but most young people have already decided. (Shetland DYW regional group focus group)

Source: Education and Skills Committee, [focus group notes from visit to Shetland](#) (June 2018)

108. As is to be expected, the Committee heard a variety of experiences of the value of specific work placements, with some young people, including in rural and island communities, not receiving their preferred placement:

” The students said that it was a first come first served system and they did not know anyone who had got their first choice for their work experience. Some people got a placement which was irrelevant to what they wanted to do. The students all felt that work experience was a good thing as its helps to get a taste of a work environment (Shetland College students).

Source: Education and Skills Committee, [focus group notes from visit to Shetland](#) (June 2018)

109. The potential for young people to participate in work placements and other opportunities that tend to be dictated by the nature of a number of large local employers as opposed to the desires of young people is reflected in the later section on island and rural communities.
110. The Committee also heard, including during its visit to Shetland, that work placements are often secured as a result of young people having useful contacts and connections made with certain employers through their parents. A number of young people suggested they had undertaken work placements courtesy of their parents, including at a parent's place of work. This is one example of where disadvantage can be compounded within schools. Those without parents or others in a position to actively advocate for them may be less likely to secure a suitable work placement. Similarly information on vocational pathways and other opportunities may not be highlighted to the same degree to young people who do not have parents attending parents' evenings. The next section of this report on key performance indicators looks in more detail at the need for targeted support, for example for care experienced young people. The Committee also highlights that those who are not in mainstream education may not necessarily benefit from work placements, for example young people with complex additional support needs. Work placement experiences and other opportunities need to be specifically tailored for these young people.
111. A further aspect of work placements highlighted to the Committee was that the first day of a work placement can be daunting, with young people not knowing exactly what to expect or feeling intimidated arriving in a new environment.

” All the students said they had little or no advice about going into the workplace and what was expected of them. They felt it would be good to having more advice or generalities of working and in the run up to work experience there should be more information and training to improve the experience. (Anderson High School students focus group)

Source: Education and Skills Committee, [focus group notes from visit to Shetland](#) (June 2018)

112. The DYW regional group in Shetland reflected this from an employer perspective:

” On **work experience** one person suggested they were sometimes dismayed at the inability of some young people to attend on time, use good English in writing, look people directly in the eye or dress appropriately. These qualities as well as enthusiasm are more important, they suggested, than qualifications when people are being considered for a job. The idea of more work experience was welcomed as it was seen as a useful way to audition a possible future employee, work experience often leading to an apprenticeship and eventually employment.

Source: Education and Skills Committee, [focus group notes from visit to Shetland](#) (June 2018)

113. Sir Ian Wood suggested in evidence that a short module at school on what employers expect from young people and what the working environment is like might be a useful induction for young people about to begin a work placement.¹² This would help ensure young people arrive prepared for the placement. Given the value placed on work placements the Committee considers that making the most of the time available for a placement is important, and being prepared for it in advance would assist young people and employers.

114. The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government instructs an amendment to the Work Placement Standard to include a module on 'what to expect on work placements'. The Committee seeks further information from the Scottish Government as to whether consideration has previously been given to this proposal made by Sir Ian Wood, including whether any education authorities undertake work of this kind that could be highlighted to others as best practice.

115. The Committee has been particularly focused on the value of work placements for those seeking to leave school in the 'statutory leavers' cohort. This reflects a point raised by SDS, that those who leave school on the statutory date tend to have poorer outcomes than post-statutory leavers. The 15-24 Learner Journey Review similarly highlights that more is needed to ensure the statutory leavers' cohort receive the maximum value from the learning and skills system. Connect in its submission notes on this issue:

- ” For young people with additional support needs and those who are in the group who leave school at the first opportunity (e.g. Christmas leavers) the system is self-evidently failing to deliver.

The impact on the lives of the young people who leave our schools with no adequate destination or long-term prospects, and the cost to society, is simply unacceptable. The answer for many young people in these positions is often multi-layered and involves many partners: where the focus of schools is on qualifications and tariff points, these young people very often fall through the net and support (much less good support) is an after-thought. Even when there is a multi-disciplinary approach taken, the various agencies involved are often under extreme pressure of time and resources, resulting in a quick fix approach.

Source: Connect, [written submission](#) (May 2018)

116. The Committee heard examples, including through its focus group with Young Women Lead, of work placements and other opportunities which could be beneficial and have most impact for target groups such as the statutory leavers cohort which were perhaps not reaching the right people:

- ” A woman whose job included encouraging take up of funded applications on STEM suggested that when she sought from schools individuals to come and hear about funded places, the school did not send people who needed this assistance they sent those most likely to take up and succeed in these places. This approach prevented the harder to reach young people who may not have realise their potential from being reached by her work.

A woman who works in the third sector gave a similar example, where they were 'speed mentoring' young women in S4, S5 and S6 and some schools selected which young people could attend and her view was that this meant that those with lower confidence who would not think they could achieve more did not receive mentoring.

Source: Education and Skills Committee, [Young Women Lead focus group note](#) (May 2018)

117. Given the potential benefit of work placements, Jennifer Craw highlighted in evidence the value of being innovative, generating more by identifying formats that suited employers and also young people. This example highlights that work placements do not have to fit the standard model of one-week during the school year:

” One of the good examples that we shared in the report was Alfie Cheyne’s business, Ace Winches. It was offering work experience on Saturday mornings, which it was able to do because it was open on Saturday mornings. The key thing was to move away from the model of having a young person turn up for just one week of work experience...

...It is an opportunity for them to get to know young people in their region and area—which goes back to how to retain young people in the region and area—and through that they can start to identify future employees. The benefit is mutual. The idea that work experience should be for only one week was not widely seen as best practice. The best companies do more than that, offering opportunities outside school terms and at weekends, although that clearly does not work for all young people.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 13 June 2018, Jennifer Crow, contrib. 107³¹

118. The Committee has heard other encouraging examples of innovative approaches to increasing the availability of work placements. The Young Women Lead focus group highlighted two good examples:

- ”
- a careers adviser from a local school attending a third sector forum to seek work experience for 100 of their school's pupils. This involved a period a week for a year being set aside for tailored work experience. If a pupil does not undertake work experience they have to undertake an additional subject during that year;
 - JET where students request work experience of their choice, subject to availability, and school time on a Friday is used to attend;

Source: Education and Skills Committee, [Young Women Lead focus group note](#) (May 2018)

119. The Committee was struck by the importance placed by young people on practical experience through work placements and the range of benefits work placements, based on young people's preferences, can have. Evidence reflected the fact that early and varied work placements can be of particular importance and value for those who choose to leave school on the statutory date. The Committee recommends that, where it is possible to identify in advance students who are clear that their intention is to leave school at this stage, these young people should be offered an enhanced opportunity for work placements.
120. Where appropriate and practical, young people termed 'statutory leavers' should take priority in opportunities for work experience of their choosing. In addition, SDS and schools should ensure that, where possible, work experience for these students should be in excess of what is provided for in the Work Placements Standard, with the assumption being they will have the chance to undertake at least two work placements.
121. Evidence reflects positive examples of where schools have sought to personalise the placement service, ascertaining when during the week or the school year work placements would suit particular employers and young people. The Committee highlights this good practice to ADES, SDS and the Scottish

Government and encourages the sharing and adoption of this best practice elsewhere.

Key performance indicators

122. The KPIs and milestones for delivery of senior phase DYW recommendations are laid out in the Scottish Government's response to the Wood report. Each year, as part of the annual progress reporting the activity to meet the milestones is reported (along with the KPIs). The 11 key performance indicators (KPIs) are the specific measures that are being tracked over the seven-years of DYW (2014 to 2021). Four of the KPIs are particularly relevant to delivery of the two recommendations that frame this inquiry and progress against them is set out below. As can be seen in the table below, progress is mixed against the 4 KPIs.

KPI 3 - Increase the percentage of school leavers attaining vocational qualifications at SCQF level 5 and above by 2021.	Progress made – from 7.3% to 10.7% between 2013-14 and 2015-16
KPI 6 - Increase the percentage of employers recruiting young people directly from education to 35 per cent by 2018.	No change - figure remained 32% between 2014 and 2016
KPI 10 - Increase the employment rate for young disabled people to the population average by 2021.	Progress fluctuating - the employment rate for young disabled people increased from 35.2% in January–December 2014 to 40.8% for the same period in 2015. It decreased to 35.6% during the same period in 2016.
KPI 11 – Increase positive destinations for looked after children by 4 percentage points per annum resulting in parity by 2021	Not met – the number of looked after children in positive destinations was 71.2% in 2015-16; a total increase of 1.9 percentage points since the baseline figure in 2012-13.

Vocational pathways

123. Recommendation 1 from the DYW report states that: "Pathways should start in the Senior Phase which leads to the delivery of industry recognised vocational qualifications alongside academic qualifications..."¹
124. Senior Phase Vocational Pathways (SPVPs), including Foundation Apprenticeships, form the basis of the formal response to Recommendation 1. SPVPs are available in all local authorities and colleges. However, the type varies between regions. In its submission to this inquiry, Scottish Funding Council (SFC) showed that in 2016/17 there were five major groupings of qualification type:
1. Skills for Work (1,978 enrolments)
 2. National Progression Awards (1,423)
 3. National Certificate Awards (455)
 4. Higher National Certificates (mostly in Edinburgh, Forth Valley, West Lothian and Tayside) (349)
 5. Scottish Vocational Qualifications (294).³²
125. The development of school-college links to deliver SPVPs has remained a priority in college outcome agreements since the Scottish Government determined its implementation plans for DYW. The SFC's submission reported that the trend for the period 2013-14 to 2016-17 was of increasing uptake of SPVP courses delivered

by colleges, doubling from 2,100 to over 4,500 in that period. This increase was also reflected in an increase in overall credit activity colleges have committed to delivering SPVP.³²

126. SFC's submission noted that final draft Outcome Agreements for academic years 2018-19 to 2020-21 will make clear that growth in SPVPs will continue, with over 6,600 enrolments planned for Academic Year 18-19 and "some 7,600 by AY 2020-21".³² These figures suggest that it is likely that the DYW target of 7,000 pupils taking part in this form of vocational learning by 2019-2020 will be achieved.

127. The Committee recognises the considerable amount of positive work being undertaken, including by colleges, to ensure that the DYW target of 7,000 pupils taking part in senior phase vocational pathways by the 2019-2020 academic year will be achieved.

Foundation apprenticeships

128. The development of foundation apprenticeships is overseen by SDS. They are offered at SCQF level 6 (equivalent to Highers) and are now available in all local authorities. Pupils can choose to pursue a FA as their only SCQF level 6 qualification or alongside other qualifications, such as Highers and National 5s.
129. In 2017, there were more than 1,200 FA starts, an increase from 346 in 2016. SDS's submission reported that the programme is on track to deliver 2,600 starts (across 12 frameworks) in academic year 2018/19 and *up to* 5,000 in 2019/20. SDS stated that it is:

” ... making more frameworks available to more pupils, with the longer-term aim of having FAs available in every school. However, it must be recognised that this will take time and will require the leadership and buy-in of employers and industry, which is increasingly being driven through the newly-established DYW groups.

Source: Skills Development Scotland, [written submission](#) (May 2018)

130. Several submissions to this inquiry have highlighted various challenges in the delivery of FAs:
- Both Colleges Scotland and the Scottish Chambers of Commerce believed that the use of the term 'foundation' had led to confused perceptions as to the value of the qualification when compared to Highers and equivalent qualification
 - Limited acceptance with universities was also cited as a barrier to both parent and pupil perception of FAs by the Scottish Chambers of Commerce.
 - ADES and NPFS both thought that FAs starting at SCQF level 6, the equivalent of a Higher was too high a level. NPFS felt "those at N4/ N5 level (SCQF levels 4 and 5) are more in need. The N4 pathway, in our opinion, needs the most work"³³. ADES welcomed the fact that SDS is currently developing new

vocational qualifications at SCQF levels 4 and 5 which will help young people to progress successfully to FA courses at their own pace.

131. Some submissions raised the broader issue of how vocational pathways are perceived. Connect recommended the creation of a clear title for SPVPs which give a positive message to young people, families, employers and schools. It was felt that 'vocational' was not the appropriate word as it is (wrongly) associated negatively as meaning 'non-academic' and risks being viewed as second-class to other options.
132. Alison Henderson from the Scottish Chambers of Commerce commented on the perception of FAs:

” Regarding perceptions, part of the problem is that, when foundation apprenticeships were being brought in, there was a lack of information about the level that they would be at and what it would mean for employers and colleges to work together to encourage intake. In Dundee and Angus, there are still some really slow numbers when it comes to teachers talking about the apprenticeships as a qualification and encouraging young people in. We have a big job of education to do in order to persuade parents, teachers and people in general. A question arises as to whether people would take a foundation apprenticeship as opposed to a higher. There are a whole bunch of conflicting things that are causing some problems.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 06 June 2018, Alison Henderson, contrib. 74³⁴

133. As is to be expected at this stage of the programme, evidence indicates that FAs are not yet embedded in the system; with FAs presently seen by many as something separate rather than integrated alongside National 5s and Highers. However, the Committee wishes to highlight the range of issues raised in evidence, both on the supply and demand side, in order to ensure barriers to an increase in the provision and uptake of foundation apprenticeships can be addressed further in the remainder of the DYW programme.

134. The Committee highlights to the Scottish Government and SDS the amount of evidence it has received on barriers to the increased provision and uptake of foundation apprenticeships. It welcomes assurances from SDS that 5,000 foundation apprenticeships will be available for the 2019/20 academic year and requests an update from SDS on the actual number available and the uptake achieved in due course.

Care experienced young people and young people with a disability

135. As shown in the table on page 43, in the most recent DYW progress report the KPI under schools and equalities shows an underperformance in relation to the targets for care experienced young people and young people with a disability. For example the percentage of looked after children in positive destinations was 71.2% in 2015/

16. This was an increase of only 1.9 percentage points since the baseline figures were recorded in 2012/13.

136. Before looking in detail at delivery against these KPIs, the Committee wishes to highlight its continuing interest in the collation of information on positive destinations. In a number of pieces of work, for example its [additional support needs inquiry](#), the Committee has sought to establish what the experiences of those achieving positive destinations looks like in practice. In this inquiry the Minister was asked about the potential for those on exploitative zero hours contracts to be included in the percentages of young people achieving positive destinations. In this regard, the Committee welcomes the undertaking from the Minister to investigate the extent to which some businesses specifically base their planning on models that are reliant on zero hours contracts.²² The Committee also appreciates that the Learner Journey Review is pursuing the possibility of a unique learner number for young people to provide more detail on specific experiences. However, the Committee wishes to re-emphasise its interest in ensuring that positive destination data is collected at points at which young people's pathways can be accurately recorded and in sufficient detail to enable scrutiny of what these positive destinations look like.

137. In relation to KPIs on equalities, in the most recent DYW progress report (for 2016-17), Councillor Stephen McCabe stated:

” ...despite some of the progress made in the DYW Programme, I am clear that we have simply not made enough progress in relation to addressing equalities issues relating to gender, disabled and care experienced young people.

Source: Scottish Government, [Developing the Young Workforce: annual report 2016-2017](#) (9 January 2018)

138. This progress report further stated that the challenge that lies ahead is embedding the changes needed within the curriculum and ensuring that equalities issues are considered as part of the developments that are being taken forward.
139. The SQW and YoungScot research noted that, as a group, care-experienced young people are more likely to have poorer outcomes from the education and learning system than their non-care experienced counterparts. Many encounter challenges while at school and lack confidence in making post-school transitions. The evidence suggests that they require intensive and individualised support to be able to pursue their aspirations. Positive relationships can be pivotal to providing a good service, particularly where the young person has had negative experiences of being let down by others.²⁸
140. The 15-24 Learner Journey Review also stated:
- ” Feedback from our engagement suggests the need for CIAG to be backed up with more on-going personalised support for young people, throughout key points of their journey, which looks at their wider health and wellbeing, as well as their career aspirations and academic ability. This would suggest that there is room for improvement in delivering on the CfE entitlement to personal support.

Source: Scottish Government, [15-24 Learner Journey Review](#) (May 2018)

141. The SDS [2018 report on CIAG](#) highlighted that 96% of targeted pupils (including care experienced people and young people with disabilities) received one-to-one coaching guidance. Committee members sought further information about the personalised support received by targeted groups, including careers advice. James Russell from SDS set out in detail the processes and forms of support in place for care experienced young people:

” The direct delivery service to young people—the targeted support that we mentioned, which is described in our submission—identifies socioeconomic factors among young people and uses those factors to enable the careers adviser and the practitioner who are supporting a young person—whether they are providing pastoral support or guidance—to make an informed decision about the level of support they will get.

One of the socioeconomic factors that would identify a young person for the maximum level of support is care experience, by which I mean care experience in any sense, not just the one-year definition that some statistics are reporting against. We are able to validate what the service level will look like for a young person on the basis of their circumstances. They may be a supported young person with clear career pathways in mind, and we will be able to identify that. We have brought the enhanced support on the back of the career education standard into S3 so that we can start the validation and intensive support with a young person from an earlier age.

The post-school services that we offer are, in effect, a continuation of the relationship that we have with young people from school into post-school if they have not moved into a positive destination. That is part of our corporate parenting plan, because, as an organisation, we are identified as a corporate parent. We have also extended the availability of intense and on-going support for young care-experienced individuals up to their 26th birthday, which creates a significant window of opportunity.

That is what our career intervention or career guidance support looks like, although it is not the entirety of it. We use a network to ensure that we bring into that environment whoever is working with or needs to work with a young person as part of the learning programme, and there is a commitment, from a service delivery point of view and also through partnership working, to extend that support.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 26 September 2018, James Russell, contrib. 141³⁵

142. Joan Mackay from Education Scotland added detail on work being undertaken by Education Scotland:

” The whole area is a challenge because of the level of individual support that is needed. I reiterate what Alan Armstrong said. From the DYW angle, we are trying to focus on what works for these young people when they are transitioning from one stage to another, into employment or to other positive destinations. That is very much what we are looking at. We are making slow and steady progress, although it is incremental.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 26 September 2018, Joan Mackay, contrib. 140³⁶


143. The Minister set out his perspective on progress against KPIs for care experienced young people and young people with a disability:

” We have been moving in the right direction with the equalities agenda. For example, I know that, in the last period, we have seen an increase on the 2012-13 baseline figures of 6.7 percentage points in positive destinations for looked-after young people. The employment rate for young disabled people is, in line with that for disabled people of all ages, shockingly low—it is unacceptably low. We have set out our ambitions to do much more to tackle the disability employment gap, but it is moving in the right direction. There was an increase of 8 percentage points compared with the baseline figure of 35.2 per cent in 2014. We are moving in the right direction. There is positive progress but, again, there is much more to do.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 03 October 2018, Jamie Hepburn, contrib. 10³⁷

144. The Committee is concerned that KPIs on positive destinations for care experienced young people and on the employment rate for disabled young people are not being met. This is the case despite a focus from SDS, Education Scotland and schools to provide targeted support.
145. The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government commissions an independent piece of research to establish why the targeted work is not resulting in the percentage increase in positive destinations and employment rates for young people as intended in the Government's milestones for DYW. This should have a specific focus on young people with disabilities and also care experienced young people.
146. The Committee further recommends that the review focuses on qualitative evidence gathered from young people to gain their perspective on the support received and on what further support would have been beneficial.

The role of employers in delivering DYW

147. Building better relationships between industry and schools was a key priority for DYW “both to enhance the quality of the education experience and provide better knowledge of careers and the workplace, as well as offering more young people employment straight out of education”.¹ The success of DYW relies on sufficient numbers of employers engaging with schools and colleges to provide work placements including as part of vocational pathways and also to highlight employment opportunities.
148. The Wood report noted that, in 2014:
- Less than 30 per cent of Scottish businesses have any contact with education;
 - only 27 per cent of employers were offering work experience placements;
 - 29 percent of employers recruiting direct from education; and
 - 13 per cent of employers hosted Modern Apprenticeships.¹
149. The Wood report also looked at the role played by business and industry both to enhance the quality of education and to improve information on careers and the workplace, and to identify ways that more young people could be employed straight out of school education. Sir Ian Wood said in his foreword:
-  This is not part of the corporate social responsibility agenda. It is very much in business and industry's self-interest to maximise the skills and talents of an incredibly important resource - their future staff and workforce.
- Source: Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, [Education Working For All](#) (June 2014)
150. KPI 6 seeks an increase in the percentage of employers recruiting young people directly from education to 35 per cent by 2018. Recorded performance against this target has not changed since 2014, it was recorded as 32 per cent between 2014 and 2016. This section of the report will look at why more progress has not been made against this particular KPI, and more broadly at the challenge of improving the ability of employers to actively engage in DYW.
151. In relation to work placements, evidence suggests limits to the progress in provision. The 2017 Review of the work placements standard and guidance found that: "The majority of employers are unaware of the standards and the guidance, and a third of employers are yet to consider providing work placements."¹⁶
152. In relation to developing opportunities for apprenticeships, recent research by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) shows that DYW is a priority for small businesses, both for the benefit of the business, but also for wider social and economic reasons. It also highlights limits in the information and support provided for small businesses with the potential to take on apprentices. The research makes recommendations including that SDS should create an online advisory service which contains practical, step-by-step guidance on recruiting, managing and developing apprentices.

153. A number of submissions and other contributions highlighted barriers to employer engagement with DYW in the various roles expected of employers. The barriers for small to medium sized enterprises and the level of support for SMEs was a particular focus. A report from March 2018 by the Federation of Small Businesses entitled *Modern apprenticeships and small businesses* highlighted barriers to small businesses engaging with DYW, specifically:

- ”
- Although they account for nearly three in four of all businesses in Scotland, businesses with no employees cannot take on apprentices at the moment.
 - While there have been welcome improvements to the flagship apprenticeships website, it remains difficult for small businesses to find straightforward information devoid of technical jargon

Source: Federation of Small Businesses, [Modern apprenticeships and small businesses](#) (March 2018)

154. Sir Ian Wood highlighted in evidence barriers for SMEs and also the potential impact if SME engagement in DYW increased:

- ” SMEs have two problems in that regard. One is that they have no process or resource to enable them to handle the administration and planning that is required in taking on an apprentice. That is a big issue—it is as big as the money issue—but we can sort it out. The various local DYW groups could easily have a resource that could hold SMEs' hands when they get engaged in the process of taking on apprentices.

The second issue is money. Some support is given—I have forgotten whether it is in the first or second year of the apprenticeship—but we thought that support should probably be given for three years. I am not talking about a huge amount of money. If we could get a bunch more SMEs to take on apprentices, we would help the SMEs, we would address the employment problem and we would undoubtedly increase the number of people who are being trained.

There is a third problem. We have to ensure that in a small company there is support, so that the young person is looked after while they do their apprenticeship. We cannot just cast a person adrift in a company. A bit of work is required there, but, goodness me, there will be a huge, positive result if we get it correct.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 13 June 2018, Sir Ian Wood, contrib. 76³⁸

155. Significant emphasis is placed in the DYW structure on the role of DYW regional groups. The Minister told the Committee:

- ” there is also a significant role for our 21 developing the young workforce regional groups, especially in encouraging employers to take part.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 03 October 2018, Jamie Hepburn, contrib. 40³⁹

156. The intention in establishing DYW regional groups was to:

” ...ensure that all of Scotland's young people are fully and fairly supported into employment by bridging the gap between education and employers. The groups aim to: encourage and support employers to engage directly with schools and colleges; and challenge and support employers to recruit more young people into their workforce.

Source: Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, [Education Working For All](#) (June 2014)

157. Specifically, the groups are intended to generate connections between local businesses and schools including to help increase work placements and the opportunities for employment direct from schools. They also have a role helping to facilitate vocational pathways including Foundation Apprenticeships by generating interest from employers. Generating this engagement from businesses requires businesses to be provided with clear guidance on how to engage with schools and colleges and on what the benefits for businesses are.
158. 21 DYW regional groups have been established since 2014. The Committee appreciates that creating this structure at a local level covering the whole of Scotland has been a substantial piece of work. Regional groups are understandably at a relatively early stage, as the meeting with the Shetland DYW regional group below demonstrates:

” A representative of the construction industry suggested that when the **local DYW development officer** was appointed in the coming months there was a pre-prepared programme of events and courses being made available in construction. A co-chair of the network said the Shetland group had been one of the slowest to get going but they hoped to have an officer in place for the next school year. He felt they had a good plan but they “just needed the **resources** to get it moving.

Source: Education and Skills Committee, [focus group notes from visit to Shetland](#) (June 2018)

159. Findings from the COSLA event entitled [Maintaining the Momentum](#) reflected that there has been increased employer engagement and more meaningful work experience with the development of DYW. However, while the DYW Regional Groups have led to pockets of good practice around the country, participants noted that the Regional Groups do not yet have a particularly high profile, beyond only two or three regions of Scotland.
160. DYW has also involved the development of the online digital platform “Marketplace”. Marketplace offers a digital meeting place for businesses and education to engage in planned activity and allow businesses to be more involved in the school curriculum and school experience. Issues were raised in evidence on the roll-out of Marketplace, including on its uptake and its functionality.
161. At the time the [2016-17 DYW progress report](#) was published, Marketplace was being used by 7 of the 21 Regional Groups with plans to extend this to more groups over the next year.
162. Over 300 employers have registered with Marketplace since its launch to offer opportunities to schools across Scotland. As at March 2017, there were an estimated 365,600 private sector enterprises operating in Scotland. On that basis the reach of Marketplace at present is extremely limited.

163. The [Scottish Chambers of Commerce](#) suggested that Marketplace was not user friendly for many employers. It was felt to be challenging to use it effectively if an organisation did not have a very specific aim that it wanted to achieve.
 164. SDS set out examples in evidence of the variety of work it is undertaking directly with employers to seek to increase employer engagement. For example it is working with the enterprise agencies to raise awareness of DYW with 'account managed companies'. The Committee understands that account managed companies tend to be large or medium in size, with a smaller proportion of small businesses.
 165. The Committee notes that the [Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee](#) is undertaking an inquiry: "To understand the range of support services available to new and existing small and medium sized businesses at a local level across Scotland, with a particular focus on Business Gateway. The Committee will evaluate current provision and explore ways of ensuring businesses receive the support they need to grow and succeed."
166. The Committee commends the work to establish 21 DYW regional groups. This is a complex process to establish entirely new infrastructure to provide an important function in the delivery of DYW at a local level across Scotland. The Committee appreciates the work of DYW regional groups is at a relatively early stage but highlights to the Scottish Government and SDS the extent of the responsibilities that sit with these groups. These groups require levels of support from SDS, and associated funding and support from the Government, to give them the local profile and leverage required to perform their functions effectively.
 167. The Committee notes the emphasis and importance placed on DYW regional groups in engaging with SMEs. The Committee recommends that the Government ensures that trade bodies have a stronger presence on regional groups, to seek to improve the links between DYW groups and small to medium sized enterprises.
 168. The Committee is concerned that the key performance indicator target on increasing the percentage of employers recruiting young people directly from education has not been achieved, with recorded performance against this target remaining the same since 2014.
 169. The Committee recommends that SDS assesses whether the progress made by Marketplace, the online platform, is sufficient at this stage of DYW implementation. SDS should then publish an action plan, included with its formal response to this report, setting out when Marketplace will be rolled out to all 21 DYW regional groups and including targets for the number of organisations it expects to see signed up as members of Marketplace by the end of 2021.
 170. The Committee also recommends, in addition to work by DYW regional groups, that SDS should report to the Committee on how it can enhance its own efforts to provide direct support to SMEs. In relation to apprenticeships, the Scottish Government and SDS are invited to set out their perspective on the benefits of an online advisory service for businesses on recruiting, managing and developing apprentices, as recommended by the Federation of Small Businesses.

171. The Committee highlights to the Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee the issues raised in relation to SMEs for consideration as part of that Committee's inquiry into business support for small and medium enterprises.

Island and rural communities

172. DYW is a programme that operates at a local level and is largely reliant on local collaboration. Evidence suggests that in some rural and remote areas connections, such as between schools and small local employers are strong. There are however challenges associated with these areas, for example in delivering college courses where transport between colleges and schools is more limited than in urban areas and the distances greater. Challenges associated with distances and travel were raised with the Committee, including the impact on timetabling courses and the ability to reach employers for work placements.
173. A common issue in terms of the breadth of choices available for young people, is the more limited number of employers in some local areas seeking to recruit. Young people in rural and remote areas also have a smaller range of options for work experience and are more likely to only receive exposure to local industries through talks in schools. In some areas the largest employers are within the public sector. In considering the role of employers in island and rural communities, the relative importance of public sector employment must be acknowledged.
174. Apprenticeships and vocational courses are also reliant upon local employers prepared to provide the employment based element of the course, so the vocational pathways can also be dictated by the ability of often small businesses to support these placements.
175. A selection of evidence reflecting these themes is reproduced below:
- a) School engagement with small businesses - [COSLA](#) noted that the profile of businesses in some areas makes it challenging for education to engage. For example, in rural areas most of the businesses are very small so would struggle to provide apprenticeship opportunities.
 - b) Availability of work placements and other opportunities - Education Scotland noted that in rural areas in particular there are often not enough placement opportunities available to allow young people to gain access to work experience while at school.
 - c) Travelling between schools, colleges and employers - at a focus group of Shetland college staff " **Transport** to college from schools was not seen to be an issue, but there was an issue with transport home especially if courses were not in Lerwick or went on to slightly after office hours. Bike routes and more **student accommodation** were both being explored. Paying for accommodation on an apprentice salary was deemed to be very challenging.
 - d) The profile of local employers influencing decision making by young people - the Young Women Lead focus group included discussion on rural areas and how they:
 - ” ...can have more limited opportunities and perhaps more limited numbers of role models meaning young people feel there are limited options for them. A small number of big local employers and the community perspective can have a big influence.

Source: Education and Skills Committee, [Young Women Lead focus group note](#) (May 2018)

e) The ability to have intermediaries between a more limited number of young people, colleges and local employers - TrainShetland, a Shetland Islands Council initiative, co-ordinated 140 apprenticeships in 35 occupations through 16-18 training organisations on Shetland and the mainland. The note of a fact-finding visit to a ship building company on Shetland states:

” The Chief Executive of Malakoff was very positive about TrainShetland. There was only one modern apprentice at Malakoff arranged by TrainShetland during its 20 years that had not completed the qualification. The Chief Executive did not have involvement with Skills Development Scotland as TrainShetland is the ‘clearing house’.

Source: Education and Skills Committee, [focus group notes from visit to Shetland](#) (June 2018)

176. The Minister was asked about rural and island communities during his evidence session, including limitations on the availability of a sufficiently diverse range of opportunities for young people. He highlighted that fundamentally DYW is designed to operate at a local level. He hoped, however, that work placements can provide for transferable skills, laying the foundations for young people to then be able to pursue opportunities beyond their immediate area.²²
177. At a national level, the Scottish Government has a number of substantial long term initiatives aimed at ensuring the workforce for future years will be equipped for shifting priorities such as increasing automation and the fourth industrial revolution. The Enterprise and Skills Review, of which the Learner Journey Review is one workstream, is the central piece of work aimed at co-ordinating efforts in this regard. Long term strategies such as on STEM also reflect this aim.
178. In summary, the Committee received evidence about the benefits and also the barriers that living in a rural or remote community creates for young people seeking opportunities that fulfil their potential and for employers, schools and colleges delivering DYW priorities. Ensuring that practical measures are in place to provide diverse opportunities, locally or further afield, for young people from island and rural communities has a dual benefit. It benefits the young people themselves and it contributes to ensuring there are sufficient numbers of young people with transferable skills to form a flexible workforce for the future needs of the economy. This approach may also help young people to appreciate the benefits of remaining in their local area versus moving away to follow particular paths.

179. The Committee invites the Scottish Government to set out in its response to this report what work is underway at a national level to assist rural and island communities in:
 - generating opportunities locally with an emphasis on transferable skills; and
 - ensuring young people are aware of and able to take part in national initiatives, such as opportunities generated by the STEM strategy.

The Learner Journey Review and DYW

180. The Learner Journey Review is an ongoing programme of work, led by the Scottish Government, to examine the efficiency and effectiveness of progression for 15-24 year olds through the education system. Its focus is on the learning needed to allow the economy and wider society to function, in terms of the balance of skills and qualifications required for that goal to be achieved.
181. The Review has 5 proposed priority areas and an accompanying 17 recommendations. There are a number of linkages between the Learner Journey Review and DYW. Of particular note are the actions at Priority 2 'Provision', which focus on 'fully embedding DYW in schools by 2021'.¹⁰
182. The Review also goes beyond DYW. DYW focuses on links between schools, vocational training and industry, while the Review also looks at how the college curriculum is linked to universities and employers. Many of the indicative dates around Review activity are towards the end of DYW. The intention is to build on the momentum created by DYW, meaning recommendations are additional to DYW recommendations as opposed to replacing any of them.
183. The Committee has sought to establish in evidence the extent to which the Learner Journey Review implementation will complement work towards DYW, whilst ensuring valuable work on DYW is in no way diluted by a focus on the more recent policy initiative. On 17 October, following the end of evidence taking on the inquiry, the Scottish Government published a document as part of its Enterprise and Skills Review, of which the Learner Journey Review is a workstream, called *Working Collaboratively for a Better Scotland: Strategic Plan*. One recommendation reads:
- ” Accelerate implementation, and set a timescale for delivery of the Learner Journey Review recommendations, in particular where these reduce duplication and accelerate the pace that people can proceed through the school, college, university and apprenticeship systems, creating more effective pathways to productive employment. SFC and SDS should jointly draft advice to Government on the Learner Journey, including consideration of aligning existing funds.
- Source: Scottish Government, [Working Collaboratively for a Better Scotland: Strategic Plan](#) (October 2018)
184. The 2018-19 Scottish budget includes a funding line of £12 million for young person specific employability and training interventions. This comes in addition to other funding allocated through Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Scottish Funding Council (SFC), and local authorities. The Committee sought clarification as to the extent this funding was specifically for DYW and whether Learner Journey Review budget lines would be kept separate to DYW. The response noted that the £500,000 budget for the delivery of Developing the Young Workforce and the Learner Journey Review supports one team working across the two programmes to ensure the alignment of what are closely related areas of work. The budget is intended for:

- ” DYW and Learner Journey Review Programme costs. Funding to support the delivery of the Developing the Young Workforce and Learner Journey Review programme, including costs for communications and marketing, publications, stakeholder engagement, events (£135,000 in total) staffing (£315,000) and analytical support (£50,000).

Source: Scottish Government, [correspondence from the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills](#) (September 2018)

185. Given that the implementation plan for the Review is still in development, it is not clear to the Committee how the delivery of the last 3 years of the DYW programme will sit alongside the Review. For example it is unclear whether the governance arrangements for the review and the programme will be separate.
186. The Learner Journey Review has linked policy intentions with DYW, shares certain funding streams and has the same support team within the Scottish Government. It will also run concurrently with DYW implementation, for an extended period if implementation of DYW extends beyond 2021 which appears likely. The Committee does not dispute the benefit of a joined up approach between initiatives. However, given the importance of DYW, the value of the work underway and the widespread support for its intentions, the Committee recommends that the Government takes steps to guard against any focus of resources on the Learner Journey Review leading to a dilution of efforts being made towards the successful delivery of DYW.
187. The Committee notes the recommendation in the Strategic Plan on the Enterprise and Skills Review on accelerating work on the Learner Journey Review. The Committee seeks an explicit assurance that the required timeline and draft guidance will stipulate work specifically aimed at the delivery of DYW.
188. As highlighted in this report, the pace of progress in implementing DYW is not presently sufficient to ensure the programme will be fully embedded by 2021. The Committee highlights this risk to the Government at this mid-way stage in the programme to enable it to look at ways for the programme to find a renewed emphasis in the next three years. While the priority must be on increasing momentum to deliver the programme by 2021, the Committee also recommends that the Scottish Government gives early consideration to contingency planning, including producing milestones for DYW that extend beyond 2021.

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