

A Guide for Local Partners 2016/17



Foreword

Welcome to this guide to Skills Development Scotland. We have produced this to help our local partners better understand our products and services, and identify where our joint aims and ambitions can, through strong partnerships, help achieve joint outcomes.

Our vision is to create a responsive, demand-led skills system in Scotland, where individuals have equality of opportunity and are equipped to meet the needs of the economy and its employers. This represents ambitious systemic change and is simply not achievable by any one organisation.

We recognise that achieving our aims is only possible through the continued development and maintenance of strong partnerships, an alignment of provision and resources, and a commitment to joint working towards shared goals.

We are already active in your community – from our regional skills planning work and employer engagement, to our careers advisers in every local authority-run secondary school. You can learn more about our local activity on the 'In Your Area' pages of our website.

Our colleagues are committed to building meaningful partnerships so that together, we can achieve real change.

We hope you find this guide interesting and insightful, and look forward to working with you in the future.



Sharon Kelly
Local Head of Operations



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**Regional Skills Planning
Lead**

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Introduction to SDS

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is Scotland's national skills body. We contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic growth by supporting people and businesses, in each of Scotland's local authority areas, to develop and apply their skills.

We work with partners at national, regional and local levels to create a Scotland where:



employers are able to recruit the right people, with the right skills, at the right time;



employers have high performing, highly productive, fair and equal workplaces;



people have the right skills and confidence to secure good work and progress in their careers;



there is greater equality of opportunity for all

We aim to achieve these goals by delivering a diverse and inclusive range of services that help people build the skills needed by the economy and its employers.

In every local authority area we support individuals to build their career management, work-based, and employability skills, throughout their career journey; from school, into further learning opportunities and employment. We use skills intelligence to help them make informed decisions so they are well-placed to take up the opportunities arising within the local economy, as well as across Scotland. We target delivery of this support to those who need it most, ensuring all individuals are enabled to achieve their full potential.

We work with employers and employer groups on a national, sectoral, regional, and local basis. We support them to recognise and articulate their current and future skills needs, and to engage with the skills system to help ensure it better meets those needs in the short, medium and longer term. We also support them to attract and retain talent by investing in their current and future workforce and by adopting fair work practices.

Building strong partnerships with local providers, funders and influencers of education and training, we drive a focus on delivering the programmes that will make a real difference to communities and their economies. Investment in the right skills, at the right time and in the right place is at the heart of our approach to supporting individual achievement, as well as business and economic growth, in your area.



Kelsey Pexton, Vehicle Paintwork Repair Apprentice

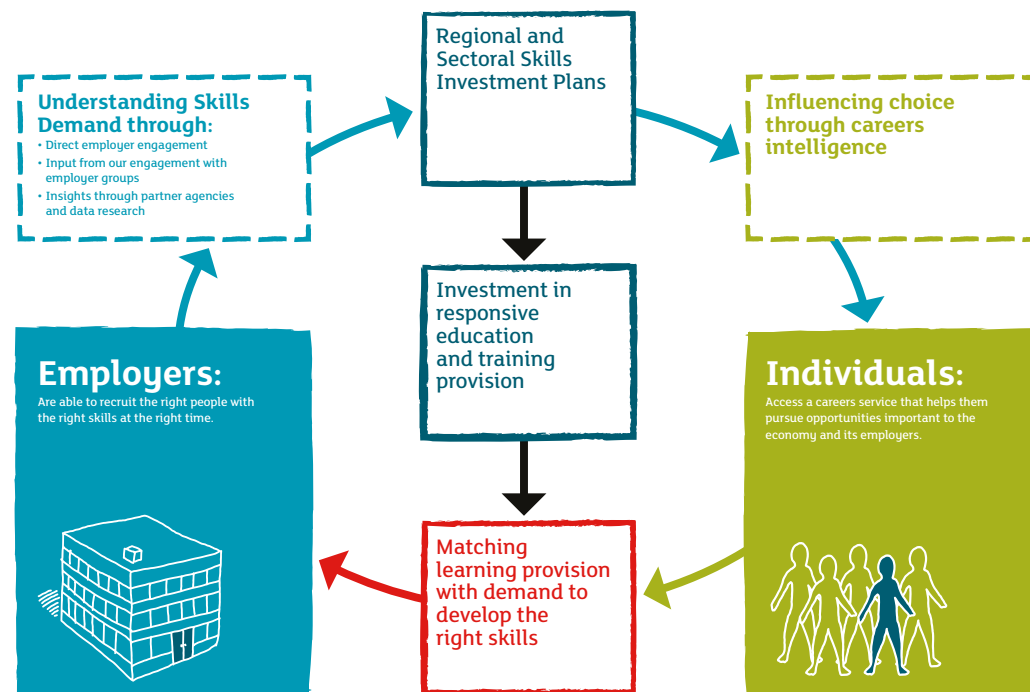
The Skills Planning Model

The Skills Planning Model is core to SDS's role and purpose. It shows how we aim to improve the response of education, training and careers services to the needs of industry and ensure that people have the best possible chance of succeeding in the world of work.

In order for individuals to achieve their potential, they must be equipped with the skills that Scotland's economy and its employers need. Achieving this relies on:

- Building a **robust evidence base** which articulates the current and future skills demands of Scotland
- **Intensive partnership work**, at both a local and national level, to ensure that skills investment is evidence-based and aligned with skills demand
- **Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) services** that understand and use the evidence base, so that individuals are supported to make informed choices.

The Skills Planning Model Making Skills Work for Scotland



2 Skills Planning and Intelligence

As shown in the Skills Planning Model, robust skills intelligence underpins all our work. Skills intelligence helps us to understand the current and future demand for skills and jobs across Scotland, by geography and by industry sector. Developing the depth and quality of the intelligence base allows us to work with partners to better inform and influence skills investment decisions.

We work with partners, such as the Scottish Funding Council, to build and use this intelligence base and to make it accessible to all stakeholders. We do this not only to inform our own skills planning work, but also to empower our partners to make evidence-based decisions on their investment in skills, and to support the creation of a more responsive demand-led skills system for Scotland.

Regional Skills Assessments

Regional Skills Assessments (RSAs) are at the heart of providing meaningful, relevant and accessible skills intelligence. Our National Skills Planning team publish **RSA data sets underpinned by over 100 social and economic indicators**. We do this to support our local partners **to understand and address the skills demand and supply challenges in your area**. The RSA data is made available in a range of slide packs designed to meet local needs, including **13 regional bundles, 5 city deal area packs and 32 local authority summaries**. You can learn more about the RSAs, and [download the data sets for your area from our website](#).

Regional Skills Planning Leads

Our team of **Regional Skills Planning Leads (RSPLs)** drive our strategic engagement with key stakeholders locally; including regional colleges, local authorities, universities, regional DYW groups, city and growth deal partnerships and local economic and skills forums. **The RSPLs support these partners to embed the evidence base** and analysis produced in the RSAs, and **help ensure that locally-provided learning opportunities** derive outcomes which **meet local skills needs**. For example, in 2016/17 our RSPLs led workshops with regional colleges to support them to use the RSAs to inform their curriculum development. Likewise, **RSPLs used the RSA evidence to support local authorities** to consider the focus of their employability provision. This partnership work is critical in ensuring the skills system responds to the needs of local economies.

[You can find the contact details for your Regional Skills Planning Lead on our website.](#)



Courtney McDowall, an MA and winner of Springboard's Future Chef 2016, is pictured here with the Tourism SIP

Skills Investment Plans

Skills Investment Plans (SIPs) **define skills needs and development opportunities** and help to **ensure that skills provision adequately reflects current and future demand from employers**.

At a national level, we create sectoral SIPs, helping to ensure that skills provision in Scotland is aligned to the current and future needs of key sectors in our economy; supporting future business growth and preparing individuals to take up opportunities created by that growth. **Our team of Sector Skills Managers work in partnership with industry bodies, employers and other stakeholders** to ensure the implementation of our SIPs for Chemical Science, Construction, Creative Industries, Digital Technologies, Energy, Engineering, Financial Services, Food and Drink, Life Sciences and Tourism. In 2017, we will also publish the first SIP for Early Years and Childcare, which aims to support the sector to plan for the roll-out of increased free childcare provision.

Building on the success of the Highlands and Islands SIP, **we have developed an approach to creating Regional Skills Investment Plans (RSIPs)**. In addition to continued work in the Highlands and Islands, we have engaged with partners to develop RSIPs for Aberdeen City and Shire, Glasgow and Clyde Valley and Edinburgh and the South East. We are committed to using our knowledge and experience of regional skills planning to assist more areas to better understand, articulate and respond to their skills needs.

Local Partnerships

Partnership is also key to making the Skills Planning Model a reality, and is at the heart of all we do. Our strategic engagement at both a national and local level, allows us to shape and flex our delivery to meet local needs, informed by knowledge of best practice from across the country.

Through developing relationships with local authorities and Community Planning Partnerships we continue to ensure our services and investments are joined up and complementary to local provision; contributing to the wider social and economic development agenda locally.

Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs)

Through the Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) 2015 SDS became a statutory member of Community Planning Partnerships. As such, **we support your Local Authority to meet their statutory duties** to facilitate community planning and take reasonable steps to ensure the CPP fulfils its functions efficiently and effectively.

Prior to the Act, we already worked closely with your CPP at Board or Executive group level, ensuring we supported partners to improve outcomes for local people.

SDS is actively involved in a range of local partnership activities, playing a key role, for example, in the **Local Employability Partnership** which drives an integrated approach to employability services at a local level. **We also participate in the development of Local Outcome Improvement Plans.**

DYW Regional Groups

In line with recommendations from the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce (DYW), **we work with your DYW regional group**, either as a board member, or through regular meetings with their Chair or Programme Lead. These are **employer-led groups set up to provide leadership and a point of contact between employers and education.**

As agreed with the DYW National Group, our offer to each group includes information on the take-up of Modern Apprenticeships by sector and employer in their area; and information on products and services provided by, or in partnership with, SDS.

As well as addressing employers' needs through these groups, we also play a role in **identifying and communicating demand from schools, and providing local opportunities for employers to engage with young people.**

Our local engagement with DYW groups across the country has resulted in the national roll-out of 'Marketplace' – a bespoke IT platform accessed through existing SDS websites – that enables greater employer engagement with young people in schools and colleges. More details on Marketplace are available in the 'Working with Employers' section of this booklet.

We actively support DYW groups in a variety of ways. Examples of this work include:



part-funding a work based learning regional hub in the Highlands and Islands



working closely with partners in Dumfries and Galloway to help shape and support research that will provide a detailed assessment of employer skill needs in the region



promoting specific interventions to improve outcomes for equalities groups with Glasgow DYW

Making Skills Work

We produce biannual 'Making Skills Work' briefings for CPPs and other local partners. Published in June and December, these provide an overview of our investment and delivery in your local area.

[Local statistical information is also available on the In Your Area section of our website.](#)

Careers Information Advice and Guidance

Our Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) services focus on equipping people with the Career Management Skills (CMS) they require to achieve their potential, and providing the information required to make informed learning and career choices.

CMS are those skills that enable individuals to successfully manage their career. Our CIAG services are focused around four themes of CMS:



Self – Knowing who you are, what you want from your life and how to get it.



Strengths – Knowing what you are good at and how you can best make use of this.



Horizons – Knowing where you are going, how to get there and what to do when things go wrong.



Networks – Knowing how to manage relationships, give and receive help and use your networks to support your career building.

Our Schools Offer

The majority of our CIAG services are delivered face-to-face in schools, and we have at least one dedicated careers adviser working in every local authority-run secondary school within your area.

In line with recommendations from Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy, we began delivery of our expanded CIAG service offer in schools in August 2016. This new approach is designed to engage and inspire young people at an earlier stage, and help them to develop CMS, make informed choices, and be better prepared for the world of work.

Our CIAG service offer in your local schools now includes provision of:



A suite of lesson plans and resources, co-designed with teachers, to support delivery of the Career Education Standard in the classroom, from P5 upwards



Increased support for those S3 pupils identified as having greatest need to help increase engagement in the senior phase of school (S4-S6).



'ICan' digital tools to introduce pupils in P5-P7, and those with additional support needs, to CMS



A range of group work options for pupils in the senior phase which help build CMS, including considering a range of post-school options.



A group session for all pupils making the transition from primary to secondary school,



Targeted one-to-one coaching support for senior phase pupils identified as needing additional help to achieve a positive destination after school



The offer of individual support to all S2/S3 pupils making subject choices and their parent/carers



Access to our award winning CIAG web service, My World of Work and support to use its tools and resources



Group work activity for all S2/S3 pupils not making subject choices, on areas such as gender bias in career choice.



Drop-in sessions for all pupils, with one-to-one interviews available on request.

The service offer is designed to be flexible to meet the needs of each school, and the exact detail of delivery is decided in consultation with teaching staff through annual School Partnership Agreements.

Our school careers advisers work closely with teachers to embed [Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for Learning, Life and Work](#). They also regularly attend and present at Parents' Evenings and other events to help parents and carers understand how best to support young people to make informed and unbiased career choices.

School Leaver Transition Support

The school leaver transition support programme offers a bridge between leaving school and engaging with the local SDS Careers Centre. Our Careers Advisers work with the Pastoral Care staff in their school to identify pupils who are likely to leave school without an opportunity, and become part of the 'Next Steps' cohort.

The programme aims to ensure:

- **a consistency of service, from school to post school**
- **customers are introduced to their local SDS Careers Centre at the earliest opportunity**
- **young people continue to engage after leaving school (e.g. during the summer holiday period).**

Our Careers Centre Offer

Our post-school and adult services are delivered via our network of Careers Centres and in local partnership and outreach premises. [You can find details of your nearest Careers Centre on our website.](#)

Next Steps

Next Steps is our service offer to 15 – 18.5 year olds¹ who have left school and not yet transitioned into further education, training or employment. For care experienced young people this offer is extended up to their 26th birthday. Next Steps aims to develop and deliver a progressive and cohesive CIAG service offer which:



Enables customers to receive the right support, at the right time and from the right person as part of their CMS development



Enables customers to develop their CMS, recognising improvement at each stage as they progress towards a sustainable destination



Extends and develops our coaching relationship for those who have the greatest need



Enables customers to receive ongoing support even after they have progressed into a positive outcome, particularly where this is of a short term nature (e.g. a local employability programme), or for up to six months if a longer term outcome (e.g. entering Further Education).
The extent and nature of this support is always discussed and agreed with the customer.

¹ Young people can first engage with DWP at the age of 18. We ensure that Next Steps support is continued through a managed transition into full-time job seeking. Those who we have been working with can still continue to receive our support beyond this age as required, but our expectation is that most customers will have less intensive interaction with us beyond that age.

Careers Information Advice and Guidance

Young people accessing our Next Steps service can expect to be seen by their adviser at least once a fortnight. **The service offer is tailored to meet the needs and learning style of each individual** and combines a range of engagements including CMS Assessments; individual coaching guidance and group sessions.

We recognise that we cannot meet the needs of all customers without the support of our partners. **Next Steps recognises our strengths and those of our partners** so that we can deploy our shared resources effectively.

Integrated Employment & Skills (IES) Partnership

The IES Partnership is a joint strategy between SDS and The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) designed to **ensure that unemployed customers are supported to achieve sustainable employment, training or learning**. When our 'Next Steps' customers reach 18, we support them to consider whether they are ready for the demands of full-time job seeking, and if so, to make an initial claim for benefits. Likewise, if an 18 year old school leaver makes an initial claim for benefits, DWP automatically refers them to us for additional CIAG support.

Through IES, **anyone claiming benefit** who is keen to develop their skills, but is unclear on what path to take, **can be referred to their local SDS Careers Centre for information, advice, and guidance**.

Universal Careers Service

While our support is targeted at those who need it most, we offer a universal CIAG service for everyone in Scotland, regardless of their age, skills level or career. While most non-targeted customers will predominantly receive assisted or self-directed support through our award winning CIAG web service, My World of Work, **all of our face-to-face services are available to any customer according to their need**.

Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE)

PACE was set up by the Scottish Government to **help minimise the impact of redundancy situations**. SDS is the lead PACE delivery partner, with 21 organisations, including your local authority, DWP (through Jobcentre Plus), Citizens Advice, colleges and training providers making up the partnership. **Together we understand the local labour market, and offer a wealth of experience in helping companies and people** who are facing redundancy.

Our local team responds quickly when situations arise and can assist businesses to try and minimise the risk of redundancy before it happens. **We support businesses of any size, no matter how many employees are involved**. It's free of charge, and helps ease some of the strain of dealing with redundancy. For employees, we offer free, impartial advice on dealing with the practical and emotional sides of redundancy. **PACE advisers help people recognise their skills, explore their options and prepare for their next move**.



EDF Energy Apprentices

Within our PACE delivery is **targeted support for those affected by redundancies in the Oil and Gas Sector and for redundant apprentices**.

As PACE partners support employers through a range of other services, we can often connect businesses looking to recruit with those making redundancies.

External Review of Our Services

Our CIAG services are externally assessed by Education Scotland at a Local Authority Level. In 2017, our CIAG provision in five local authority areas was assessed. The quality of the CIAG services we deliver to our customers was endorsed with **100% of the CIAG review scores receiving a rating of good or above, and 73% rated very good or excellent.** This represents a six percentage point increase over two years in the proportion of CIAG services rated very good or excellent.

All Education Scotland CIAG Reviews are made public. [You can find and read the available local reports online.](#)



Ella Johns, 14, is pictured here using My World of Work

16+ Data Hub

We work with partners to **strengthen intelligence on young people's destinations and career aspirations.**

The [16+ Data Hub](#) reflects the requirement for data sharing contained in the Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013. Data from local authorities, regional colleges, the Scottish Funding Council, the Student Awards Agency Scotland and the DWP is **imported through a secure gateway and held in a shared data set** so that reports based on combined intelligence can be compiled.

The combined data set allows SDS to track the destinations of school leavers, through a process which combines regular data input from partners, with direct input by SDS staff following contact with young people.

The Participation Measure

The Participation Measure uses the shared data set to **provide analysis of the number of 16-19 year olds in learning, training or work.** It supports greater understanding of the activities and needs of young people in your area. We are responsible for publishing this data every August. Participation data is available at a local authority level. [The Participation Rate for your area is available on our web pages.](#)

Scottish Apprenticeships

We are committed to developing and growing a world-class Work Based Learning (WBL) system in Scotland. Our vision for WBL is that we reach a point where we have a demand-led, responsive skills system in which:



Young people have a wide range of local learning opportunities to choose from and understand the different career opportunities that exist



Parents and other influencers understand and value academic and WBL options equally



Employers are able to identify, and have access to, a pipeline of skilled talent



Employers work with schools, colleges and training providers to ensure that the skills they require are provided

Ultimately, we want more people to be work-ready and equipped with the right skills at the right time, making them attractive to employers and more likely to move into employment.

Our approach contributes to achieving Scotland's ambitions to be amongst the top quartile in the OECD in terms of productivity and to reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021.

We aim to achieve transformational and systemic change by:

- **developing and delivering new apprenticeship models that expand the scale and reach of WBL options**
- **strategically expanding existing Modern Apprenticeship provision**
- **focusing on key sectors, in line with employer demand**
- **improving the availability of high quality, valued, WBL opportunities, putting them on a par with existing academic routes to learning**

SDS administers the Scottish Apprenticeship Family on behalf of Scottish Government. **We manage all elements of the Apprenticeships**, from contracting provision, quality assurance and managing provider payments, to capacity building with our training providers and promoting work based learning opportunities with both employers and young people.

The Apprenticeship family continues to expand in line with the Scottish Government's Youth Employment Strategy ambition to reach **30,000 apprenticeship starts annually by 2020**.

Foundation Apprenticeships

Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) were introduced in the 2014/15 academic year and provide WBL opportunities for secondary school pupils alongside their other studies. Based on existing MA frameworks, **FAs are designed to provide young people with demonstrable experience of the work place** which can aid the successful transition from education into employment.

FAs strengthen the links between local employers and schools, and help create a pipeline of young talent with the skills required to enter post-school training and employment opportunities. They also present an opportunity to **improve equality and diversity** in certain sectors of the economy, by increasing participation from under-represented groups, and to actively **promote careers in growth sectors** to the future workforce.

Offering FAs in schools **supports delivery of the Curriculum for Excellence, and the Scottish Government's Youth Employment Strategy**. It also demonstrates the benefit of WBL pathways to educators, parents, employers and young people themselves.

FAs are increasingly being recognised as valuable routes into higher education as well as employment and training, with **eight Scottish Universities currently accepting an FA as equivalent to a Higher** in their entry requirements.

Modern Apprenticeships

Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) are the most established and well-known member of the Scottish Apprenticeship family. **MAs provide individuals with the opportunity to secure industry recognised qualifications while they are in employment**, earning a wage. MAs help employers to develop their workforce by training new staff, and upskilling existing employees.

There are over 85 types – or frameworks – of Modern Apprenticeships available, covering a range of industries including chemicals and biotechnology, construction, creative and cultural skills, engineering and energy, financial services, food and drink, health and social care, hospitality and tourism, transport and logistics, and sport.

In 2015, we published our [Modern Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan](#). This five-year plan outlines the extensive work we do, and will continue to do, to improve diversity and equality of opportunity in Apprenticeships. **We work with partners in every local authority** to deliver a wide range of programmes designed to **improve gender imbalance** in some frameworks (e.g. Engineering) and to **increase participation from targeted groups**; specifically young people who are disabled, care experienced and from an ethnic minority group.

Graduate Level Apprenticeships

Graduate Level Apprenticeships (GLAs) offer a **combination of academic study and work-based learning at an advanced level**. In conjunction with Higher Education partners and employers, SDS has worked with industry, and Scottish universities and colleges, to pioneer a structured WBL offer for higher education in Scotland.

GLAs are accredited WBL programmes at SCQF levels 8 to 11. They **lead to degrees or to degree level, professionally recognised, qualifications**. GLAs support the learning and development of young people and existing employees so that they acquire the skills, knowledge and competence necessary to work and progress in their careers.

76% of new MAs are taken up by 16-24 year olds

66% of new MAs starts are at Level 3 or above

78% of MAs complete their apprenticeships successfully

96% of employers say those who have completed their MA are more able to do their job

88% of employers say MAs are important to their business and workforce development

GLAs provide an attractive alternative to traditional academic study, a mechanism for supporting non-traditional entry to university, and a different way of learning for people:

- **whose learning styles are not linear and prefer to learn by ‘doing’**
- **whose aspirations have not previously been to enter full-time degree programmes**
- **who have selected vocational options, such as FAs or MAs, and wish to continue their learning and progression**
- **who do not feel they could afford to pursue degree-level study without earning a wage.**

Phase 1 of GLAs was launched in 2016, and opportunities are currently **available in eight of Scotland’s Universities and one Regional College**. We continue to work with our Higher Education partners with a view to further extending provision.

Apprenticeships.Scot

Our dedicated apprenticeships website, www.apprenticeships.scot, includes information on what an apprenticeship involves, inspirational real-life apprentice stories and support for employers to make it easier to recruit an apprentice. It allows employers to post MA and GLA vacancies for free, enabling young people to **search and apply for apprenticeship jobs vacancies in their area**. The search function also allows school pupils to discover which FAs are currently available in their area.

Employability Skills

We support individuals through a range of programmes, to increase their work-based and employability skills, enabling them to take their first steps into the labour market, or to make successful career change and progression.

Employability Fund

The Employability Fund (EF) **supports local employability pipelines and services** which have been developed to address the specific needs of local areas. SDS administers and manages the EF on behalf of the Scottish Government. We do this by **working with local partners, to maximise the resources that are available in your area and to avoid duplicating existing employability services**. By working closely with our partners, we make sure that the fund is aligned to local provision and maximises opportunities for individuals.

Local EF training providers work with employers to understand their skills needs and help them find and train the right individuals. With a strong focus on work experience, **the EF lets us respond to the different needs of each individual, while also adapting to employer demands on a local basis**. The Fund can be used to support people to develop the employability and vocational skills they need to make the transition into an MA or other job. **In 2016/17, 70% of EF participants achieved a qualification, progressed to a further stage of the Employability Skills Pipeline, or entered employment during the programme.**

Certificate of Work Readiness

The Certificate of Work Readiness (CWR) is designed to offer young people the vital opportunity to acquire employability skills, helping them to become 'job ready' and to take their first steps into the world of work. CWR offers **10 weeks of work experience with a local employer**. The CWR is designed **for 16-19 year-olds** but is open to anyone. It includes **at least 190 hours of work experience** with the employer assessing the person's skills, supported by a training provider. If successful, the participant receives the **SQA accredited Certificate** at the end of their time, which acts like a reference, demonstrating their ability to other employers. Some employers have used CWR as **a way to recruit young talent** into their organisations, and many participants have used CWR as a stepping stone into an MA or other employment.

Benefits of the Certificate of Work Readiness

95%

of young people rate the CWR as either 'excellent' or 'good'

97%

of young people report increases in self-confidence and team-working



employer survey in 2017 found that 100% would recommend the CWR to other employers looking to take on young people or offer an opportunity to an unemployed person.

97%

of providers believe that CWR enhances young people's chances of moving into positive destinations

93%

of young people report an increased understanding of what work entails



Employers reported self-confidence and interpersonal skills to be the greatest improvement they saw in the young people throughout the work placement

Scotland's Employer Recruitment Incentive (SERI)

SERI is funded by the Scottish Government and is managed and delivered by Local Authorities. SDS administers the programme on behalf of the Scottish Government. It **targets support at unemployed young people with the greatest barriers to employment** to enable them to obtain and remain in sustainable employment (including Modern Apprenticeships). It **offers employers up to £4,000** when their company commits to a new job or new MA. The funding is available as a contribution toward the additional costs of recruiting and sustaining a young person during their first 52 weeks of sustainable employment. If the company pays the young person the living wage there will be an additional payment of £500. As a minimum, it is expected that **25% of places allocated to Local Authorities will support young people who are a care leaver or carer, disabled or who have an offending history.**



Connor Waldron, Foundation Apprentice of the Year 2016

The National Third Sector Fund

The National Third Sector Fund (NTSF), launched in 2016, delivers additional employability provision in Scotland through European Funding, managed by SDS and **delivered by third sector organisations.** The majority of provision is offered at **Stage 1 of the Employability Skills Pipeline, supporting those furthest from the labour market**, although some providers also offer Stage 2 and 3 delivery. The NTSF contracts were issued in October 2016 with an initial tranche of 7 providers commencing contract delivery, with provision expanding in 2017.

Individual Training Accounts

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) were announced by Scottish Government in March 2017, and will replace the Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) which are being phased out. ITAs will be provided by SDS and will continue to **give people access to up to £200 per year for training and skills development.** However, for the first time each course will now result in an industry recognised qualification. ITAs will **support employers to develop their workforce and address skills gaps.** They will also **make it easier for job seekers and low paid workers to gain access to qualifications and skills training** which meet the demands of the job market.

Working with Employers

Through our partnerships with local and sectoral representative bodies, such as Industry Leadership Groups, we seek to better understand the current and future skills demand of Scotland's employers and economy. This understanding contributes to the intelligence base and helps provide clear direction for skills investment in Scotland, ensuring better alignment of supply and demand.

Our locally based Employer Engagement Team also work with employers on an individual basis, supporting them to:



understand, engage with and create work based learning opportunities



understand the skills they require to achieve their ambitions



consider how they can meet those needs through work based learning (WBL), and other workforce development, as well as recruitment



build and maintain fair and equal workplaces that attract and retain talent

Work Based Learning and the Apprenticeship Levy

The Apprenticeship Levy was introduced by the UK Government in April 2017. The levy is paid by employers with a payroll of over £3 million, including the public sector, and is equivalent to 0.5% of total annual wage costs; [you can read more information on the levy on apprenticeship.scot](https://www.apprenticeship.scot)

In response, **our Employer Engagement Team are working proactively with large employers affected by the levy** to ensure they are in the best position to take advantage of apprenticeships and other WBL opportunities within their organisation. **Employers in your area can access free support** to maximise apprenticeship opportunities in their organisation **by contacting our employer helpline on 0800 783 6000** or by completing our [online support request form](#).

We have also established an **employer-led Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board (SAAB)** to strengthen employer contribution to the development of apprenticeships in Scotland, ensuring they are aligned with **industry and economic need, fair work principles and job opportunities**. SAAB is made up of four groups. Membership includes a local authority Chief Executive, the Chief Executive of COSLA and representatives from the Developing Scotland's Young Workforce National Group, Confederation of British Industry, Federation of Small Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, Scottish Council for Development and Industry, Institute of Directors, and the Scottish Trades Union Congress.

[You can read more about the SAAB and its work online.](#)



Paul Campbell is Organisational Learning and Development Lead at Scottish Water and Chair of the SAAB Employer Engagement Group

Our Skillsforce

Our Skillsforce is a **dedicated web resource** that helps employers to find and access both national and local support, by **bringing together all the skills-related information they may need into one place**. It includes free advice, skills planning, HR support and funding. There's also information to help businesses:



engage with education,



plan for change



build a skilled and motivated workforce



prepare for the future with a succession plan.

Skills for Growth

Skills for Growth is a **free service for employers in Scotland with between 5 and 250 employees**, designed to **support business growth through planned workforce development**. It works by combining consultancy from Investors in People with guided support from our Employer Engagement Advisers. The advisers **help employers to create a Skills Plan for their workforce**, ensuring they make the best use of the skills their staff already have, and identify any gaps that need to be filled. Businesses are responsible for taking forward and funding any actions they choose to make as a result, such as workforce development or recruitment, but advisers can help by mediating with training providers to find appropriate solutions, and by maximising access to available funding.

"Getting someone to make us stand back from the business helped motivate some well needed change. As an engineering business charging daily rates to clients we were apprehensive about the time commitment needed but once we got the process started the benefits were ten-fold."

Usideen and Marina Fraser, Synergie Environ
Skills for Growth participants

Marketplace

Marketplace is a new online tool, being rolled out in 2017, which **connects schools and colleges with business, bringing industry insight into the classroom**. Employers can register using Our Skillsforce and start passing on knowledge of their sector through workshops, talks, workplace visits or placements. Using the dedicated Marketplace area on My World of Work, **teachers can search for opportunities posted by nearby employers** or use Founders 4 Schools to find and invite local business leaders to an event. [Read more about Marketplace on Our Skillsforce.](#)



8 Promoting Equality of Opportunity

Equality and Diversity

We are committed to **increasing equality of opportunity as an employer and as a provider of services**. This commitment is inherent in all we do, from challenging career stereotypes and bias in schools, to supporting employers to improve their recruitment practices, and ensuring our own work is scrutinised by expert equality partners.

Full details of our ambitions and achievements in relation to equality and diversity can be read in our [Equality & Diversity Mainstreaming Report 2017-2021](#).

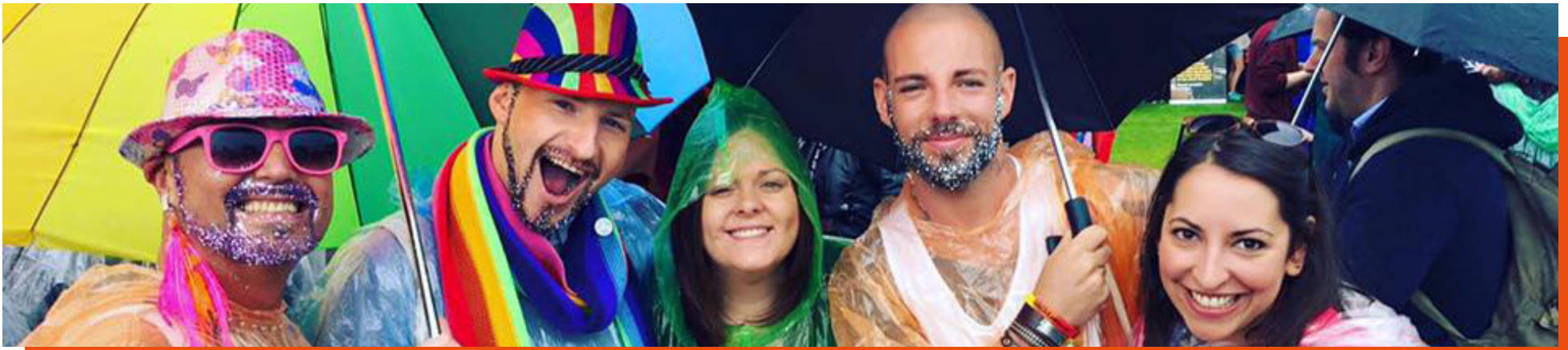
Community Justice

SDS is named, with Local Authorities and other organisations, within the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 as a **statutory Community Justice partner** across each of the 32 Community Planning Partnerships (CPP) areas. Through the CPPs, our local colleagues **help to develop, monitor and report against the Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP)** for your area. Our contribution to Community Justice is largely based on increasing awareness of, and access to, our existing services. To find out more about how we are acting as a Community Justice Partner in your area, [please contact your local Area Manager, who can provide more details](#).

Corporate Parenting

SDS became a corporate parent along with other organisations including local authorities, colleges and universities under the Children and Young People Act 2014 (Scotland). Our role as a corporate parent is to understand the lives of Scotland's care experienced young people, to respond to their needs and to support their wellbeing.

[We published our Corporate Parenting Plan for 2015-18, which includes 16 core commitments](#). Our plan outlines how we intend to support care experienced young people to make and sustain a successful transition from school into training, education or employment. **Working with local partners, particularly local authorities, is integral to meeting our commitments**, and we are proactively seeking to strengthen our relationships in response to this. [Our dedicated Corporate Parenting web pages can help you find your local contact](#).



Colleagues from our Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) Services and HR represented us at Glasgow Pride in August 2016.

9 Our Organisation

We recognise that delivery of high quality, customer focused services relies on having engaged and empowered employees, adequately assisted by effective support services. This is why our organisational aim is to be *an employer of choice, an exemplar of fair work and internationally recognised for excellence, innovation and customer-focus.*

SDS as a local employer

As an employer, we are **committed to retaining and developing highly skilled individuals in your area.** In addition to our colleagues based in schools and careers centres, **we make the most of technology and 'anywhere' working practices** to support non-customer facing staff to work from local bases.



Since
2013



Year
accredited
2013



Year
accredited
2015



Year
accredited
2015

As Scotland's largest employer of career professionals, we are passionate about attracting new talent to the sector.

Our Young Talent programme offers entry level opportunities through **a range of traineeships, MAs and graduate internships**, predominantly to people aged 16-24. Since 2013, **the proportion of our workforce aged 16-24 has increased by 5.2 percentage points** and in 2015 we were proud to be recognised as an **Investor in Young People.**

We are an **accredited living wage employer**, and have actively worked to **reduce our gender pay gap progressively from 15.7% in 2010 to 11.2% in 2017.**

We offer all our employees **a minimum of 21 hours per annum of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**, much of which can be delivered online. In 2016, we introduced **unconscious bias training** for all colleagues involved in recruitment as part of a range of equality-based CPD available. We are proud to be both a **Disability Confident employer** and a **Stonewall Diversity Champion.**

We also offer a full range of **supportive and flexible policies and procedures**, allowing our colleagues to balance their work with caring responsibilities, further study, or to enter flexible retirement; with more than one in five colleagues choosing to work part-time hours.



Current and former members of our Young Talent Programme