

# Preparing Young People for the Future

An evaluation of the arrangements made by Scottish colleges to deliver the entitlements of the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence

A thematic aspect report by Education Scotland on provision in Scotland's colleges on behalf of the Scottish Funding Council

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# 1. Introduction

The senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) refers to ages 15 to 18 years and is the period when young people can build a portfolio of qualifications, and develop skills for learning, life and work<sup>1</sup>. For many young people, the senior phase is undertaken almost entirely within a secondary school setting. However, increasing numbers of learners in this age group are choosing to undertake their senior phase wholly or partly within a college setting. Colleges are required to embed the senior phase entitlements within programmes. Full-time learning opportunities in colleges therefore must also embed the senior phase entitlements.

CfE, published in November 2004, states that all young people should be “successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society and at work”. These are commonly referred to as the 4 capacities of CfE. CfE also recommends that the curriculum should be designed using the principles of challenge and enjoyment, breadth, progression, depth, personalisation and choice, coherence and, relevance”. All young people in Scotland are entitled to a ‘senior phase’ of education which allows them to;

*“continue to develop the four capacities and also achieve qualifications”<sup>2</sup>*

and which:

- provides specialisation, depth and rigour;
- prepares them well for achieving qualifications to the highest level of which they are capable;
- continues to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work;
- continues to provide a range of activities which develop the four capacities; and
- supports them to achieve a positive and sustained destination.

Partnership working between colleges and schools is highly important in ensuring that the senior phase provides appropriate opportunities for progression to work and further learning. The links made between school-based and college-based learning should maximise opportunities for learners to make effective transitions to vocational programmes or the world of work.

The ‘Commission for Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce’ in its report *Developing the Young Workforce* (DYW) June 2014<sup>3</sup>, made the following recommendations to Scottish Government:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/11/20178/45862#2>

<sup>2</sup> ‘Building the Curriculum 3: a framework for learning and teaching’, p15

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/06/4089>

- Pathways should start in the senior phase which lead to industry recognised vocational qualifications (recommendation 1)
- A focus on preparing all young people for employment should form a core element of the implementation of CfE (recommendation 2)
- Scotland should embed equality education across CfE (recommendation 26)

This report evaluates how well these recommendations are being supported within the college sector through answering the following high level questions:

- How well are 16-18 years olds being prepared for transition to vocational education and training through effective senior phase planning?
- How well do full-time college programmes provide 16-18 years olds with senior phase entitlements?
- How well is equality and diversity being embedded across senior phase programmes in colleges?

## **2. Methodology**

In preparing this report, reviewers visited a sample of five colleges, detailed in appendix 1 of this report. The colleges were carefully selected to provide an appropriate sample and representation of rural, urban and suburban colleges in Scotland. Each college in the sample was visited once during the fieldwork. Inspectors discussed issues with senior and middle managers, teaching and support staff, and learners. The views of stakeholders were obtained through face-to-face interviews and telephone contact.

Reviewers also drew on the findings of published Education Scotland external reviews of both colleges and the provision of SDS Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) services, reports of AEV (annual engagement visits), and examined other relevant publications and reports.

### 3. Summary of key findings

#### 3.1 Areas of Positive Practice

- Overall, colleges have responded well to CfE. Strategic planning embeds the four capacities and senior phase entitlements to support curriculum design and the delivery of learning and teaching
- Almost all colleges plan senior phase programmes well. They work effectively with a range of external partners and are well-represented on key planning groups within their regions. Through the development of a shared vision and understanding of the needs of young learners, they work collaboratively to anticipate and accommodate the needs of both the local and national economy.
- Almost all colleges work closely with local authorities to plan vocational career pathways and support young people to make the transition from school. In response to DYW, colleges are expanding the breadth and volume of senior phase provision, with increasing numbers of vocationally relevant programmes offered across a wide range of subject areas.
- All colleges promote vocational opportunities and pathways to learners and other stakeholders effectively. They employ a wide range of methods to reach school age learners and key influencers including parents/carers, guidance staff, and employers.
- Most colleges have well developed partnerships with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to promote vocational opportunities. The majority of colleges make good use of resources including *My World of Work* (MyWoW) to help develop the career management skills of young learners and help them make informed choices about progression from school to college.
- In most colleges, communication between teaching and support staff is well managed. In almost all colleges, learners in the senior phase are supported according to their individual needs throughout their programme as a result.
- Almost all colleges have robust quality arrangements in place to capture, record and share learner performance data. Learner views are gathered and used effectively to support self-evaluation and action-planning for improvement.
- Colleges deliver well-planned induction activities which help learners to settle in quickly to college life and build relationships with staff and fellow learners.

- Almost all learners appreciate the support they receive from college staff very highly. They enjoy learning theory which is contextualised to vocational skills in high quality learning environments and using industry standard resources.
- Young learners on full-time college programmes value the social aspects of college-based learning and the immersive nature of vocational programmes that focus on areas that interest them. They enjoy learning alongside peers of all ages within a more adult learning environment.
- Almost all colleges offer a wide range of senior phase vocational pathways which incorporate national qualifications at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels 3-7. Many colleges enhance the vocational relevance of programmes by embedding additional industry qualifications within delivery. A few colleges have begun the delivery of *Foundation Apprenticeships*, which include the piloting of shared delivery models with local schools and employers.
- Almost all colleges integrate skills for life, learning, and work within the curriculum well.
- All colleges focus strongly on developing skills for employability within programmes. Almost all colleges use work experience or work placement opportunities well to develop the skills for work of learners in the senior phase.
- All colleges plan for progression to positive destinations well. Vocational pathways are clearly identified, and show routes to further learning or employment for all learners in the senior phase. College staff work well with SDS colleagues to provide learners with access to comprehensive guidance services that support them to plan next steps in their learning or to employment.

### **3.2 Areas for Development**

- Across the college sector, almost half of full-time learners on full-time college programmes are aged 15-18 years. However, success rates for this group are amongst the lowest, with only two-thirds completing their programme successfully in 2013/14. This age group also has the highest number of learners withdrawing from their programme prior to completion, and the highest number completing with partial success.
- 15-18 years old learners on full-time programmes in colleges are more likely to come from one the most deprived areas in Scotland. In every deprivation decile, 15-18 years old learners have a lower rate of successful completion than their older counterparts.

- In a few colleges, relationships with individual secondary schools are not sufficiently collaborative. This adversely affects curriculum planning and restricts learner choice in the senior phase.
- Many schools, local authorities, and some colleges are not using MyWoW effectively to support the development of career management skills and help young people to make informed choices about progression from school. Overall, local authorities, schools and colleges do not recognise how MyWoW can support the delivery of the senior phase entitlements.
- The quality of information shared about individual young people is often inconsistent, adversely affecting the planning for their transition of some young people.
- Most colleges do not yet analyse the performance of learners in the senior phase as a discrete group. This limits the ability of programme teams to identify actions for improvement which are specific to the needs of learners aged 15-18 years on full-time college programmes.
- In some college classes, the behaviour of some young learners is not managed well by teaching staff. This can lead to frustration for older learners when on occasion, the behaviour of younger learners disrupts the learning experience.
- Within full-time college programmes, the sign-posting of senior phase entitlements is not sufficiently explicit or promoted to learners. Most colleges do not fully map senior phase entitlements for learners, or clearly identify how these will be developed during programme delivery.
- In a few colleges, recruitment processes do not provide young people with sufficient opportunity to fully consider programme content when making choices. This can lead to increased levels of learner withdrawal and lower levels of programme attainment.
- Many colleges do not have in place robust mechanisms to identify learners who are most at risk of withdrawal. As result, some learners do not receive early enough intervention to help them resolve issues affecting their learning.
- Across the college sector, some subject areas are dominated by one gender. Over time, there remain marked differences in gender profile and the gender balance on a number of programmes remains an issue for the sector. Curriculum teams for most programmes are aware of the issue and most have explored some of the underlying reasons. However, more requires to be done by colleges and their partners the issue along with other partners.



#### **4. Trends in learner success for 15-18 years olds in Scotland's colleges: full-time programmes leading to recognised qualifications**

Across the sector, successful completion rates are lowest amongst 15-18 year olds (see appendix 2, table 1). In 2013-14, 45% of learners on full-time programmes were aged 15-18 years. Two-thirds (66%) of learners in the 15-18 years age group completed their programme successfully. This is lower than in any other age group. The early withdrawal rate of 15-18 years age group is the lowest of all age groups (see table 2). However, further withdrawals are at least two percentage points above any other age group. This age group has the highest rate of partial success.

The number of 15-18 years old learners enrolling on full-time college programmes is split evenly between males and females. Female learners perform slightly better than their male counterparts in successfully completing their programme. Although this is the case in all age groups, the differential in the 15-18 years age group is smaller (just two percentage points). Although there is little variation in the male success rate across the different age groups, the success rate of females is significantly lower for this age group (see table 3).

16% of 15-18 years old learners on full-time college programmes have a declared disability (see table 4). The success rate of learners with a declared disability is two percentage points higher than learners who have no known disability. This is in contrast to all other age groups, where learners who have declared a disability have lower success rates than learners who do not have a disability.

Almost all 15-18 years old learners on full-time college programmes are 'white British'. 66% of 'white, British' 15-18 year olds completed their programme successfully which is in line with the national sector performance. The next most common ethnicities, 'White other' and 'Asian' make up 4% and 2% of all 15-18 years old learners on full-time courses, and have higher rates of success. 'Black' and 'mixed background' learners represent at least 1% of 15-18 years old learners. Both of these groups have success rates below the 15-18 years old average at 62% and 61% (see table 5).

Learners on full-time programmes who are aged 15-18 years are more likely to be from one of the most deprived areas in Scotland. In all age groups, success rates increase as the level of deprivation decreases. However, in every Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile, the 15-18 years old age group has the lowest success rate (see table 6).

More than half of full-time 15-18 years old learners study a programme at SCQF levels 5 or 6. At most SCQF levels the success rate of 15-18 years olds is lower than for other learner groups. The success rates are lowest at the SCQF levels that are most popular amongst learners of this age group

(see table 7). However, those 15-18 years old learners studying at SCQF level 7 (HNC level) have the highest rates of success, and outperform all other age groups. 15-18 years old learners studying at level 8 have rates of success which are in line with their older counterparts.

Overall, more 15-18 years old females complete their programmes successfully than males. This is the case in most subject areas. Young male learners outperform their female counterparts in only four subject areas: education and training; languages and ESOL; nautical studies; and special programmes. Rates of partial success are higher amongst 15-18 years old males overall, and this is the case in most subject areas. In the majority of subject areas, 15-18 years old males are more likely to withdraw from their programme of study before completing.

In 2013-14, successful completion rates (see table 8), for 15-18 years old learners on full-time college programmes were at or around sector performance levels in the majority of subject areas (art and design, construction, education and training, hospitality and tourism, land-based industries, performing arts, social subjects, special programmes, and sport and leisure). However, in the remaining eight subject areas successful completion rates for this age group are below sector performance by between 3 and 17 percentage points (business, management and administration, care, computing, information and communications technology, engineering, hairdressing, beauty and complementary therapies, languages and english for speakers of other languages, media, and science). In most subject areas, 15-18 years old learners studying programmes at SCQF level 7 or above have better successful completion rates than those studying at SCQF level 6 or below.

## **5. How well are 16-18 years olds being prepared for transition to vocational education and training through effective senior phase planning?**

### **Planning of senior phase opportunities**

Overall, colleges have responded well to the principles of CfE, and specifically the requirements of the senior phase. Most colleges convey a clear commitment to the principles of CfE within strategic plans and strategies to support learning and teaching. However, in a few colleges, commitment to CfE is less overt and less well developed. The principles of CfE are less well embedded in the curriculum as a result.

All colleges work well with a range of external partners based on a shared vision and understanding of the diverse needs of young learners. They make good use of their links with external agencies to anticipate local and national needs and plan provision. Overall, colleges are well-represented on key planning groups involving local authorities and employers. Most colleges have established productive relationships with head teachers and senior staff in local secondary schools. They make good use of these relationships to plan provision.

As a result of regionalisation, many colleges work with a number of local authorities to plan provision for school-age learners. In most areas, this has led to colleges applying creative approaches to deliver provision across and between local authorities. This includes delivering programmes on schools' premises and coordinating arrangements to ease transition from school to full-time college programmes. In a few areas, partnership working between college and local authority staff is not sufficiently collaborative or forward looking to fully support effective curriculum planning. This reduces the potential for maximising opportunities for young people.

Almost all colleges engage well with a wide range of external partners and local employers. Increasingly, colleges are drawing on *Skills Investment Plans (SIPs)* produced by SDS and feedback from industry bodies to influence and inform strategic planning of provision. Almost all apply knowledge of skill requirements at local, regional and national levels to plan provision for young people. Almost all colleges take good account of local and national priorities to meet the needs of learners in the senior phase. In response to DYW, most colleges are expanding their senior phase offer to better meet the needs of young people. As a result, an increasing number of vocational programmes are being delivered across a wide range of subject areas. However, a few colleges have not reviewed their curriculum sufficiently to ensure all programmes provide meaningful vocational experiences for young people. Joint planning of provision by colleges with their partners is not always sufficiently robust to support fully developed regional strategic approaches.

Colleges have faced a period of significant change, both structural and financial, in recent years. Planning for the delivery of senior phase provision and transition from school to college presents challenges to colleges in terms of resources and time. Larger multi-college regions are now required to provide a co-ordinated response to DYW, by working collaboratively. This can sometimes affect the pace of response by individual colleges within the region. Where provision is not financially viable for the college, the senior phase offer can lack breadth, inhibiting learner choice.

### **Promotion of senior phase opportunities**

Colleges employ a wide range of methods and approaches to promote vocational pathways to learners and other stakeholders. They make very effective use of online materials, prospectus entries, targeted marketing materials, and broadcast media to reach young learners and key influencers, including parents, carers and teachers. Regular data-sharing through local planning groups helps to target provision for those most in need. In addition, colleges engage directly with young people through regular information and advice sessions for school pupils, parents and carers. These sessions are used effectively by colleges to provide information on learning opportunities and highlight wider vocational pathways and routes to employment.

Most colleges have well developed partnerships with SDS to promote opportunities for young learners. SDS career coaches in secondary schools support the development of career management skills to help young people to make informed choices about progression from school to college. However, resources such as MyWoW are not yet used effectively across all schools or local authority areas, or within all colleges to support CfE.

Many colleges arrange joint staff development activities with local schools to promote and support the delivery of senior phase opportunities to staff. This helps to raise awareness and support partnership working. College and school staff benefit from these shared learning activities to increase awareness of the needs of young learners. This includes managing behaviours of young people and understanding the learning and developmental differences between younger and older learners. These arrangements help staff to plan for transition between school and college, including approaches to curriculum planning and learning and teaching.

## Partnership working

In most colleges, internal partnership working between teaching and support staff is strong. Almost all learners in the senior phase are supported well by college staff during their programme of study. However, in a few colleges, internal partnership working between teaching and support staff is less effective. Learners do not always receive support in line with the entitlements of CfE as a result.

Effective partnership working is instrumental in the planning and provision of senior phase opportunities. DYW has provided a renewed focus on developing skills for employability and providing coherent vocational pathways for young people. Relationships with secondary schools have developed and improved over time across all regions, and in many cases new opportunities for young learners have emerged as a result. In addition, DYW is directing local educational providers and SDS to work more closely to plan the delivery of coherent and relevant opportunities for young learners.

Information sharing between colleges and other agencies and partners is not always fully effective in supporting the most vulnerable learners to access senior phase opportunities. The quality of information shared about individual young people is often inconsistent, adversely affecting the planning for their transition of some young people.

### ***Preparing disengaged young learners for college – Dundee and Angus College***

*Dundee and Angus College works closely with both Dundee City and Angus Councils to support young people who are already disengaged from education to complete their senior phase on a full-time college programme. The Skillzone and Pupil Access to College and Employability (PACE) programmes meet the needs of learners whose school experience has been significantly disrupted by a range of factors including poor confidence or low self-esteem, poor prior attainment, social emotional, or behavioural issues, being Looked After Children/Looked After and Accommodated (LAC/LAAC), or having caring responsibilities. Many learners have been referred by other agencies, or have been involved with the Youth Justice system. College staff work alongside key workers from a range of partners to support learners to develop skills for learning, life and work. Learners will build their essential skills, participate in vocational taster sessions, and develop confidence, and self-awareness. They are encouraged to set personal goals and reflect on their progress regularly with staff. On successful completion of the programme, learners are supported to apply for a college place. Most learners progress to successfully achieve a full-time vocational programme, and progress to a sustained positive destination on completion.*

In some regions, regional *Invest in Youth* groups are beginning to provide a higher profile and clearer focus on engaging with employers. However, the growing requirement to provide access to work placements and work experience is challenging for some colleges, particularly in rural areas and smaller regions with limited numbers of local employers.

### **Industry academies - City of Glasgow College**

*City of Glasgow College has introduced an innovative approach to working with employers which supports learners to develop employability well. Each faculty operates an 'industry academy' to encourage employer engagement and interaction with the curriculum. Through the development of appropriate project-based learning (City Learning), industry partners work closely with college staff to deliver vocationally specific learning opportunities through high quality work experience within up-to-date work environments. Learners benefit from direct access to employers, helping them to develop skills for work and awareness of the world of work. They build confidence and improve problem-solving skills through collaborative learning on 'real' projects. For example, in business, learners in the senior phase worked with a local company to develop a new product range. The employer was very impressed and said "the pitches were fantastic, some of these learners were only 16. It had to be seen to be believed." Through this approach and direct involvement in the skills pipeline, employers are helped to fill skills gaps and recruit work-ready young people with industry specific skills and experience.*

### **Monitoring performance of the senior phase curriculum**

Almost all colleges have robust quality arrangements to capture, record, and share performance data. College staff participate well in self-evaluation and action-planning for improvement. Learner views are captured and used effectively overall by colleges to inform planning for improvements.

Many colleges have identified the need to improve learner success rates for learners on full-time further education (FE) programmes as a priority. Where programme team meetings focus specifically on retention and attainment for learners aged 15-18 years, performance indicators (PI) have improved significantly. However, most colleges do not yet analyse the performance of learners in the senior phase as a discrete group. This limits the ability of course teams to identify actions for improvement which are specific to the needs of learners aged 15-18 years on full-time college programmes.

Increased partnership working between colleges and local schools has improved the quality and delivery of information about the range of learning opportunities available to young people in the senior phase. Learners progressing from school to college are now more aware of college opportunities than in the past. Overall, this has been assisted by the involvement of SDS careers staff and the increasing use of resources such as MyWoW.

Colleges offer a range of useful pre-entry support to help young learners prepare for entry to college programmes. Taster sessions, open days, and targeted 'keeping warm' communications are used by most colleges to build relationships with young learners prior to the start of their programme. Improved recruitment processes, including face-to-face interviews and appropriate skills testing, support young learners well to make informed choices.

Once enrolled, almost all learners participate in well-planned induction programmes which help them to settle in quickly and bond with their classmates. Induction activities help to reinforce learner responsibilities and develop positive relationships with staff and their peers. A few colleges place emphasis on acceptable standards of behaviour from learners during induction activities.

All young learners in the senior phase value the support they receive from college staff very highly. They welcome the opportunity to learn theory alongside practical skills, and undertake work-based experiences to help them develop skills for employment. They enjoy the social aspects of college life and the contextualisation of college programmes that focus on a particular vocational area that interests them. Younger learners benefit from the supportive culture of colleges and experiences to learn alongside peers of all ages. However, in a few college classes, the behaviour of some young learners is not well managed by teaching staff. Older learners describe frustration when the behaviour of younger learners disrupts the learning experience.

### **Behaviours - City of Glasgow College**

*City of Glasgow College is supporting the development of skills for life, learning and work in young learners through the development and reinforcement of the college 'behaviours'. Developed collaboratively between learners and college staff, 'Our Behaviours' identify what learners can expect from staff, and in turn what staff expect of them. The behaviours identify the attitudes and approaches expected to learning and at work, including 'how we do things', 'how we treat others', 'what we say and how we say it', and 'how we expect to be treated'. They are designed to support learners to make the most of their own learning experience, reach their full potential, and support the learning of others. The behaviours include for example; 'listen to and respect others', 'take responsibility for delivering high quality work', 'display a can-do attitude', 'respect others and consider differences', and 'work as a team'. They are displayed prominently throughout the college, and reinforced throughout the learner journey. Staff use the behaviours to support the modelling of positive behaviour and encourage learners, and where required challenge unwanted behaviours which negatively affect the learning experience. Learners across all vocational areas know what is expected of them from an early stage in their learning journey, and in turn are empowered to challenge the behaviour of other learners and staff.*

## 6. How well do full-time college programmes provide 16-18 years olds with senior phase entitlements?

### Planning and sign-posting of senior phase entitlements

The majority of colleges use the principles of CfE to embed senior phase entitlements well within full-time college programmes. Overall, effective strategic transition planning with local schools supports well-considered planning of the delivery of senior phase programmes across a broad range of subject areas.

Many colleges map the development of the CfE capacities within programmes and lesson plans. However, in some colleges the sign-posting of senior phase entitlements within full-time programmes is not sufficiently overt. Most colleges do not clearly identify how the entitlements will be developed during programme delivery. Staff and learners often lack awareness of how college programmes will deliver the senior phase entitlements as a result.

Almost all colleges have effective arrangements to introduce 15-18 years old learners to vocational programmes whilst still at school. There are good opportunities for school-age learners to engage with specialist vocational areas prior to entry to full-time programmes. This helps them to gain a broader understanding of the vocational area to make choices appropriate to their skill levels and interests.

#### **Borders College Schools Academy**

*Borders College has collaborated well with Scottish Borders Council for over 10 years to provide young people with the opportunities to experience vocational learning and make effective transitions beyond school. The 'Borders College Schools Academy' offers young people the opportunity to experience a broad range of curriculum areas including; construction, motor vehicle engineering, hairdressing, beauty therapy, early education and childcare, rural skills, horticulture, and sport. In response to DYW, the college has recently expanded the breadth of opportunity by adding engineering, fashion design, and software development. Annually, around 350 young learners in the senior phase undertake college courses. On successful completion of their programme, learners can apply for a full-time college place, having experienced their chosen vocational area, developed skills for learning in a new environment, and become familiar with college life. Smooth transition pathways for young learners between school and college ensures that young people have a better vocational awareness allowing them to make informed choices. Learners' prior experience of what it is like to study in a college environment supports them well to settle in quickly, sustain their learning, and achieve high quality outcomes.*



## **Opportunities to attain qualifications**

Almost all colleges offer a wide range of senior phase vocational pathways to learners which incorporate national qualifications at SCQF levels 3-7. These include HNCs, SVQs, and a range of individual NQ units and National 4 and 5 subjects. A few colleges have started to deliver *Foundation Apprenticeships*, which include the piloting of shared delivery models with local schools and employers. Although at an early stage in the pilot, these models are leading to better integrated provision. Programmes offer a more rounded vocational experience for young learners, particularly in relation to the requirements of the world of work. Most senior phase programmes are delivered within high quality, realistic working environments including restaurants, workshops, hair salons, and laboratories. This provides learners in the senior phase with valuable experience of industry and working to commercial pressures. Many programmes include input from employers and the opportunity to work with real customers.

The SCQF is used well by colleges to determine the curriculum and support progression. Many colleges enhance programme vocational relevance by embedding additional qualifications within delivery, for example food hygiene certification, health & safety, vendor qualifications in computing, or industry-specific requirements such as *Construction Skills Certification Scheme* (CSCS) for construction. These enhance the experience of learners, support wider achievement, and underpin skills for employability well.

Most colleges have in place very effective processes for interviewing, and selecting learners into full-time college programmes. Overall, these processes ensure that learners are enabled to make well-informed choices to enter a programme that suits their abilities, interests and circumstances. Overall, systematic arrangements are in place to identify the core skill levels of new learners. However, a few colleges do not provide sufficient opportunities for potential learners to gain in-depth information about the content and activities within programmes. This contributes to increased levels of learner withdrawal and lower levels of programme attainment.

## **Development of skills for life, learning and work**

Almost all colleges embed the development of skills for life, learning, and work within the curriculum. Most learners are encouraged by teaching staff to reflect regularly on the development of these skills and track their progress during their programme. Learners are encouraged to reflect on the activities and task work they enjoy most. In most programmes learners are supported well by staff to make connections between their classroom learning and the world of work.

Overall, colleges focus strongly on developing skills for employability within programmes. Almost all colleges use work experience or work placement opportunities well to develop the skills for work of learners in the senior phase. A few colleges have been successful in utilising a wide range of local employers to provide opportunities for every senior phase learner to participate in relevant vocational experience. However, many colleges do not

yet embed work experience or work placement opportunities within all senior phase programmes, or for all learners. Consequently, many learners do not benefit from direct experience of the world of work to support them in developing skills for employability.

Many colleges make good use of volunteering projects to engage greater numbers of learners in developing the skills required to enter and sustain employment. Alongside volunteering projects, learners in the senior phase are encouraged to participate in opportunities to develop skills for learning, and life through involvement in charity work, fund-raising activities, and projects within the local community. These activities support the development of citizenship well and support learners to develop respect for themselves and others.

### **Progression to positive and sustained destinations**

All colleges plan well for learner progression to positive destinations. In almost all colleges, vocational pathways are clearly identified and show routes to further learning or employment for all learners in the senior phase.

College staff and SDS career coaches provide comprehensive guidance services which help to ensure that learners in the senior phase are kept informed about next steps in their learning or routes to employment. Colleges regularly host events with other education providers and employers which focus on progression and articulation. Overall, college staff offer well-planned support facilities to assist learners in the senior phase with university or job applications. They regularly promote new opportunities through job fairs and employment bulletins. A few colleges make very effective use of *MyWoW* to raise awareness of a wide range of opportunities to learners. However, the potential of *MyWoW* has not yet been fully realised across the college sector as a whole.

Overall, colleges have in place appropriate arrangements for learners in the senior phase to plan, review, and discuss their progress. Almost all learners have access to key staff members with whom they meet regularly to discuss achievement of their goals and attainment of qualifications. Learners use personal development planning tools well to identify and record the development of their skills and knowledge and highlight how their programme and work experiences are connected. However, a few learners do not have regular access to on-going personal development planning. Most college programmes include a weekly timetabled guidance session during which learners have the opportunity to raise issues and seek advice from staff about their learning. Where colleges do not provide dedicated guidance time within programmes, effective use of social media and other forms of communication provides learners with access to support services.

## Support for learning

Colleges plan and manage services to support learning well. All learners are informed of the support available to them and are actively encouraged by staff to access a range of services to overcome barriers to learning based on individual need. Colleges have effective referral mechanisms to sign-post and direct learners to appropriate help. All colleges have specialist support staff who engage with curriculum teams and provide tailored support for learners with additional needs, including customising resources and facilities. Further support is offered outwith class time through drop-in clinics and study clubs.

A few colleges employ staff whose role is to monitor individual learner attendance patterns, intervene when issues arise and provide encouragement and support to learners who may be experiencing difficulties. By providing swift advice and guidance, learners at risk of withdrawing are supported to get back on track. In most colleges a named member of staff provides learners with a useful single point of contact. This is particularly helpful in supporting young learners to feel welcomed and to fit in to college life. In response to the growing incidence of mental health issues amongst learners, many colleges have expanded their support provision to include counselling services and referral to external agencies.

Most course teams meet regularly to discuss learner progress and highlight 'at-risk' learners who may require further support and encouragement to achieve. However, a few colleges do not have effective arrangements to identify vulnerable learners or those who are most at risk of withdrawal. As a result, some learners are not receiving early enough intervention to help them resolve issues affecting their learning.

Learners value highly the relationships they develop with college staff. They enjoy learning in high quality, industry standard facilities and are appreciative of the support and encouragement they receive to fulfil their learning goals.

### **Building resilience In young learners at Orkney College**

*Staff in Orkney College support learners to develop their skills for employability by helping them to build resilience and confidence in the workplace. Staff within the hospitality team for example, use creative techniques to allow learners to readily accept constructive criticism and learn from it. In the Master Chef Challenge, learners are required to plan, prepare and execute a dish to commercial and industry standards. Teaching staff have minimal input into the choice and preparation of the dish, encouraging learners to take responsibility for their own learning. On completion, the dish is critiqued by both teaching staff and fellow learners. Through this approach, young learners develop skills in giving and receiving constructive feedback, both positive and negative. They learn to reflect on their own work and the work of others, and to identify areas for improvement. By building confidence and 'backbone' young learners are prepared well for what can be expected in the workplace from both peers and customers alike.*

## **7. How well is equality and diversity being embedded across senior phase programmes in colleges?**

### **Planning for equality and diversity in the senior phase**

Almost all colleges offer programmes across a wide range of subject areas to learners in the senior phase. Overall, provision is designed well to meet a diverse range of learner needs, with programmes ranging from SCQF 3 to 7 including programmes for learners with a range of additional support needs.

Many colleges achieve external kite marks in recognition of the support arrangements in place to meet learner needs, including, for example *Buttle Trust* award for supporting looked after/looked after and accommodated young people (LAC/LAAC). There are good examples of colleges working closely with social work departments and local schools to share information to support young people, some of whom have complex needs, to make effective transition to college. However, a few partners do not always share information timeously or consistently which constrains the ability of colleges to plan for receiving vulnerable young people.

Most learners benefit from early identification of their individual needs after enrolling on a college programme. College staff draw on this process to tailor support and are supported well to accommodate individual learner needs. Focussed continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities for staff are used well to highlight specific issues relating to protected characteristics. Most teaching materials and resources are customised to meet individual needs and reflect the diversity of the learner population. Almost all staff develop a shared understanding of equality and diversity as a result of these arrangements.

In a few colleges, key workers provide support to learners with additional needs and work in close partnership with external agencies to arrange work experience and work placement opportunities. Where access to work placement is not possible, colleges ensure that learners develop skills for employability through project and team-working experiences in realistic working environments.

### **Gender balance in the senior phase**

In 2013/14, approximately the same number of males and females aged 15-18 years entered full-time college programmes. However, there remain marked differences in gender profile at subject level, with clear gender bias evident in a number of areas. In 2013/14, eight subject areas attracted predominantly female learners: art and design; business, management, and administration; care; education and training; hairdressing, beauty and complementary therapies, hospitality and tourism; science; and social subjects. Six subject areas were dominated by male learners; computing and ICT; construction; engineering; nautical studies; sport and leisure: and land-based industries. The remaining four subject areas had no overall gender bias: special programmes; performing arts; media; and languages and ESOL.

Colleges take great care to avoid gender stereotyping in the recruitment and selection of senior phase learners. They positively promote under-represented groups and target reduction in gender bias as a priority. However, several subject areas remain overly dominated by one gender, including: computing and ICT; engineering; construction; science; care; and hairdressing, beauty and complementary therapies. Despite focussed efforts to redress the balance in these subject areas, only marginal changes have taken place over the last three years. For example, there are now fewer 15-18 years old females studying computing and ICT than in 2011/12, and there has been no significant change in the number of males studying hospitality and tourism, or females enrolling on engineering programmes.

### **Ethnicity in the senior phase**

In 2013/14 almost all 15-18 years old learners on full-time programmes in Scotland's colleges were categorised as white British. Only 6% of 15-18 years old learners on full-time programmes were not, and the number of 15-18 years old learners in this grouping has decreased by 1% since 2011/12. Over the last three years, the number of learners whose ethnicity was other than white British fell in the majority of subject areas. However, the total number of learners from ethnicities other than white British increased in seven subject areas: art and design; business, management and administration; care; construction; hospitality and tourism; science; and sport and leisure. Despite declining numbers of young full-time learners from ethnicities other than white British in the senior phase, levels of attainment for this group are better than white British learners in the majority of subject areas.

## **8. Recommendations**

### **Colleges should:**

- ensure that curriculum planning takes account of CfE and the senior phase entitlements for all 15-18 year old learners on full-time programmes;
- ensure that transition planning and recruitment processes support 15-18 years old learners to make informed choices about their full-time college programme;
- promote senior phase entitlements to all 15-18 years old learners on full-time college programmes;
- develop appropriate approaches to learning and teaching including classroom management for young learners;
- ensure programme teams analyse the performance of 15-18 years old learners on full-time programmes as a discrete group to better inform action-planning for improvement; and
- continue to work with secondary schools and other partners to redress the gender balance in some subject areas by positively promoting the full range of curriculum to all 15-18 year old learners.

### **Colleges and Secondary Schools should work together to:**

- ensure there are appropriate opportunities for young people to link college and school learning;
- promote the full range of vocational opportunities within colleges to all pupils in the senior phase; and
- ensure that key information regarding the support needs of individual school pupils who plan to enter a full time college programme is shared timeously to allow earlier planning of support services.

### **Colleges and SDS should work together to;**

- raise awareness of staff in colleges of the role of career management skills in supporting CfE and delivery of senior phase entitlements; and
- provide CPD for staff in schools and colleges to promote MyWoW and its role in supporting transition from school to college.

**Education Scotland should;**

- ensure inspection and review activities take account of the senior phase entitlements;
- support secondary schools and colleges to work together to provide senior phase opportunities which meet the needs of all 15-18 years old learners regardless of where they learn; and
- promote and share good practice in delivery of senior phase entitlements across and between secondary schools and colleges

**College Development Network should:**

- draw on the findings of this report to support colleges in taking forward the recommendations.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: Colleges which contributed to the fieldwork for this report**

Borders College

Dundee and Angus College

City of Glasgow College

Moray College UHI

Orkney College UHI



## Appendix 2: Performance Indicators

Table 1 - Learner success by age: full-time programmes leading to a recognised qualification 3-year trend

Sector Performance			
Age	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
15-18	68%	69%	66%
19-29	72%	72%	69%
30-40	77%	76%	73%
41+	81%	81%	70%

Table 2 – Learner success by age 2013/14: full-time programmes leading to a recognised qualification

Sector Performance 2013/14					
Age	Initial Enrolment	Early Withdrawal	Further Withdrawal	Partial Success	Success
15-18	45%	6%	15%	13%	66%
19-29	43%	7%	13%	12%	69%
30-40	8%	8%	12%	8%	73%
41+	4%	9%	12%	8%	70%

Table 3 - Learner success by Gender and Age, 2013-14

		Sector Performance			
Gender	Proportion 15-18	15-18	19-29	30-40	41+
Female	50%	67%	71%	76%	71%
Male	50%	65%	66%	68%	68%

Table 4 – Learner success for learners with a disability, 2013-14

		Sector Performance			
Disability Category	Proportion 15-18	15-18	19-29	30-40	41+
Disability	16%	68%	66%	64%	63%
No known disability	84%	66%	69%	74%	72%

Table 5 - Learner success by Ethnicity and Age, 2013-14

		Sector Performance			
Ethnicity	Proportion 15-18	15-18	19-29	30-40	41+
Asian	2%	69%	67%	73%	75%
Black	1%	62%	63%	69%	63%
Mixed background	1%	61%	68%	74%	65%
Other	0%	67%	75%	74%	74%
White British	93%	66%	68%	70%	69%
White Other	4%	70%	77%	83%	76%
No known	0%	53%	55%	45%	67%

Table 6 - Success for learners aged 15-18 by SIMD decile

		Sector Performance			
SIMD Decile	Proportion 15-18	15-18	19-29	30-40	41+
1 – most deprived	13%	62%	66%	71%	65%
2	13%	64%	65%	73%	67%
3	11%	63%	68%	71%	67%
4	11%	64%	67%	71%	68%
5	11%	68%	70%	73%	72%
6	10%	69%	72%	74%	68%
7	9%	69%	72%	75%	76%
8	9%	69%	72%	75%	74%
9	8%	68%	75%	78%	74%
10 – least deprived	6%	70%	73%	78%	86%

Table 7 - SCQF level of full-time courses undertaken by 15-18 year olds, 2013-14

		Sector Performance			
SCQF Level	Proportion 15-18	15-18	19-29	30-40	41+
No SCQF Level	1%	69%	74%	79%	83%
1	0%	92%	95%	50%	100%
2	1%	81%	86%	91%	93%
3	2%	74%	77%	83%	73%
4	11%	61%	65%	73%	76%
5	30%	62%	67%	75%	72%
6	25%	64%	66%	71%	68%
7	14%	70%	66%	68%	63%
8	15%	73%	74%	74%	73%
9	0%	84%	78%	66%	88%
10	0%	100%	95%	100%	67%

Table 8 Success for learners aged 15-18 on FT programmes by subject area

Subject area	Level	Enrolments 15-18	Early Withdr awal	Further Withdra wal	Partial Success	Completed successfully	Sector (all ages)	Difference in success rates between 15-18 and all ages
		N	%	%	%	%	%	%
Art and design	FE	1,558	5%	18%	11%	66%	67%	-1%
	HE	1,087	5%	12%	11%	73%	76%	-3%
Business, management and administration	FE	1,254	8%	18%	15%	59%	64%	-5%
	HE	1,897	4%	11%	10%	74%	72%	3%
Care	FE	3,360	7%	18%	13%	61%	64%	-2%
	HE	743	4%	11%	10%	75%	72%	3%
Computing and ICT	FE	1,245	7%	16%	19%	58%	61%	-3%
	HE	1,037	3%	12%	16%	69%	66%	4%
Construction	FE	2,602	7%	15%	12%	66%	67%	-1%
	HE	312	4%	15%	18%	63%	67%	-5%
Education and training	FE	438	6%	13%	10%	71%	69%	2%
	HE	148	1%	12%	7%	80%	79%	0%
Engineering	FE	3,389	7%	14%	12%	67%	70%	-2%
	HE	810	4%	9%	23%	64%	65%	-1%
Hairdressing, beauty & Comp Therapies	FE	2,697	8%	19%	11%	62%	67%	-5%
	HE	314	3%	10%	7%	80%	77%	3%
Hospitality and tourism	FE	1,903	7%	17%	12%	64%	65%	-1%
	HE	523	4%	16%	14%	67%	65%	1%
Land-based industries	FE	827	7%	11%	13%	70%	70%	0%
	HE	38	3%	18%	8%	71%	74%	-3%
Languages and ESOL	FE	201	5%	10%	27%	58%	75%	-17%
	HE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Media	FE	464	7%	21%	16%	56%	59%	-2%
	HE	492	3%	11%	12%	75%	74%	1%
Nautical studies	FE	124	1%	1%	7%	91%	90%	1%
	HE	98	0%	5%	10%	85%	82%	2%
Performing arts	FE	849	5%	15%	12%	67%	66%	1%
	HE	932	3%	9%	14%	74%	73%	0%
Science	FE	695	5%	18%	24%	53%	59%	-6%
	HE	274	4%	12%	15%	69%	68%	1%
Social subjects	FE	1,158	8%	17%	21%	55%	57%	-2%
	HE	710	5%	12%	13%	71%	70%	0%
Special Programmes	FE	1,534	6%	12%	11%	72%	73%	-2%
	HE	9	11%	22%	0%	67%	74%	-7%
Sport and Leisure	FE	1,592	6%	16%	14%	64%	64%	0%
	HE	882	6%	15%	12%	67%	70%	-2%
<b>College: all subject areas</b>	<b>FE</b>	<b>25,890</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>-2%</b>
	<b>HE</b>	<b>10,306</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>0%</b>

### **Appendix 3 – Glossary of Terms**

AEV	Annual Engagement Visit
CfE	Curriculum for Excellence
CIAG	Careers Information Advice and Guidance
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSCS	Construction Skills Certification Scheme
DYW	Developing the Young Workforce
ELS	Extended learning support
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FE	Further Education
HE	Higher Education
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
ILP	Individual learning plan
IT	Information technology
LAC/LAAC	Looked after and accommodated young people
MyWOW	My World of Work
NQ	National Qualification
PACE	Pupil Access to College and Employability
PI	Performance Indicators
PLP	Personal Learning Plan
SDS	Skills Development Scotland
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multi-Deprivation
SIP	Skills Investment Plan
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification

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