



The evidence so far

Career Review Whitepaper

October 2021



Proudly part of
**Young Person's
Guarantee**



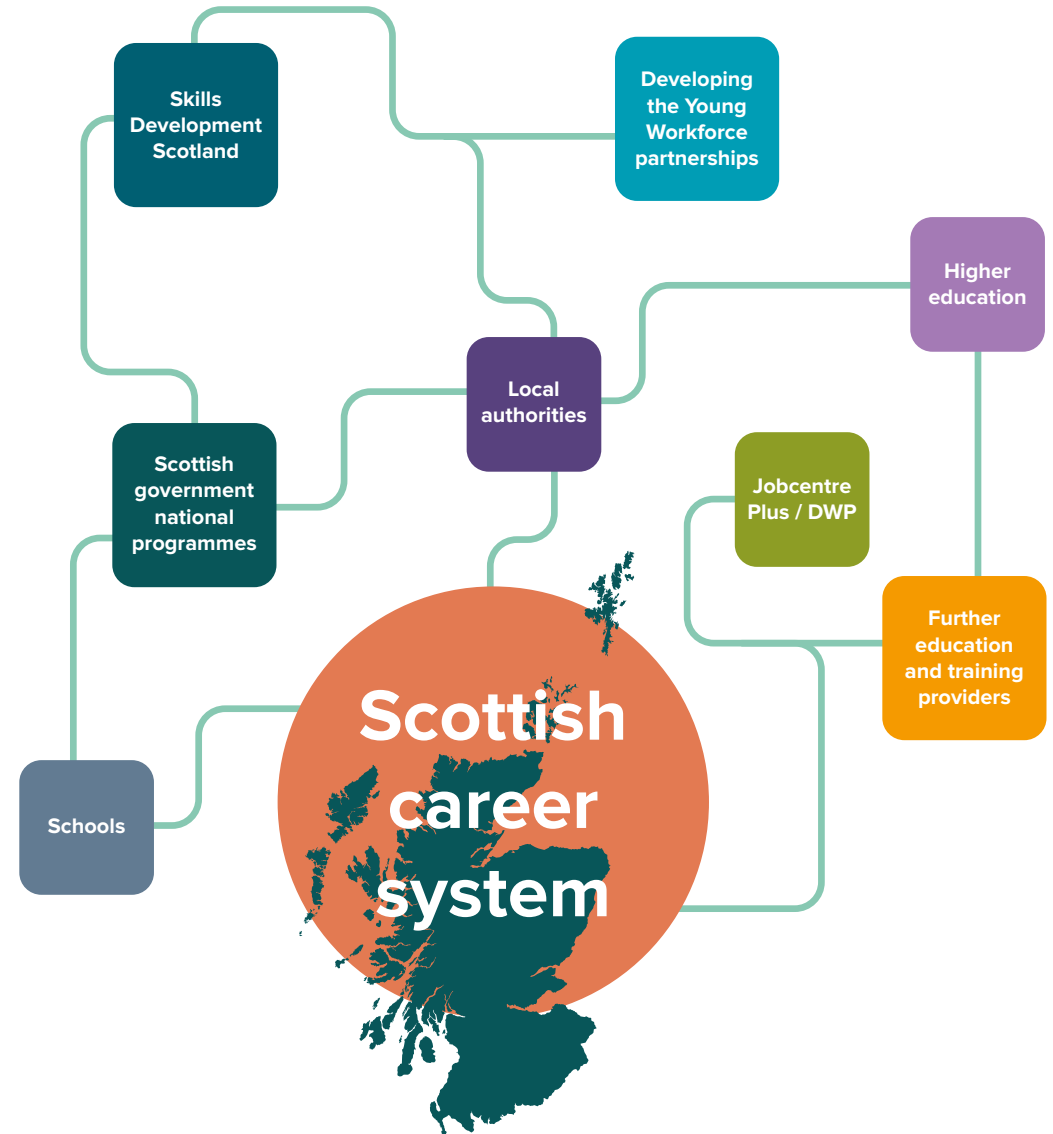
Introduction

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) on behalf of the Scottish Government is conducting an independent review of careers services in Scotland.

This review was requested by the Government to inform the future shape and nature of careers services in Scotland and ensure they are fit for the future.

A response to a key recommendation of the Young Person Guarantee – No-one Left Behind Initial Report, the review will see SDS, alongside partners and the third sector, consider how a career advice service could best operate from early years right through until a young person enters employment. This would address the long-term issue of how best to give young people the insight to what the economy of Scotland is likely to need in the future and how that might influence their decision around career paths.

The Career Review aims to ensure careers services are fit for purpose and future proofed and to provide recommendations for the implementation of all age career services across Scotland in line with Scotland's Careers Strategy - Moving Forward report.





An evidence-based approach

The Career Review has carried out extensive independent research to understand how Careers Services are delivered in Scotland today. Principally, the evidence base to date combines a review of Strategy and Policy, Investment, Structure and Delivery Activity. This paper is part of a series and seeks to summarise the findings related to that scope. The evidence that is referenced has been independently gathered and is drawn from a literature review of 58 published and unpublished documents gathered and reviewed, 21 interviews with informants drawn from across the Scottish career system, a survey of 135 organisations and Skills Development Scotland's data, networks and documents.

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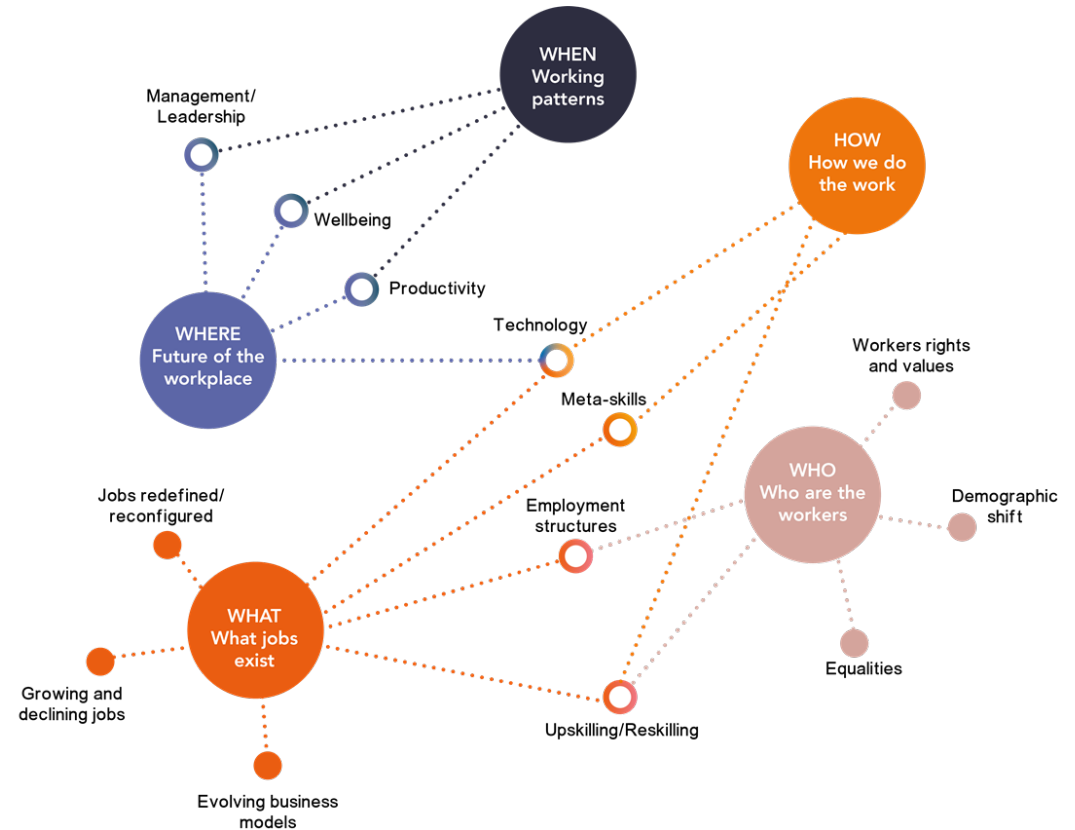


Context – The Future of Work

The review is taking place during a period of significant change in work, the economy and the labour market. The nature of work and the idea of a career is changing, accompanied by a renewed spotlight on upskilling, fair work and equalities.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution was already driving this, but the pace of change has been accelerated by the pandemic. Automation is changing how jobs are done and there are new and emerging sectors and careers. Recruitment practices are also changing, as well as how people access jobs and information about the labour market, and meta-skills are more important than ever before to help people navigate this constant change.

As business models change, the work situations that individuals will find themselves in are more likely to have much greater challenging transitions and there is the likelihood that individuals will need to make more unexpected career decisions. Therefore, an effective careers service is critical to supporting young people to navigate constant change.





Key findings to date – components of the system

The data collected in the initial evidence gathering phase has been reviewed to develop a ‘map’ of the present service with an estimate of its overall size and how much it costs.

Within this, there are eight identified components that collectively comprise Scotland’s career system. It’s possible to group most of the provision of career services under these eight components.

A key strength of Scotland’s careers system is the delivery of career services by a highly professional workforce. Many countries globally seek to achieve the level of professionalism that exists in SDS and Scotland’s HE career services.



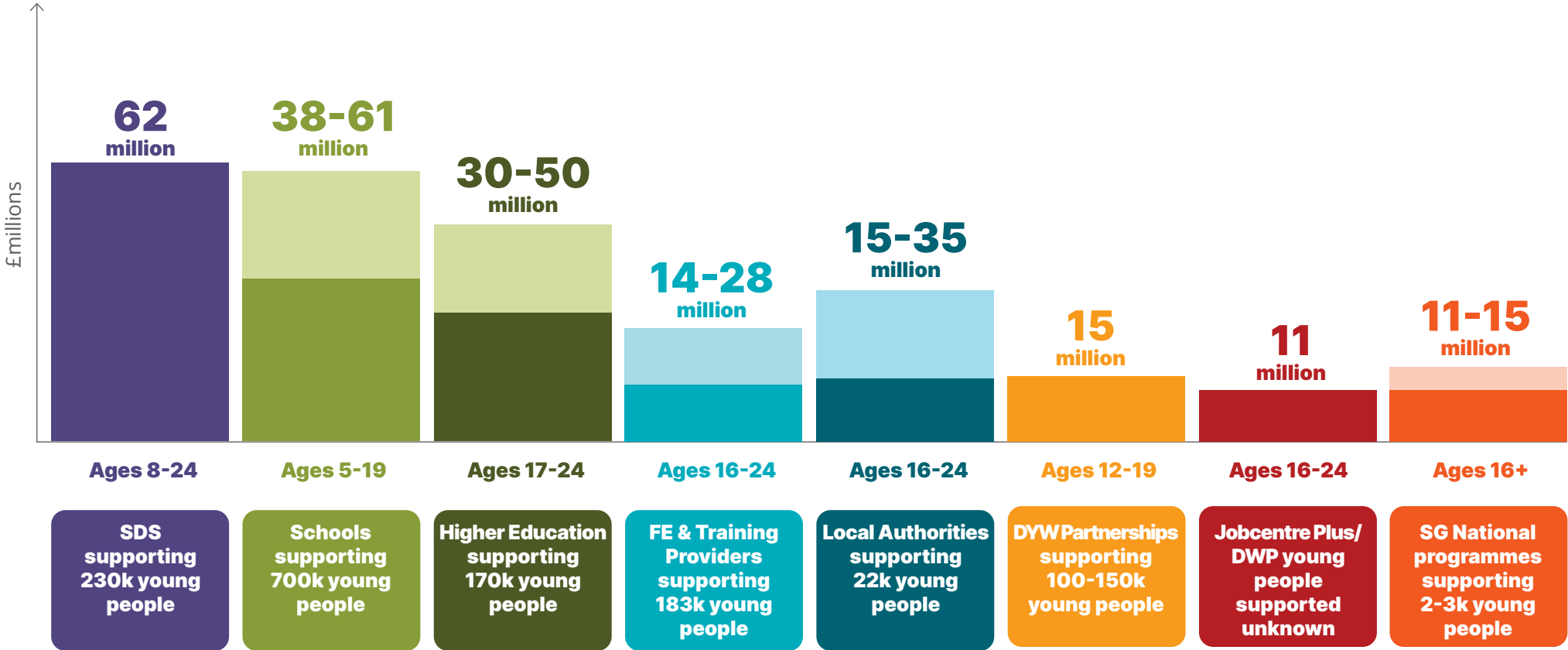
The first three components (SDS, DYW and Scottish Government national programmes) are all ultimately funded by Scottish Government and research shows that all high functioning career systems are based around publicly funded career services.

The Job Centre is funded by UK government and local authorities are drawing on a mixture of funding sources, with European funding having been an important source in the past. The final three are education and training providers who have career services embedded within their provision and funding. Both the third sector and private providers of career services are important to the delivery of provision across all of these components.

The third sector within Scotland also assists the careers system in driving local partnerships as part of Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs), Local Employability plans and Scottish Government national programmes. It connects individuals with services they can benefit from, in areas where there is greatest need and people are furthest from the labour market.



Key findings to date - Funding by cohort size at a particular age



Career system



Career services in Scotland are largely publicly funded albeit through a wide range of different funding mechanisms associated with different levels and elements of government. Key funding sources currently in evidence in the Scottish career system include the following.

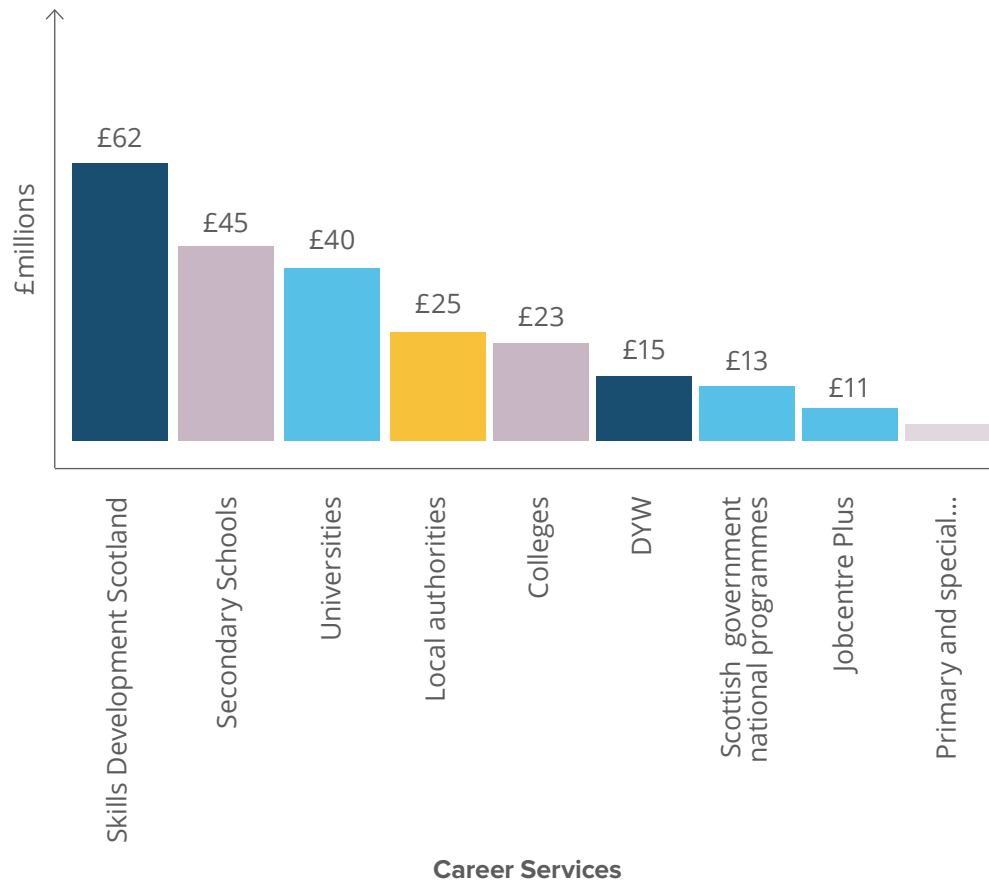
- European Union (e.g. €940 million came from European funds between 2014-2020 with half spent on youth employment / employment⁵³)
- UK government (e.g. through DWP funds)
- Scottish Government (e.g. the £70 million Young person's guarantee funding introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic, £20 million for No one left behind and £35 million for skills and retraining⁵⁴).
- Local government
- Charities and foundations
- Embedded funding (e.g. higher education institutions funding their career services) Overall, we estimate that there is between £200-£280 million total public funding for career services in Scotland.

If we take the mid-point of our estimates (with an overall mid-point for public funding around £240 million per year) we can see that funding is spread through the system. This implies that Scotland is currently spending an average annual amount of around £160 on every young person. However, the funding is strongly skewed towards older young people. One reasonable estimate would be to assume negligible levels of resource on average between age zero and nine, such that we infer an approximate average of £250 per person is spent on those between age 10 and age 25, including the value of teaching/staff time as well as dedicated career budgets. Within this age range, there are likely to be further significant variations, based on age, type of education institution attended, employment status, geography and other factors

Like Scotland, all high functioning career systems are based around publicly funded career services. Some systems have established more effective permanent structures for managing public funding across multiple government departments.



The estimated distribution of public resource for career services in Scotland (£millions)



Key findings to date - Gaps

Although there are various strengths of Scotland's careers system, there are also gaps to be addressed.

Research by Young Scot and SQW highlighted a high, and often unmet, demand for career support amongst young people under the age of 25 in Scotland who make up 27% of the population (a total of 1,495,119 young people).

It suggested that not all young people have equal access to careers services in Scotland, with disadvantaged young people and those who are not pursuing an academic pathway often finding it more difficult to access services. The Learner Journey Review also highlights the variability of access and how dependent it is on the type of institution, if any, that a young person is attending.

This Scottish research is supported by recent UK research from UCAS which suggests that two out of five UK students wished that they had access to more career support and those that received support were more likely to be satisfied with their HE and FE course choices.

An alternative model might start much earlier, as the OECD recommends, ramping up provision in primary schools, but also making sure young people do not pass out of contact with career services once they leave education. Starting earlier and continuing through until the early stages of employment would also have benefits for social inclusion and the equality of outcomes.



Key findings to date - Assessment of need

At the moment, services are predominantly organised on a needs rather than asset based approach. Needs based approaches address social problems and are targeted at those judged to need them most. They align with career services in the employment and employability system, whereas an asset-based approach aligns with career services in the education system and is aimed at building social and economic capacity. While a needs-based approach will focus on what the young person is thought to be lacking in order to get a job, the focus in an assets-based approach is on a person's strengths. Many providers recognise that a more asset-based direction would allow services to become more universal and lifelong which would be helpful in a world where resilience and flexibility will be key in the jobs market.

Key findings to date - The policy landscape

Research to date suggests there is too much complexity and volume of policy in the current system. Careers services try to adhere to a wide range of public policy goals including supporting the effective functioning of the economy, the labour market and education system and contributing to social mobility, social equity, health and well-being, positive environmental behaviour and justice and rehabilitation.

There are 24 policies that frame careers and careers services can be mapped back to 10 of the 12 national performance indicators. The effects of this cluttered policy landscape are far reaching.

Career policy in Scotland is being developed on an ongoing basis with new reviews, initiatives and policies emerging all the time. Often new initiatives emerge before older ones are complete and overlap with them in aims and delivery approach. This leads to a complex delivery landscape and contributes to issues of fragmentation and duplication.

Career policy in Scotland is simultaneously the concern of UK government, Scottish government, and local government. It is also the concern of education and employment ministers as well as ministers in other areas. The fact that there are both multiple jurisdictional levels and multiple government departments seeking to develop career services, and that there is no clear structure for the management of these competing agendas, adds further complexity.

It is also noticeable that the issue of the fragmentation of services and the requirement for their greater integration comes up repeatedly across many of these policy documents.



Key policies and documents framing the delivery of career services in Scotland

| Programme | Policy | Funding |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| Plans for Jobs | Refreshed Curriculum for Excellence narrative | Parental employability support fund |
| Scotland's Career Strategy | No one left behind | Workplace equality fund |
| Young person guarantee | Every child, every chance | |
| Community Learning and Development Guidance | Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 | |
| The 15-24 learner journey review | Career Education standard | |
| A fairer Scotland for disabled people: Employment action plan | Work placements standard | |
| Scotland's labour market strategy | Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 | |
| Guidance for local partners in the new model for community justice | Curriculum for Excellence | |
| School/employer partnerships | | |
| Community Planning Guidance | | |
| Developing the young workforce | | |
| European Social Fund operational programme for Scotland 2014-2020 | | |
| National Youth Work Strategy | | |



Findings to date - Measurement

Each of the main components in the career system are seeking to measure and the table on the right demonstrates that the level of impact measurement across Scotland's career service is quite variable and that there is limited ability to provide higher levels of evidence. The patchy impact measurement across the system interacts with data sharing issues to reduce the possibility of building system wide evaluations. This is compounded by a lack of agreement about what the aims of different services should be. For example, SDS measure impact using progress in CMS reported by clients, while HE services may refer to graduate attributes. Recognising and evaluating against sector appropriate metrics is good practice if these different metrics represent conceptually different ideas about what the service is trying to achieve. If, on the other hand they are conceptually similar, but expressed differently, there might be value in trying to align the relevant frameworks and outcomes.

The data reported here is derived from a survey of Careers Services Providers and is therefore self-reported.

The level of impact that key components in the career system state they can demonstrate

| | SDS | DYW | Scottish Gov | JCP/DWP | LA | HE | FE | Schools |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|--------------|---------|----|----|----|---------|
| Return on investment | | | | | | | | |
| Community impact | | | | | | | | |
| Improved life outcomes | | | | | | | | |
| Behavioural impact | | | | | | | | |
| Knowledge and skills | | | | | | | | |
| Positive rating | | | | | | | | |
| Services have been delivered | | | | | | | | |
| Funding has been spent | | | | | | | | |



Key findings to date - Collaboration & Co-operation

In addition to the core delivery of services, Scotland has some structures to improve co-operation and co-ordination across these different services. Investment in co-operation and co-ordination of services is critical in part because career services are so frequently serving multiple policy aims, funders and government departments. Thinking about the design of effective career support systems strongly emphasises the importance of attending to and developing structures that create and maintain quality, enable co-operation, organise funding and simplify access to services for the customer.

| Organisation | Working with... |
|--------------------------------|---|
| SDS | DYW / LAs /Schools /Colleges /DWP |
| Developing the Young Workforce | SDS / LAs /Schools /Colleges |
| Local authorities | SDS / Jobcentre Plus /Schools /Colleges |
| Primary schools | DYW / SDS |
| Secondary schools | SDS / DYW /Schools /Colleges / Universities |
| Colleges | SDS / DYW /Schools /Colleges / Universities |
| Universities | Universities |

There are two primary coordination structures working at different levels. The first is local coordination facilitated through Community Planning Partnerships and Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs). The requirement on Local Authorities to develop localised plans delivering against key national indicators is a means by which consistency across regions in terms of outcomes is supported, but with flexibility in delivery mechanisms allowed depending on the needs and resources of a local authority area (and smaller localities

The second is the coordination of specific career and employability activities supported by SDS and DYW. The creation of school employer partnerships (supported by DYW) and partnership agreements between SDS and schools, job centres, colleges and other partners are key coordination mechanisms.



Skills Development Scotland is also critical in providing an underpinning infrastructure for much of Scotland's career ecosystem. Central to this is the MyWoW website which provides high quality career information and advice to individuals and to all the other components in the system. It is worth noting that MyWoW is not the only source of career information and LMI used by career services in Scotland. In the Higher Education sector, for example, universities often report using their own bespoke resources, and other web-based resources including the prospects and target jobs websites. Other resources noted in survey responses included resources provided by private organisations, not-for-profit organisations and websites for specific local areas.

There is less evidence for effective coordination systems at a national level. This is about the co-ordination of delivery, but also about how delivery and impact are monitored and measured. SDS activities are reported internally within SDS, and Local Authority and DYW activities are reported back to Scottish Government. A lack of clarity on funding streams, and high diversity in the localised activities of LEPs and others potentially creates a challenge for devising effective forms of national collaboration, but it is still important to note the absence of these collaboration mechanisms. Finally, it is worth mentioning the Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) which bring local authorities together, alongside Education Scotland, to collaborate at a regional level to improve the education system and increase its contribution to equity offer a mid-level coordinating structure

between the national government and local authorities, which could prove useful in coordinating Scotland's career ecosystem. However, at present the RICs have a very limited level of engagement in career services.

Putting it simply, the overall system is little more than the sum of its parts. Yet given the volume of provision, the shared interests, and the fact that Scotland is a small state with considerable investment in, and infrastructure for career guidance, it would be possible for the whole system to be simplified, for gaps to be eliminated, overlaps to be minimised, and greater synergies to be identified.



User Information

Huge amounts of information about users' needs are collected across the career services of Scotland and the issue of user information emerged repeatedly in the evidence gathering interviews. The development of the 16+ data hub is an important attempt to address these issues and improve data sharing, but there is a need to improve this further.

This would enable both improvement of the service that individual young people are able to access and provide a more strategic overview of need across Scotland. For example, there is limited ability to pass on information about a young person's career needs from school to further education or college and no opportunity to look systematically at the differing needs between different components within the system.

Ideally information must move beyond the recording of 'participation' and include broader information about young people's progress through the system and career development needs. Strongly related to concerns about user information are problems in achieving good and useful integration between local, national and international data on the education and employment system.

For example, LEPs have a lot of information about local needs and activities and education providers collect information on their students - most notably Higher Education providers who gather both information on the destinations of graduates and wider career and labour market information relating to Scotland and further afield. SDS also collect a lot of labour market data and Scottish Government, UK government and a range of other sources also have information and intelligence to bring to bear. Yet, there can be challenges in bring these data sources together.



What's next?

There are a range of considerations related to investment, strategy and policy, impact and delivery as Scotland thinks about the future of its careers system:

1. Scotland offers universal access to career services, but not all access is equal
2. Career services are embedded in a wide range of different policies, but policy does not manage them as a national ecosystem
3. The overwhelming majority of career services are funded by public money but there is limited measures and impacts are
- 4 Multiple stakeholders are involved in the career ecosystem, but there is a need to more clearly define who they are and what their roles should be
5. Some elements of the ecosystem listen carefully to the voices of users, but users are rarely asked to comment on the ecosystem as a whole.

Looking to the future, it is also worth noting that careers services have always been involved in managing a shifting paradigm. However, the nature of work and the idea of a career is changing, and the pandemic has only accelerated this change. Work situations that individuals will find themselves in are more likely to have much greater challenging transitions and the need to make more unexpected career decisions. Therefore, an effective careers service is critical to supporting young people to navigate constant change.

Other considerations moving forward should include the volatility of the labour market, UK policy considerations, the role of the DWP and the volume of change within education presented by the OECD report and the CfE.



With these shifts come opportunities that should be considered. Scotland will need services that are:

- Lifelong
- Person centred and designed to include all young people, in their individual context
- Delivered in a way that considers young people's aspirations, feelings, situations and behaviours, with young people involved in the co-design, governance and quality assurance of services
- Experiential and connected to the world of work through awareness, exploration and experiences which build aspirations and ambitions
- Integrated within the classroom
- Involving employers in the design and delivery of curricula.

We will need to ensure these interventions take place much more often and providing a greater emphasis on developing the skills that enable people to think about, explore and experience the world of work whilst still in education.

Provision must also start earlier and continue throughout life to be successful; enabling all young people to be prepared for and encouraged to reflect on their experiences by teachers, carers, careers professionals and employers through a wider programme of career learning.

