



# Careers By Design

The Career Review: what it means for Scotland's colleges

May 2022



Skills  
Development  
Scotland

Young  
Person's  
Guarantee

**This review would not have been possible without the **insights, experiences and deep engagement** of young people and stakeholders.**

**The review recommendations have been designed with over 80 young people whose **experiences and ideas** are captured in the pages that follow.**

**David Scott is one of the young people who fed into the Career Review. In a short video, **he shares their hopes for an accessible and inspiring career system.****



**Watch it here:**





# Introduction

One of the strong underpinning themes of this review has been the changing world of work. Increasing disruption in the labour market means today's students are likely to face challenges throughout their working lives that require them to adapt, reskill and retrain along the way.

As a college principal, I see daily evidence of colleges responding to the changing world of work, enabling our students to develop new skills and be resilient to change.

However as a sector, it's clear that we need to continue innovating, adapting and responding to the external environment.

If we are to truly help our students thrive in the future, we need to better support them in developing the skills needed to manage their careers. It is therefore critical that colleges play a more significant role in shaping and delivering career services within the tertiary education ecosystem.

Historically colleges have provided career information as part of a wraparound of support services. Industry insight and applied learning, led by vocationally experienced lecturers, is a strength of the sector and we support around 240,000 people each year to develop the skills required to contribute to our society and economy.

Colleges deliver around a quarter of all higher education in Scotland. And yet, as a sector, the career services available in colleges is inconsistent, under-resourced and not reflective of what is being provided in schools and universities.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) review of senior phase and the Scottish Funding Council's Review of Coherence and Sustainability highlighted the importance of creating a connected tertiary ecosystem that values skills as much as qualifications.

It also flagged the need for lifelong learning in a context where resilience and transferable skills are necessary to navigate the constantly changing future job market.

Therefore, it is essential that all college leaders take the time to understand the recommendations of the career review.

It is critical that your voice is heard in shaping the career system that will be delivered through our programme design and support offer, so that our students have equality of opportunity to develop the same career management skills as others within the tertiary sector.

Angela Cox

**Principal, Scottish Borders College and Career Review Programme Board Member**

# What is the Career Review?

The Scottish Government commissioned the national skills agency Skills Development Scotland to lead the most comprehensive review of Scotland's career services in a generation.

An independent programme board worked with a wide range of young people, employers, parents and carers, teachers, careers advisers and other organisations, listening to their experiences of current services and how they could be improved.

## Why is it needed?



### COVID-19

COVID-19 has impacted education and career development and highlighted and exacerbated a range of existing inequalities driven by skills and access to work



### Educational reform

The OECD has recently completed a review of Scotland's education system, which has signalled significant reform. Progress toward change is already underway. The Scottish Funding Council has also undertaken a review of Coherence and Sustainability in Further and Higher Education



### Poverty and inequality

Despite relatively high rates of participation in the labour market, poverty and inequality remain a significant issue. Two thirds of children living in poverty are members of working households. The Black Lives Matter movement continues to shine a light on persistent and systemic racism in society

## The climate emergency



This Scottish Government was the first in the world to formally recognise a climate emergency and has committed to a just and fair transition to net zero, requiring transformation in all areas of our society and economy

## Industry 4.0 and disruptive technologies



Advances in technology continue to change the demand for skills and create new ways of working. This is likely to result in frequent disruption in the labour market that requires recurring occupational change and a need to significantly and regularly retrain and upskill

## A dynamic labour market



Skills shortages in Scotland are being mirrored around the world, resulting in a global war for talent in many sectors. Scotland has a shrinking working age population and there is a critical requirement to maximise all the talent and skills available

## The nature of work



These changes and more are driving fundamental shifts in the nature of work and where it takes place. There is a need to place increased emphasis on career management skills, meta skills and wellbeing, as part of a wider approach to fair work. Non-traditional working models highlight both advantages and risks. There is a need to ensure young people are supported to work safely, free of discrimination and harassment



# What the evidence told us

## Colleges have a limited dedicated career service:

- Colleges rarely have a dedicated career service and are more likely to deliver some career information and advice as part of a broader student support service
- SDS provides a targeted but limited service offer to certain student cohorts, agreed with each college through a partnership agreement
- Colleges estimate between 350 and 500 FTE staff are involved in supporting students' career choices across 27 institutions, however the vast majority of those do not have a career-specific remit or a career-specific related job title
- In many cases the support that they provide is likely to focus on helping people to find a pathway through the college, for example transferring from one course to another, rather than providing a longer-term view on students' careers that extends into the labour market
- Levels of career-related qualifications and specialisms within this cohort are low
- Impact and evaluation of college career services remains limited

## Career education is not systemically embedded in college curricula:

- Scottish Funding Council outcome agreements commit colleges to learning with impact, being responsive to employer and industry needs and to create work ready graduates. This commitment acknowledges a critical dependency between career education and post-school pathways into further education
- Colleges have strong relationships with employers and provide many programmes that are closely connected to the labour market via vocational and technical education
- However, this does not necessarily translate into a focus on broader career education or courses that are relevant to the labour market; more needs to be done to provide work-related learning and industry curriculum co-design
- An accelerating rate of change means young people and those supporting them need the skills to thrive in a rapidly changing labour market; at present education and career services are not always cognisant of the pace of change in the world of work
- There is inequity in accessing experiential career education opportunities

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**The Scottish Funding Council's Review of Coherence and Sustainability presents a unique opportunity:**

- Ensuring provision in post-school education has greater industry involvement and meets the needs of students, employers and broader economic and social drivers
- Developing a more agile and responsive funding model for career services in colleges



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# What needs to change?

- **Defining a universal offer** for career services in colleges, providing consistent access to career guidance practitioners as appropriate
- **Greater industry involvement**, ensuring provision in post-school education meets the needs of students, employers and broader economic and social drivers
- **Strong performance data** providing career intelligence that informs students' choice of pathway
- **Experiential work-related learning** becomes part of the fabric of college curriculum design and delivery
- **Skills are prioritised:** education and services develop, recognise and accredit the skills and habits essential for the future world of work
- **Practitioner support:** those delivering the curriculum are supported to make connections to the world of work
- **Workplace delivery:** elements of the curriculum are delivered in the practical setting of the workplace.

# How we can make things better: Our design principles



Meeting the dynamic aspirations and different needs of all young people



Building agency and equipping young people with the skills to thrive in a changing world



Enabling young people to expand their knowledge and experience of Fair Work



Integrating career experiences into curricula, practice and culture of the education system



An 'ecosystem' of assets delivering coherent and impactful career services for Scotland

# How we'll do it: Our recommendations

Working with young people, employers, parents and carers, teachers, career practitioners and other stakeholders, the Career Review has co-designed ten recommendations.

These recommendations are summarised below. For more detail on the recommendations visit the [Career Review microsite](#).



## Experiential career education

There should be dedicated curriculum time for experiential work-related learning in all settings.



## Community based services

Career services should be delivered within communities in a way that is aligned to social justice values and provides access to consistent national services.



## Exposure to fair work

People should have a right to have a wide range of meaningful opportunities to experience work and understand what fair work is.



## Digital enablement, empowerment and engagement

Enhanced digital services and online tools should be developed that present information about the world of work in an inspiring and accurate way.



## A new career development model

A simple model should be established that defines career services, bringing definition to the variety of career services across Scotland.



## Developing skills and habits essential for the future world of work

Career education and services should be designed to develop, recognise and accredit the skills and habits essential for the future world of work.



## Creating person centred career services

Individuals should be involved in identifying what they need from career services based on their own circumstances and context, which leads to a flexible and personalised service offer.

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### **Clear roles for the delivery of career services**

Where appropriate, the roles across career services should be defined to deliver the career development model in a coherent way.

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### **Strengthening evaluation and continuous improvement**

The effectiveness and impact of the whole career system should be measured using a suite of outcome-based measures that are integrated in all settings, supporting the delivery of responsive and flexible services.

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### **Creating a career services coalition**

A coalition should be established that ensures the implementation of the review's recommendations and the coherence of career services across Scotland, where young people, practitioners, employers and stakeholders are represented.

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### What will this mean for colleges?

- **Better informed school leavers**  
School leavers are more informed about their learning and training pathways and career choices
- **More opportunities for students to experience fair work**  
A wider range of offers for college students which help them develop skills needed to manage careers and thrive through change, and aligns with their aspirations
- **A familiar career framework**  
Students have experienced the career development model throughout their school education
- **More career support for students**  
A new service blueprint for colleges that articulates a consistent national career service offer
- **Access to innovative and impactful assets**  
Tools, resources and services that help their students develop skills and make informed choices
- **Access to immersive and engaging career experiences**  
Innovative and impactful tools, resources and services that provide high quality career experiences
- **Understanding the impact of career provision**  
Using joined up data to improve services and secure the best possible future for students
- **A direct say in how career services are provided**  
Ensuring strong college voice on the career services coalition

### What will it require from colleges?

- **Significantly greater emphasis on career education** within the college curriculum at all levels
- **Consistent work-related learning** with industry involvement in the curriculum
- **Building capacity** of existing resource to provide career support
- **Identifying professionally qualified resource** for equitable access to career guidance
- **Shared ownership** for the career system through the career services coalition
- **Clear leadership**, empowerment and accountability to deliver changes required

# What happens now?

The Scottish Government has welcomed the findings of the Career Review and has accepted all of its recommendations.

Ministers have asked the independent Career Review Programme Board to lead the development and design of implementation plans to make them happen.

These plans will be co-designed with those delivering and experiencing career services. This will include the strong voice of colleges in developing:

- an overarching 'target operating model' which outlines the overall vision for the career system
- a 'service blueprint' for college career services which outlines the relationships between services, processes, structures and how they engage with customers
- implementation plans that detail what needs to be done, by whom and when

The programme board recognises that the Scottish Funding Council's Review of Coherence and Sustainability in Further and Higher Education is a fundamental condition of success, given the links between education and career choices, the importance of career education and the opportunity to marshal the combined resources of our education system and career services.

Colleges interested in finding out more about this work, or getting involved in helping the Programme Board in its work should visit [www.CareerReview.scot](http://www.CareerReview.scot) or express interest by emailing [CareerReview@sds.co.uk](mailto:CareerReview@sds.co.uk)

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