

Careers by Design

Summary Report of the Career Review Programme Board

February 2022



Skills
Development
Scotland

Young
Person's
Guarantee

Introduction

The recommendations in this report were designed with over 80 young people whose experiences and ideas are captured in the pages that follow.

We asked them to introduce the report – the text below has been approved by the young people involved.

“Over the last six months we’ve helped the career review team to design and develop the recommendations that you’ll read in this document.

We volunteered to do this because each of us has personal experience of what it’s like to make career choices in 2021.

We come from a diverse range of backgrounds. Some of us had great experiences, with career support which helped us grow and thrive. Others felt left behind by a system which didn’t work for us.

Most of us got involved with this review because we want to change things for the better. We hope that our experiences and our ideas help to create services which are accessible and inspiring for all young people in Scotland.

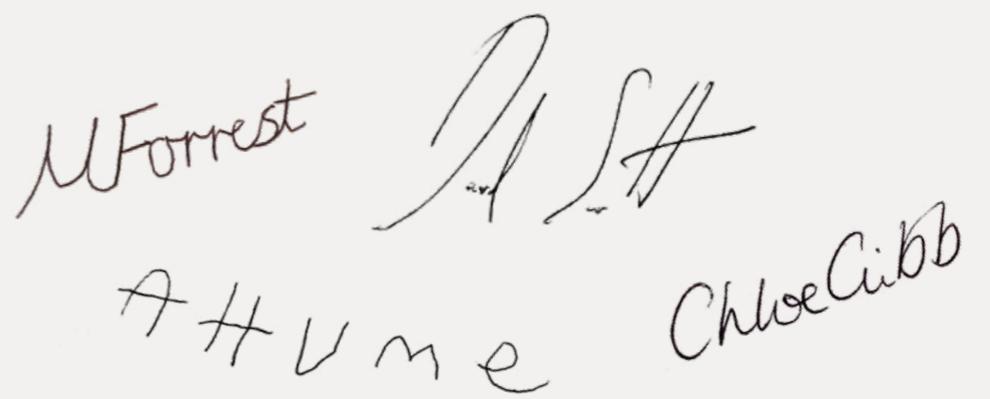
Through interviews, group discussions and workshops we’ve had the opportunity to feed back on what works well and the opportunities to improve.

We’ve shared ideas, challenges and opinions to find collective solutions together. Solutions that give young people a broader range of experiences, that remove stigma and open up possibilities and that are inclusive and open to everyone.

To the people with the power to make these changes: we hope you listen to our voices. And continue listening to our voices as the future service is being developed and designed.

Most of all, we hope you act to make these changes happen. If you do, you will be creating a better tomorrow – one which will be good for all young people, and good for our country.

You’ll be helping make Scotland a better, fairer place to live and work.”



Chair's foreword

Young people today face an uncertain and disruptive future.

The harmful effects of COVID-19 have impacted their learning and social lives, and called into question their plans for the future. The fact is, however, that even without this insipid and destructive pandemic, they would still be facing unprecedented change. It is all around us.

Our ambitions to reach net zero require transformational change in our society and economy that has to be economically and socially just. Advances in technology are changing the work that we do and will continue to disrupt many traditional job roles. Changing demographics mean our working-age population is contracting, with a wide range of implications.

Scotland's career services therefore need to help young people navigate and thrive in this uncertain and disruptive future.

In recent years, Scotland has maintained, invested in and developed a national, all-age career service giving us strong foundations to build from. There are many positives to celebrate and maintain.

However, it is clear that what worked yesterday, will not work tomorrow. And the current system isn't working for everyone.

The persistent inequality and discrimination that blights the life chances of young people as a consequence of their social class or personal characteristics needs to be overcome.

Over recent months we have undertaken the most comprehensive review of Scotland's career services in a generation.

Young people we spoke to set high expectations for universal all-age career services. They are impatient for change, as are their parents, carers, teachers, practitioners and mentors.

We support this ambition. We must also frame this expectation within the reality of the resources invested across the ecosystem.

Valued as they are, the universal career services provided by Skills Development Scotland will not be sufficient in ensuring young people have the support they need to deal with the rapidly changing nature of work.

We therefore need to be much more intentional about how services work across the ecosystem to create a joined-up offer that wraps around the needs of individual young people.

In other words, we need careers by design.

More fundamentally, our ability to better support young people's career development is profoundly dependent on better embedding career education within the curriculum at all levels of education.

Scotland's approach to curriculum across secondary, further and higher education is going through a period of significant review.

Senior phase curriculum and assessment is the subject of review and consultation in response to the recommendations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Review of Coherence and Sustainability is also considering future provision, delivery, outcomes and targets, funding models and support for research activity across the college and university sector.

These reforms, alongside other key policy drivers, present a truly unique opportunity to fundamentally enhance career education, ensuring it has greater prominence and priority. It is an opportunity that must not be missed.

As the OECD recognises, we need a more equitable focus on the skills and competencies young people are developing. The curriculum needs to devote adequate time to career related learning with greater access to work-related learning.

And alignment between what young people and our economy demand and our education and skills system and our employers offer is vital.

Through this review we have been given a once in a lifetime opportunity to lead the change that will provide Scotland's young people with the support, guidance and skills they need.

Some steps to implement our recommendations should begin immediately. Others require further detailed planning to specify the appropriate means, timescales and resources.

We know the challenge that this presents and the urgency and commitment this requires.

But we also know the prize: a comprehensive system of career support that assists all our young people to live fulfilling working lives, that supports thriving workplaces, and a successful, fair and sustainable economy and a more equal society.



Grahame Smith
Chair, Career Review Programme Board

Background

'It is recommended that under the leadership of SDS, an implementation plan is developed to take forward the recommendations [of Scotland's Career Strategy].

'In addition, SDS should be asked to consider how best a career advice service could operate from early years right through until a young person enters employment.

'This would also start to 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.'

Sandy Begbie

Initial Report: Youth Guarantee - No-one Left Behind

As part of the Young Person's Guarantee, SDS has undertaken a comprehensive, evidence led, review of career services for young people in Scotland.

This Review has been led by an independent programme board chaired by Grahame Smith with members drawn from a wide range of key stakeholders in the career system and a specific focus on those with protected characteristics. It is has been fully informed by the views of young people who use careers services.

This summary report represents an overview of the review and its recommendations aligned to Scotland's Career Strategy.

The full report is published on the www.CareerReview.scot

Context

Scotland's Careers Strategy: Moving Forward sets out the need for accessible and consistently high-quality career information, advice and guidance for all ages against the background of a rapidly changing labour market.

However, since its publication the context has changed significantly:

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

 **Educational reform**
The implementation of the OECD's recommendations on Curriculum for Excellence and the SFC's Review of Coherence and Sustainability in Further and Higher Education are underway.

 **Poverty and inequality**
Despite high rates of participation in the labour market, poverty and inequality remain a significant issue.



The climate emergency
The Scottish Government 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 are changing demand for skills and will frequently disrupt the labour market, driving a need to significantly and regularly retrain and upskill.



A dynamic labour market
Global skills shortages are resulting in a global war for talent in many sectors. Here, a shrinking working age population drives a need to maximise all talent and skills.



The nature of work
These changes and more are driving fundamental shifts in the nature of work and where it takes place, placing increased emphasis on career management / meta skills and wider fair work outcomes.

The current system and opportunities for change

There is much to celebrate within current career service provision:

- Scotland has protected funding for an all-age career service that is the envy of many other countries
- Career services are integral to a wide range of Scottish Government policies and are aligned to many national performance indicators
- Career services, career education and information that supports career choices are in demand and valued by young people
- Services delivered by SDS are independently inspected and scrutinised by Education Scotland: 75% are rated as excellent or very good
- There is a highly professionalised career workforce in SDS and Scotland's universities
- There has been a growth in partnerships between education and employment
- Local partnerships, including the third sector, have proven effective at connecting individuals with services, particularly those who are furthest from the labour market

We face systemic challenges in supporting career development:

- Career education is not systematically embedded in the curricula of all educational settings
- The current 1.5 FTE resource per state secondary school, dedicated to supporting career choices through SDS and DYW, is insufficient to provide personalised one-to-one support to Scotland's 300,000+ school pupils
- There is a fragmented and complex delivery landscape, with limited oversight of the system. This drives inequities in access, quality and take up of services
- There is significant pressure on public finances
- The economy and the labour market is changing rapidly, requiring proportionate response to opportunities and challenges
- High demand for career support often goes unmet and is likely to increase. Those that need the most support report finding it more difficult to access services
- Many young people said they didn't see themselves represented in career services
- The OECD reports evidence of "initiative overload" in the education system with increasing pressures on schooling.

There is opportunity to better serve the needs of all young people by:

- Adopting a more consistent and comprehensive approach to career education, including more curriculum time for career education at all levels
- Establishing broader pathways to success and creating an education system that values skills as well as qualifications
- Significantly expanding work-related learning, industry curriculum co-design and strong performance data to inform young people's choice of college and university course
- Ensuring services are 'by design' through greater alignment between policies, investment and operational delivery with common standards and measurement
- Achieving better alignment between the skill demands of individuals and the economy and what our education and skills system and employers provide
- Shifting from needs-based to asset-based approaches that allow services to become more universal and lifelong
- Supporting individuals at an earlier age and continuing until they enter a sustained destination

To better serve the needs of all young people, career services should focus on:

- Developing **confidence and agency**
- **Developing and applying skills** to manage careers and thrive through change
- **Personalisation and responsiveness** to individual need
- High quality **information and insight**
- Empowering people to benefit from **technological change**
- Reflecting a need for **continual learning**
- **Supporting transitions** and unexpected career decisions
- Helping articulate **expectations of fair work and skills**
- Helping understand the longer-term **implications of choices**
- Delivery within **communities**
- **Appearing clear, relevant and appealing** to young people and those who support them
- **Informing and enabling key influencers** to help their young people
- **Enabling interaction with employers, trade unions** and others
- Delivering a curriculum **co-designed with employers**

Dependencies

The future success of career services have a range of dependencies:

- The outcome of the review of Curriculum for Excellence is a fundamental condition of success
- Skills alignment, ensuring that investment decisions align with the needs of individuals and the economy
- Consistent work-related learning, industry curriculum co-design and strong performance data to inform young people's choices of college and university course choices
- Integration of policies, developed with and informed by the careers service 'sector'
- The critical role of employers and business support, building on the work of the Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board, including:

- a greater focus on workplace innovation
 - more opportunities for workers to access support for skills and career development
 - recruitment and selection practices that give skills currency
 - the wider adoption of fair work principles and practices
 - the adoption of the principles of equality and anti-discrimination as per The Equality Act 2010
 - opportunities for employers to co-develop and implement policy that impacts on career services.
- Clear leadership, empowerment and accountability to deliver change
 - A move to multi-year funding assumptions through the multi-year spending review in 2022

The programme board encourages Scottish Government Ministers, public bodies, representative bodies and other key policy influencers to reflect on these issues in their consideration of this report and related decision-making.

Our design principles

We drew on the evidence and our work with young people and other stakeholders to co-create five design principles for future career services in Scotland:

We believe that services designed, developed and implemented in line with these principles will not only overcome the gaps in current provision but will ensure services fit for current and future challenges.

The specific recommendations we have identified align with these principles and we believe the action necessary to implement them will enable the wide range of career services to each play their role in a coherent system that provides greater clarity and better progression for young people.



Career services meet the dynamic aspirations and different needs of all young people.



Career services build agency and equip young people with the skills to thrive in a changing world.



Career services enable young people to expand their knowledge and experience of fair work.



Career experiences are integrated into curricula, practice and culture of the education system.



There is an 'ecosystem' of assets delivering coherent and impactful career services for Scotland.

Our recommendations

Working with young people and stakeholders we have co-designed ten recommendations.

These recommendations are far reaching and cover the full career 'ecosystem'. We believe that adopted and implemented as a whole, and properly resourced, they will deliver a fundamental transformation of our career services.

We have articulated each of these in terms of what it means for a young person using the service.

Our recommendations are:

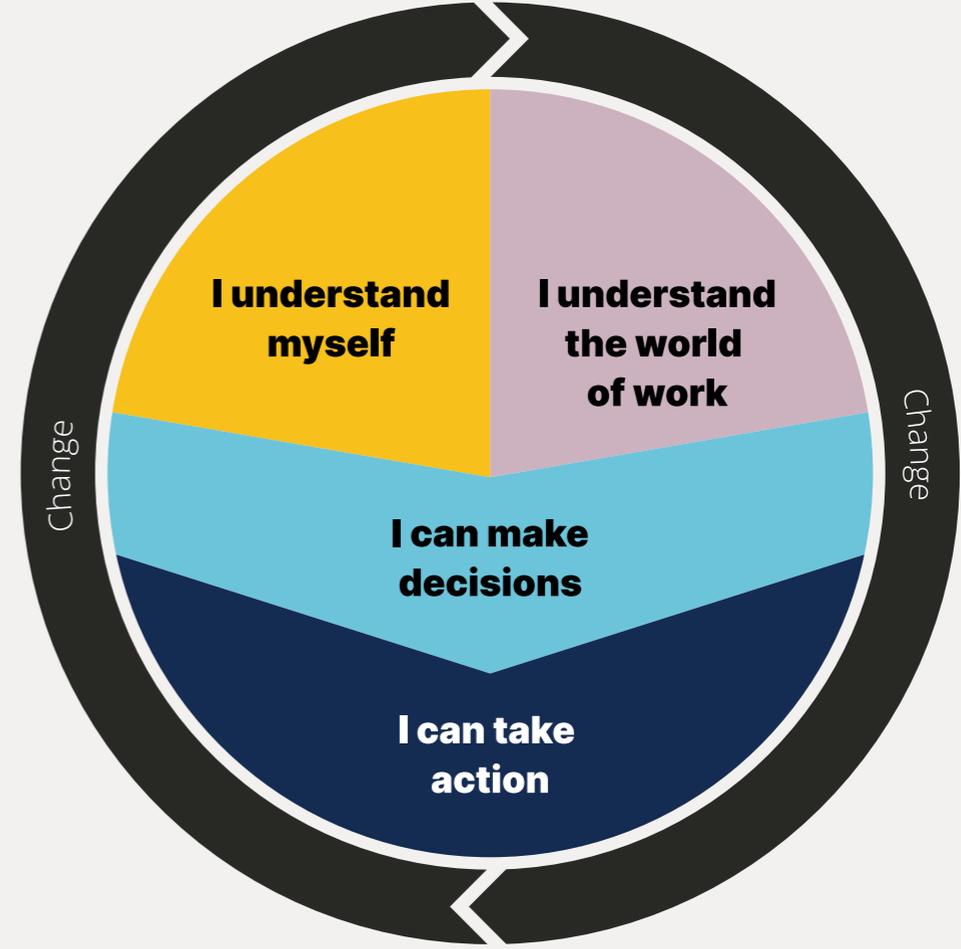


**Recommendation 1:
A new career development model**

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

"I know what learning experiences I can expect to take part in to help me make decisions about my career"

Career development model prototype





**Recommendation 2:
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.

"I can describe and am developing a set of skills for the world of work that will help me manage my career."



**Recommendation 3:
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.

"I know that career services understand me, that they are there when I need them, and will help me get to where I want to be."



**Recommendation 4:
Experiential career education**

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

"In my learning I know there will be a range of meaningful activities that are hands on and help me understand and experience fair work."



**Recommendation 5:
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.

"I know that within my community there are people who I trust to help me explore careers and I have access to the same chances as everyone else."



**Enabling recommendation 6:
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.

"I know I'll get lots of chances to explore jobs and work in different ways."



**Enabling recommendation 7:
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.

"I find digital information and activities more inspiring, current and self-explanatory."



**Enabling recommendation 8:
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.

"I am supported by a group of people who know me and help me achieve my potential."



**Enabling recommendation 9:
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.

"My growth/progress and level of satisfaction is measured to improve career services."



**Enabling recommendation 10:
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.

"I have a say in how services are developed and delivered in a way that benefits me."

Next steps

We believe the recommendations in this report represent an ambitious redesign of Scotland's career system. Building on the excellent work of practitioners across the country, they directly respond to the evidence and insight that are driving a clear need for change.

Given the need for urgency brought on by the pandemic and its impact on young people, we recommend immediate action to implement change.

In the short term we believe the Career Review Programme Board should continue, under current oversight and governance arrangements, and by June 2022 should:

- develop and co-design the future state Target Operating Model and service blueprint that set out lifelong entitlement to career services and conduct a fully costed gap analysis between the current 'as is' and the future 'to be'
- develop and agree a detailed Implementation Plan including recommending the remit, functions and composition of the proposed career services coalition
- complete the co-design of the proposed career development model
- further test our proposals with all-age users to identify any refinements to match the requirements of an all-age career service
- be a means through which the career ecosystem can engage with wider policy developments to ensure that our recommendations align with them and how they will be planned for implementation.