

Careers By Design

The Career Review: what it means for Skills Development Scotland

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

For the last five years, it has been my privilege to lead the delivery of Skills Development Scotland's career services.

During that period, I've been frequently amazed by the determination, compassion and diligence of our career practitioner community.

Often working in challenging conditions, doing a job which doesn't always get public the recognition it deserves, I've witnessed time and again the phenomenal work of SDS colleagues providing powerful one-to-one support to those who need it most.

This recognition comes through loud and clear in the comprehensive evidence gathered for this review.

Listening to the voices of hundreds of young people, employers, parents and carers and other career influencers, we heard many examples of SDS colleagues delivering rich and integrated experiences for young people.

So there's no doubt that we're building on strong foundations.

But we know our services aren't perfect. And we know that change in the external environment means our services need to keep evolving.

We've been clear from the outset that the Career Review is much broader than SDS – it's about how the system comes together to deliver experiences for young people.

We also recognise that the range of national career services provided by SDS form the backbone of the system.

This document therefore summarises the findings of the review and its recommendations as they relate to the national skills agency.

As we start to develop and design the implementation plans to take forward the recommendations of the review, I am absolutely committed to working with our practitioner community and other SDS colleagues to help us design and develop our response to this review.

You are the key to providing the support and experiences our young people need to develop the skills and competencies to thrive in whatever future they choose.

James Russell
Director of CIAG Operations

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 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (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

Scotland has world-class career services:

- Career services that support choices are in demand and valued by young people.
- The service delivered in schools by Skills Development Scotland is independently inspected and scrutinised by Education Scotland, who conclude: “The impact of CIAG services on customer progress and achievement of high-quality outcomes features prominently in external review reports”.
- SDS has a highly professionalised CIAG workforce working in schools and communities.
- My World of Work is uniquely embedded in the career and education system and is consistently referenced as positive practice within Education Scotland reviews of CIAG services.
- My World of Work is one of the most heavily accessed youth digital services in Scotland with over 1.4 million users per year.
- Local partnerships, including the third sector, have proven effective at connecting individuals with services in areas where there is greatest need for those who are further from the labour market.

Our career services aren't working for everyone:

- Despite relatively high rates of participation in the labour market, poverty and inequality persist. Two thirds of children living in poverty are members of working households.
- Young people find it hard to navigate the range of services on their own and many fall through the cracks.
- The universal digital offer My World of Work is not enough for many young people.
- The 1.5 FTE resource per secondary state school via SDS and DYW is not able to provide personalised one-to-one support to the entire secondary school cohort.
- There is a stigma associated with our offer amongst some young people because they see it as being for those who face disadvantage in progressing in learning, work and life.
- Demand for career support amongst young people often goes unmet.
- Many young people say they don't see themselves represented in career services.
- Disadvantaged young people, those who are not considered high achievers and those not pursuing an academic pathway report finding it more difficult to access services.



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SDS operates in a complex policy landscape:

- Career services are a critical, and yet complex and fragmented, part of Scotland’s education and skills infrastructure. The need for greater integration comes up repeatedly across many policies.
- This fragmentation leads to a complex delivery landscape. Young people, particularly those at risk, face confusion as the career support they receive is determined by wide-ranging policy, programmes and funding arrangements.
- There are significant pressures on public finances.

Demand for career services is going to grow and change:

- Dynamic change in the economy and world of work requires a decisive shift in the way we prepare and support young people to engage and thrive.
- There is a real risk that this dynamic change benefits the better connected, more informed and more mobile young people, exacerbating inequality.
- The scale of demand on career services will increase significantly, placing an increased emphasis on coordination of services, skills and assets in the career ecosystem.
- More frequent disruption in the labour market will require recurring occupational change amongst segments of Scotland’s workforce and a need to significantly and regularly retrain and reskill.

What needs to change?

- **Building greater coordination** with partners, with clearer roles and responsibilities, more integrated services, common standards and measurement frameworks
- **Ensuring personalisation and responsiveness** across services, responding to the specific situations, aptitudes and aspirations of each young person
- **Empowering people** to reap the benefits and opportunities that technological change offers
- **Supporting people to continually learn** to keep up with rapidly changing working environments
- **Helping people through challenging transitions** and more unexpected career decisions
- **Providing services within communities** to proactively address the impacts of discrimination on young people

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.



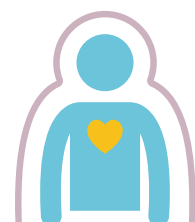
A new career development model

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.



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.



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 Skills Development Scotland?

- **Reaching more young people in a more impactful way**
Continuing to develop asset-based approaches, which focus on the strengths of individuals and allow services to become more universal and lifelong
- **Greater recognition for the expertise of qualified career professionals**
The different roles that deliver career services are clearly defined and articulated, and the role of career guidance is better understood
- **Greater emphasis on career education within the school curriculum**
A greater package of experiences for pupils to develop the skills they need to manage their career, that aligns with their expectations
- **Working with young people earlier in their lives**
Developing services and channels of delivery that enable earlier intervention, recognising how influential early years can be
- **Strengthened partnership working**
A common delivery framework through the career development model, with practitioners feeling more aligned and better connected
- **Less duplication of services**
Clear roles and responsibilities across the system and integrated services

- **Addressing the stigma associated with some existing career services**
Services are accessible and approachable and presented in a way which is appealing to young people and their career influencers

What will it require from Skills Development Scotland?

- **A significantly strengthened universal offer**, including inspiring experiential digital services
- **Taking a leading role in the Career Services Coalition**, working in strong collaboration with partners across the ecosystem
- **Improving and adopting asset based-based approaches** that allow services to become more universal and lifelong
- **An organisation-wide approach to delivery**, driven by the career development model
- **Continued resource** prioritised towards career services
- **Presenting career services** in a way which appeals to young people
- **Even greater representation** of young people and employers in service development and delivery
- **Strengthened partnership arrangements** with community-based services
- **Enhanced career intelligence** providing impactful insight into the world of work
- **Supporting partner service development** to ensure services are interconnected by design



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 SDS colleagues in developing:

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

Colleagues interested in finding out more about this work, or getting involved in helping the Programme Board in its work should visit

www.CareerReview.scot or express interest by emailing CareerReview@sds.co.uk

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