

Briefing in advance of Scottish Government meeting - Wednesday 13th May 2015

Scottish Apprenticeship Week

Background

The Scottish Children's Services Coalition (SCSC) is a policy-focused collaboration between leading independent and third sector service providers who have come together to work with political and other key stakeholders to help improve the delivery of children and young people's services.

SCSC members deliver specialist care and education services for children and young people with complex needs, such as learning difficulties and learning disabilities, as well as direct help and support for them and their families. They also provide independent advocacy, advice and representation for children and young people with care experience.

Further information at: www.thescsc.org.uk

Summary

Young disabled people are more likely to be offered a limited range of education and training opportunities and ultimately to experience significant periods of unemployment.

Evidence demonstrates that young disabled people have a similar level of career aspiration at the age of 16 to their wider peer group. By the time they are 26, they are nearly 4 times more likely to be unemployed. In addition, care leavers experience some of the poorest educational and employment outcomes of any group of young people. One in three is unemployed 9 months after leaving school

We applaud the work that the Scottish Government and Skills Development Scotland is undertaking to boost the number of those with disabilities into MAs, such as through the Employer Recruitment incentive and the additional £3m committed by the Scottish Government to increasing access for disabled people and young ethnic minority people.

However, it is clear from the extremely low numbers of those with disabilities undertaking Modern Apprenticeships (0.4%) that considerably greater efforts are required to boost this number.

In order to tackle inequality and deliver sustainable economic growth the talents of all young people will need to be harnessed.

Key Issues

Within the Modern Apprenticeship statistics, **out of 25,191 Modern Apprenticeships in 2013/14, only 92 were taken up by people with a declared disability. This represents a 0.4% share (the same as in 2009/10) against a youth population share of 8.1% of those with a disability -** (http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/1155134/modern_apprenticeships_main_publication_quarter_4_2013-14.pdf)

Figures for the rest of the UK demonstrate a major disparity with Scotland. **In England, for example, figures from the Skills Funding Agency indicate that 8.7% of those in an MA have a disability.** (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships>)

Indeed, Scotland fares worst of any of the Home Nations, indicating that major and concerted action is required.

In looking at these statistics it would be good if these figures could be made available by type of disability as well as highlighting related figures for care leavers

The Equality & Human Rights Commission has commented that:

“We need to harness the talents of all of Scotland’s people. This report shows that we are missing a trick by failing to maximise the potential of all Scotland’s people. We believe that the Government needs to demand greater effort from their contractors to drive up the representation of ethnic minorities and disabled people.

“The focus needs to shift from what young disabled people can't do to what they can do, to take advantage of their talents and skills” (<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/devolved-authorities/the-commission-in-scotland/scottish-news/press-releases-2013/apprenticeship-schemes-excluding-women-and-disabled-workers>)

While this report dates from 2013 the number of those with disabilities in Modern Apprenticeships has altered little, increasing from 0.3% to 0.4%.

Recommendations

In December 2014 the Scottish Government published "Developing the Young Workforce: Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy - Implementing the Recommendations of the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce (Wood Review)" (<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0046/00466386.pdf>)

While a Key Performance Indicator in this has been to increase the number of MA starts from minority ethnic communities to equal the population share by 2021, no such target has been set for young disabled people and care leavers.

Recommendation 35 of the Wood Reviewed urged that “a realistic but stretching improvement target to increase the number of young disabled people. Progress against this should be reported on

annually. And **Recommendation 38** urges that “Consideration should be given to incorporating specific targets relating to care leavers within Modern Apprenticeships.”

We would welcome feedback from the Scottish Government as to whether it intends to set targets in this area for both young disabled people and care leavers and if not urge it to do so.

The **Wood Review (Recommendation 34)** also recommended that “funding levels to colleges and MA training providers should be reviewed and adjusted to reflect the cost of providing additional support to young disabled people, and age restrictions should be relaxed for those whose transition may take longer.”

- Young disabled people should attract the highest level of Modern Apprenticeship or college funding for their chosen framework or subject until the age of 30.
- Where additional support is required, training providers and colleges should receive a higher level of funding for young people with disabilities on the Modern Apprenticeship programme and on mainstream college courses.

We would welcome feedback from the Scottish Government as to what action it has taken to deliver in this area.

Care Leavers

We would be keen to know action has been taken following the Wood Review recommendations relating to care leavers. This group can be impeded by unhelpful funding barriers which often don't take account of the wider challenges the young person faces as they make the transition into adult life. Removing these need not be prohibitively expensive given the relatively small number of young people in question and the often significant lifetime costs of failing to do so.

Recommendation 38

- Care leavers should receive a coherent package of support which goes from school into post-school education and training and into employment. This should include an automatic entitlement to discretionary learner support for those moving out of care and undertaking further education courses at college.
- Care leavers should attract the highest level of Modern Apprenticeship funding for their chosen framework until the age of 30.
- Consideration should be given to incorporating specific targets relating to care leavers within Modern Apprenticeships.