

Scottish Parliament Social Justice & Social Security Committee

Inquiry into Addressing Child Poverty through Parental Employment

Written submission by Skills Development Scotland (12 June 2023)

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is the national skills agency. SDS collaborates across the skills ecosystem to ensure that Scotland's people and businesses are inspired and enabled to develop the right skills for a changing world.

We achieve this through intelligence-led delivery of Scotland's Career Service, Apprenticeships, and other learning and skills interventions in support of Scottish Government ambitions. Through extensive partnership working, particularly with our agency colleagues, sharing of expertise and intelligence we enable the development and delivery of innovative solutions to Scotland's skills and labour market challenges.

The SDS Equality Evidence Review (EER)

(<https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/50329/equality-evidence-review-2023.pdf>)

provides up to date evidence on the skills system and labour market for different marginalised groups, including those experiencing poverty. The EER highlights that in-work poverty has risen in the last two decades, and those in the hospitality and retail industries are most likely to experience in-work poverty. Groups most likely to be in in-work poverty include women, ethnic minorities and young people. Data from the Family Resources Survey shows that, between 2016/17 and 2018/19, almost a third of children with a disabled person in the household, were in relative poverty after housing costs (Scottish Government 2021, available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/analysis-national-performance-framework-indicators-perspective-disability/>).

The Scottish Government's National Strategy for Economic Transformation placed an emphasis on building a wellbeing economy and SDS is working in partnership with Scottish Government, agency colleagues, and partners across the whole of the skills and careers ecosystem to generate real change.

One of the core functions of SDS is to support individuals from all communities through a range of inclusive programmes, to increase their Career Management Skills and employability, enabling them to take their first steps into the labour market, to make a successful career change or progress in their career.

This support is offered through a range of training incentives to allow people to reskill and upskill helping them not only feel confident in the workplace but enabling them to thrive once they are there. SDS delivers Individual Training Accounts which provides individuals who qualify up to £200 a year towards training.

CIAG

Supporting individuals to enter the workplace or finding the right path for them to get the skills needed to enter the workplace is a critical component of the Career, Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) service SDS offers. SDS's inclusive careers service empowers people from all communities to make their own learning and career decisions, based on the best available career intelligence, up-to-date knowledge of routes and pathways and an understanding of customers own strengths and interests.

CIAG provision is embedded in all secondary schools, and in cities and communities across Scotland for all age customers. CIAG colleagues work closely with local and national partners to contribute to efforts of preventing and reducing poverty. This includes working closely with all 32 Community Planning Partnerships and Local Employability Partnerships. CIAG services deploy professional learning knowledge of the complex relationships between the different drivers and themes of poverty when supporting each young person and each adult. Our person-centred practice allows us to use our expertise and resources to make a demonstrable impact on reducing poverty, locally and nationally. SDS is consistently working towards greater coordination of services to ensure they are planned, delivered and evaluated collaboratively. One example of community led co-ordination driven by customers is CIAG developing Employability hubs with partners to ensure they are able to offer a breadth of services at the point of access. This joint investment approach is shown to improve the availability, accessibility and take up of services.

The Careers Review, Careers by Design

(https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/48884/career_review_main_report.pdf), called for a careers service which understands the impact of poverty on individuals and communities with a focus on supporting individuals to survive and then thrive. The recommendations set out in the report would enable a national careers eco-system to better support individuals not currently employed by creating a system-wide person-centred approach. The recommendations in the report, were endorsed by Scottish Government Ministers, create a mandate to deliver an all age careers service which delivers community based services. As part of a local approach this all age careers service will expose users to Fair Work principles so that as part of their career journey they have an expectation of how employers should support them.