
SKILLS FOR WORK AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Last year Community Services: Education had identified an area for development relating to Curriculum for Excellence and the Skills Strategy outlined by Scottish Government. This focuses on vocational education provision and Skills for Work courses designed by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), which place emphasis on learning through practical experiences and development of a range of generic employability skills and abilities.
- 1.2 The purpose of this paper is:
- To provide an update on what Education has achieved in the development of Skills for Work and Vocational Education.
 - To highlight the future developments in this area.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The PPG: Social affairs is invited to note progress made to date and the proposed future direction of Skills for Work and Vocational Education.
- 2.2 The PPG: Social affairs is invited to comment upon this area for further development and the proposals outlined in this paper and in the background paper which has also been made available.

3. DETAIL

3.1 What has been achieved

- 9 of the 10 schools in Argyll and Bute with mainstream secondary provision are offering SQA Skills for Work courses on equal parity with standard grade courses within their S3 option choices. In 2009/10 all 10 schools will be delivering such courses.
- The range of courses on offer has increased.
- Previously proposed uptake has been achieved one year ahead of schedule.
- In line with HMIE recommendation, an Argyll and Bute school/college partnership has been produced and adopted by all schools. This involves Argyll College, James Watt College and Clydebank College.
- With the support of School Estates, DTS funding, Argyll College and Schools of Ambition funding Islay High School has sustainable facilities for Skills for Work within the school premises.

3.2 What is it that the proposals are seeking to achieve?

The proposals aim to set out the direction of travel in Argyll and Bute for the education service, schools and partners to extend opportunities to young

people of all abilities to gain valuable experience and recognised qualifications in Skills for Work and Vocational Education courses.

Participation in the courses may boost young people's future employment prospects or lead to their participation in relevant further education or training provision. It is also expected that these courses will have a positive impact on the numbers of young people falling into the MCMC group. (MCMC - More Chances, More Choices: formerly NEET – Not in Education, Employment or Training)

3.3 **What is already in place?**

A revised background paper sets out a programme for the further development of vocational education in school and with partner agencies. This provides historical information on the development over a 3-year period, detail of support from the national Determined to Succeed (DTS) programme and financial implications and proposals to grow provision through 2009/2010.

3.4 **What particular issues could PPG consider?**

- Their support the proposals and their strategic context.
- The principle of developing the growing provision with a range of partners at the most local level possible.
- Leadership of, and encouragement in, exploring with all relevant council departments their involvement in growing capacity for Skills for Work provision and developing progression routes into Skillseekers and Modern Apprenticeship training under the Council's Growing Our Own (GOO) initiative.
- The development of a working partnership with other Highlands and Islands councils to consider the distinctive challenges of implementing Skills for Work provision in rural and island settings.
- Support for funding bids on an individual or joint authority basis to finance growth and development of opportunities for young people.

3.5 **How long should PPG give to consider this?**

One meeting, with the opportunity to receive progress updates at a relevant point in each school session.

3.6 **What would be the appropriate time to consider this?**

January 2009 (proposals)
November 2009 (progress)

3.7 **Deadlines**

There are no specific deadlines. Timescales for implementation of proposals are set out in the background paper.

4. **CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 These proposals aim to extend to all interested pupils the opportunity to access Skills for Work and Vocational Education provision in schools and, where relevant, in partnership with other providers. These proposals support the Council's Growing Our Own initiative and are entirely aligned with the development of Scottish Governments Skills Strategy and Curriculum for Excellence and its stated aim to ensure that all young people are successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Legal

Disclosure checks required when working in partnership with employers.

5.2 Financial

Support to schools for travel and PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) from the Scottish Government DTS Budget. This funding stream ends in April 2011.

5.3 Personnel

These proposals currently form part of the working agenda set out in the Education Service Plan and will receive support from staff in the Quality Improvement Team (QIT) and schools. A member of the QIT and an education support officer will lead and drive the programme forward.

In addition the following partners will be involved:

Argyll College, Argyll and Bute Employability Unit, the Construction Skills College in Lochgilphead, Clydebank College and James Watt College. Partnerships also involve Highlands and Islands Enterprise including AIE and Skills Development Scotland (Careers). Further partnerships may also need to be developed with relevant training providers and employers to ensure equality of opportunity to young people in rural and island schools.

5.4 Legal

None

5.5 Policy

Supporting “skills for life, skills for work” is one of six inter-related themes that are a requirement of DTS.

Director of Community Services

29th January 2009-02-25

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