

## **EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SCOTLAND**

### **Submission to Education and Culture Committee's Review of Public Bodies' Spending and Outcomes – Skills Development Scotland**

1. The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), Scotland's largest education union, welcomes the opportunity to provide an initial written submission as part of the Committee's review of the spending decisions made and the outcomes delivered by Skills Development Scotland (SDS)
2. The Scottish Government allocates a significant amount of funds to SDS to deliver its National Training Programmes, including Modern Apprenticeships, Get Ready for Work, Training for Work<sup>3</sup> and Individual Learning Accounts, some of which will be allocated to colleges for delivery of learning programmes. Funding to SDS is also used to provide the Scottish Government's national redundancy service and careers information services. The EIS supports the aims of the SDS in promoting employability at a national level.
3. According to the SPICe Report 14/18, SDS funding was £181.3 million in 2011/12, £176.4 million in 2012/13, £187.4 million in 2013/14, a planned funding allocation of £184.0m for 2014/15 and a planned allocation of £183.5 million in 2015/16. These are significant sums of money and equivalent to around a third of the college sector revenue budget for 2015-16.
4. However the EIS also has concerns that resources directed towards this national body have potentially been at the expense of college funding through the Scottish Funding Council. SDS also funds a significant number of college places, supplementing SFC funding. This gives the SDS some influence but without the SFC's transparency. Some college funding- for example, Employability Fund and Opportunities for All has oscillated between the SFC and SDS, which reflects the overlap between these bodies. The EIS prefers college sector funding to be channelled via the SFC since this body is more transparent and engages with stakeholders such as the EIS, and potentially allows better financial planning by colleges.
5. Colleges previously managed the delivery of careers education for students. Arguably, college staff have greater knowledge of the employability needs of their students and of how best to match these to local employment potential. Questions remain in relation to the comparative effectiveness of SDS, as a large national body, in fulfilling this role.

6. In relation to the school sector, the EIS has raised the issue of reduced access for young people to careers advisors since the inception of SDS. Whereas in the past young people had more regular face to face contact with a careers advisor, a significant portion of this support has been replaced by students accessing the 'My World of Work' ICT programme. The EIS view is that, in terms of quality, such interface with technology is not an appropriate substitute for young people's direct and regular contact with qualified careers advisors. Such skilled personnel not only support young people in making choices about career pathways through a wealth of knowledge about the possibilities, but through building positive relationships with those young people over time.
7. This is particularly important for young people with additional support needs or who are vulnerable as a consequence of sharing other protected characteristics. The recommendations of the Developing Scotland's Young Workforce Review (DYW) highlight significant under-representation of learners who share protected characteristics as identified by the Equality Act 2010. Young people with disabilities or who are from minority ethnic communities are, to a large extent, excluded from Modern Apprenticeship pathways, signalling that there is much work for SDS to undertake in this regard. Similarly, the need to address early occupational segregation according to gender within Modern Apprenticeships is obvious. The EIS would suggest that reductions in the amount of time that young people spend engaged in meaningful discussion with trained careers advisor will not sufficiently reduce these equality deficits.
8. Furthermore, the outcomes of DYW require schools to work much more closely with SDS to deliver the recommendations as they impact on all young people. The EIS is keen to see how schools will be supported by bodies such as SDS in working towards this. Closer partnership working of this kind will inevitably demand greater investment of time and staffing in schools and within SDS if it is to be successful in enhancing the employability of Scotland's young people.