

Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan

Annual Report 2018



Foreword

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is fully committed to ensuring equality and diversity within Scotland's workforce, supporting industry and employers to ensure equality of opportunity for all within apprenticeships.

We believe that equality and diversity in the workplace remains both a moral and an economic necessity if Scotland is to thrive and grow in the future.

First produced in 2015, the SDS Apprenticeships Equality Action Plan sets out our approach to deliver this. This report outlines our progress to meet the outcomes of the plan, as well as its achievements to date.

It also allows us to continue to share learning and how these have impacted on the way SDS shapes and delivers its work.

This latest update highlights a range of work, in partnership with others, to help drive change and we thank them for their continued support. It covers activity taking place to promote diversity and ensure everyone has fair access to opportunities and can fulfil their potential.

This includes the successful Improving Gender Balance project in partnership with the Institute of

Physics and Education Scotland. Now being rolled out nationwide by Education Scotland, it aims to challenge and change perceptions of gender from Early Years up.

As Scottish Apprenticeships grow and expand, it is vital that equality and diversity is instilled in the ethos of the nation's employers through work-based learning.

SDS has worked to support this in the last year, including launching our Employer Guide to Inclusive Recruitment, which provides practical and often free or low-cost measures to source, attract and retain apprentices or employees that businesses may have overlooked or had difficulty in accessing.

These projects, and others like them, highlight our commitment to greater equality within Scottish Apprenticeships. However, it's clear that there is much more to be done to break down obstacles in both education and the labour market which gives rise to under-representation.

This is particularly true around the issue of gender segregation, where we continue to face significant cultural and societal inhibitors which are very much part of public debate, not just in Scotland, but around the globe.

However, we must embrace the challenge to affect the change that we want to see within the education and skills system. SDS will continue to work with partners across Scotland to build fairer and more diverse workplaces.



John F McClelland CBE
Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John F McClelland'.

Stuart Drummond
Modern Apprentice



Introduction

About this report

This report outlines progress for year two of the five-year equality action plan for Modern Apprenticeships, now broadened to incorporate all Scottish Apprenticeships. It also gives an indication of our focus for activity in 2018/19.

As well as responding to the ambitions within Developing the Young Workforce, this plan also forms part of our response to the following national strategies and action plans:

- Race Equality Framework for Scotland and associated action plan
- British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) – Education and Training Strategy for Scotland
- Fairer Scotland for Disabled People Delivery Plan

The content relating to care-experience also contributes to fulfilling our duties as a corporate parent as defined in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, and builds upon the current SDS Corporate Parenting Plan.

About Skills Development Scotland

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is the national skills agency. Our aim is to make skills work for Scotland by improving the response of education, training and careers services to the needs of our economy and employers. In doing so, we help provide Scotland's people with the best possible chance of succeeding in the world of work.

Crucial to achieving this aim is both leading and supporting Scotland to develop and embed a world-class work-based learning system, with demand-led Scottish Apprenticeships at its heart.

Scottish Apprenticeships

There are now three types of apprenticeships in Scotland: Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships.

Modern Apprenticeships (MAs)

are the most established and well-known. They provide individuals with the opportunity to secure industry-recognised qualifications while they are in employment, earning a wage. There are over 80 types – or frameworks – of Modern Apprenticeships available, covering a range of industries including chemicals and biotechnology, construction, creative and cultural skills, engineering and energy, financial services, food and drink, health and social care, hospitality and tourism, transport and logistics, and sport.

Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs)

were first introduced in the 2014/15 academic year and provide work-based learning opportunities for secondary school pupils alongside their other studies. Based on existing MA frameworks, FAs are designed to provide young people with demonstrable experience of the workplace which can aid the successful transition from education into employment.

Graduate Apprenticeships (GAs)

offer a combination of academic study and work-based learning at an advanced level. Delivered in conjunction with Higher Education partners and employers, GAs are accredited at SCQF levels 8 to 11. They lead to degrees or to degree level, professionally recognised, qualifications. GAs support the learning and development of individuals who could be new recruits or existing employees so that they acquire the skills, knowledge and competence necessary to work and progress in their careers.



Tiegan Duff
Modern Apprentice

Our role in the delivery of apprenticeships

SDS is responsible for the administration of Scottish Apprenticeships on behalf of Scottish Government. Scottish Government is responsible for setting the policy, targets and budget for apprenticeships. SDS commissions training providers to deliver apprenticeships in line with Scottish Government policy and priorities.

We evaluate the bids from providers, allocate volumes and issue contracts. We then manage those contracts, including assuring quality of provision, handling contract funding and building the capacity and capability of our contracted providers.

Beyond this, SDS plays a wider role in the promotion of apprenticeships, targeted at both employers and individuals, including through our dedicated web service apprenticeships.scot, our all-age careers service, and marketing campaigns throughout the year.

Responsibility for the training, development, and assessment of individual apprentices is shared by a network of employers and training providers across Scotland. Recruitment for Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships is usually undertaken by employers, though in some cases the training provider may support them with this.

The aims of the Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan

In 2015, we published the Modern Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan. This five-year plan outlined the range of work we do, and will continue to do, to improve diversity and equality of opportunity in Scottish Apprenticeships. The plan outlines our contribution towards achieving the ambitions from Developing Scotland's Young Workforce to:

Disability Objectives

Increase the employment rate for young disabled people to the population average by 2021

Gender Objectives

Reduce to 60% the percentage of MA frameworks where the gender balance is 75:25 or worse

Ethnic Minority Groups Objectives

Increase the number of MA starts from minority ethnic communities to equal the population share by 2021

Care Objectives

Increase the number of care leavers who successfully take up an MA

The extent of the challenge

The original action plan identified that the challenges surrounding under-representation of certain groups within apprenticeships is complex. People need to be currently in, or newly recruited into, employment before they can undertake an MA or GA. Selection for these opportunities is the responsibility of the employer, and imposing rules relating to protected characteristics which may affect recruitment choices would be unlawful. The uptake of apprenticeships therefore tends to reflect the demographics of the wider workforce in each sector, resulting in evidence of cultural and societal issues such as occupational segregation by gender.

As Scottish Government policy focuses apprenticeships primarily on younger people, it is also impacted by the post-school destinations chosen by under-represented groups. This includes the fact that women and people from ethnic minority communities are more likely to move into further or higher education after school than seek employment, and that disabled and care-experienced young people face additional barriers when moving into employment.

To improve equality of access to apprenticeships, we must work in partnership with others to shift long-standing cultural perceptions.

Views held around the suitability of certain subjects, careers and learning pathways – including unconscious bias – often go unchallenged at the point of making choices. To help bring about the necessary change, we undertake activity aimed at:

- Individuals – ensuring young people are aware of the variety of opportunities available and are supported to access them
- Employers and training providers – helping them to understand the importance and benefits of diversity and equality of access, and providing them with information on how to support individuals from under-represented groups.
- Partners – working with local and national partners to utilise their expertise and influence in their particular fields, and ensure young people have the support they need to access and sustain apprenticeships.

Under-representation and disparities in outcomes, which can be seen across education and in the wider workforce, cannot be addressed by any one organisation or single approach. Partnership working is, therefore, critical to the success of this action plan.

This section provides an overview of the wide variety of work SDS has undertaken in the past year, in line with the priorities highlighted in our 2017 report, to improve diversity in apprenticeships and increase equality of access to work-based learning opportunities. We have undertaken activity across the different stages of the equality regional partnership pipeline (Figure 1), further detail on this activity can be found below.

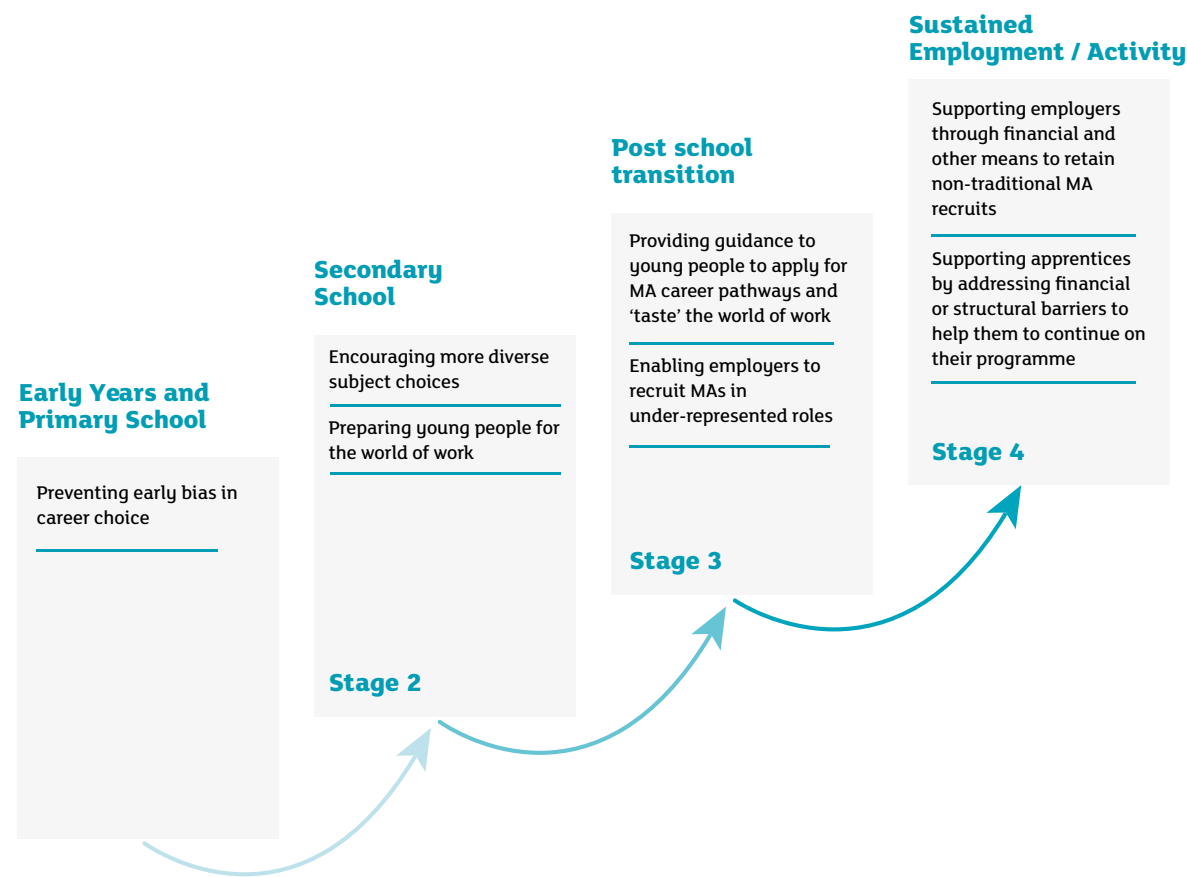


Figure 1: Stages in the equality regional partnership pipeline

Establishing a new approach to working

In our first action plan update, we highlighted the importance of continuing to develop our regional and national partnerships to share and embed good practice and to ensure our work is aligned with others to effect long term cultural change.

In September 2017, we established a team of regional equality executives who work at a local level to support providers and employers to take on individuals from under-represented groups. Using a pipeline approach, the team encourages key local partners to align their activity in a way that maximises the engagement and support for particular groups to access work-based learning.

Regional working has facilitated the development of stronger local relationships with local authorities, careers advisers, local Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) groups and community organisations. This optimises the potential to introduce people from under-represented groups to employers with apprenticeship opportunities and facilitate the delivery of any additional support that they may require. This approach is designed to improve the chances of success for the apprentices in accessing and sustaining an apprenticeship.

Since their formation, the new team has engaged with external partners to stimulate awareness of, and interest in, Scottish Apprenticeships. Through engagement with local stakeholders, such as community groups, or ASN support staff in schools, the team works to highlight the

benefits of apprenticeships, and the support available to access them to young people, their parents and the wider community. Much of the team's work is focused on building the capacity of our local partners to progress young people through the pipeline, accessing our expertise to remove barriers when required.

Our equality executives work closely with our network of skills investment advisers (SIAs) who manage the relationship with SDS contracted training providers and can therefore work to influence and support the behaviour of our contracted providers. Working with SIAs and other colleagues, the team encourages contracted training providers and employers to consider how to diversify their workforce and take positive action. This is achieved by providing advice on effective practice, promoting financial incentives, and by linking them with local and national partners who can provide practical support.

Examples of the wide variety of activity within our regional partnership approach is shown in the case studies throughout this plan.

Working with national partners

There is no short-term solution which will achieve substantial change in the face of embedded cultural stereotypes, bias and perceptions. Neither can transformation be achieved by one plan or individual agency. SDS works with national partners such as Education Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council, and specialist equality organisations, to challenge stereotypical and biased views held by young people and their influencers (parents, teachers and others). Through these partnerships we aim to reduce the impact of those perceptions on choices throughout an individual's learner journey. This approach is expected to be more effective than interventions at later stages of the pipeline, however, it may realistically take 10 – 15 years of sustained effort to start to see the impact of this work on apprenticeship uptake. Examples of this approach from the last year are given below.

Improving Gender Balance Scotland project

In recognition of the need to tackle gender bias at an early stage in the pipeline, SDS funded the Improving Gender Balance Scotland (IGBS) project which was a three-year pilot delivered by the Institute of Physics in partnership with Education Scotland and the Scottish Government.

Two project officers worked closely with six school clusters across Scotland to develop ideas and support trialling of interventions which address gender imbalance. In general, interventions were planned which would form a sustained approach and promote lasting change in the school culture.

The project was highlighted in our previous report, and 2017/18 marked the final year of the original funding. As such, the focus moved to embedding the learning and good practice into all schools across Scotland. As part of the final phase of the project, SDS commissioned the Institute of Physics to develop an accredited module for education practitioners on how to identify and challenge gender bias within their practice. This module will be made available to education practitioners from 2018 to support the mainstreaming of the project into schools across Scotland.

A full project evaluation report can be found [here](#). The main findings showed the project was positively received and had an impact on school staff beyond those directly involved. The project encouraged a whole school/school cluster approach, and supported the review of policies and practices to embed long-term, systemic change. The evaluation, which included interviews and surveys with school staff and key stakeholders (such as DYW practitioners, museums/science centres, RAiSE officers, etc) showed that, of those asked:

98% feel more informed about gender balance

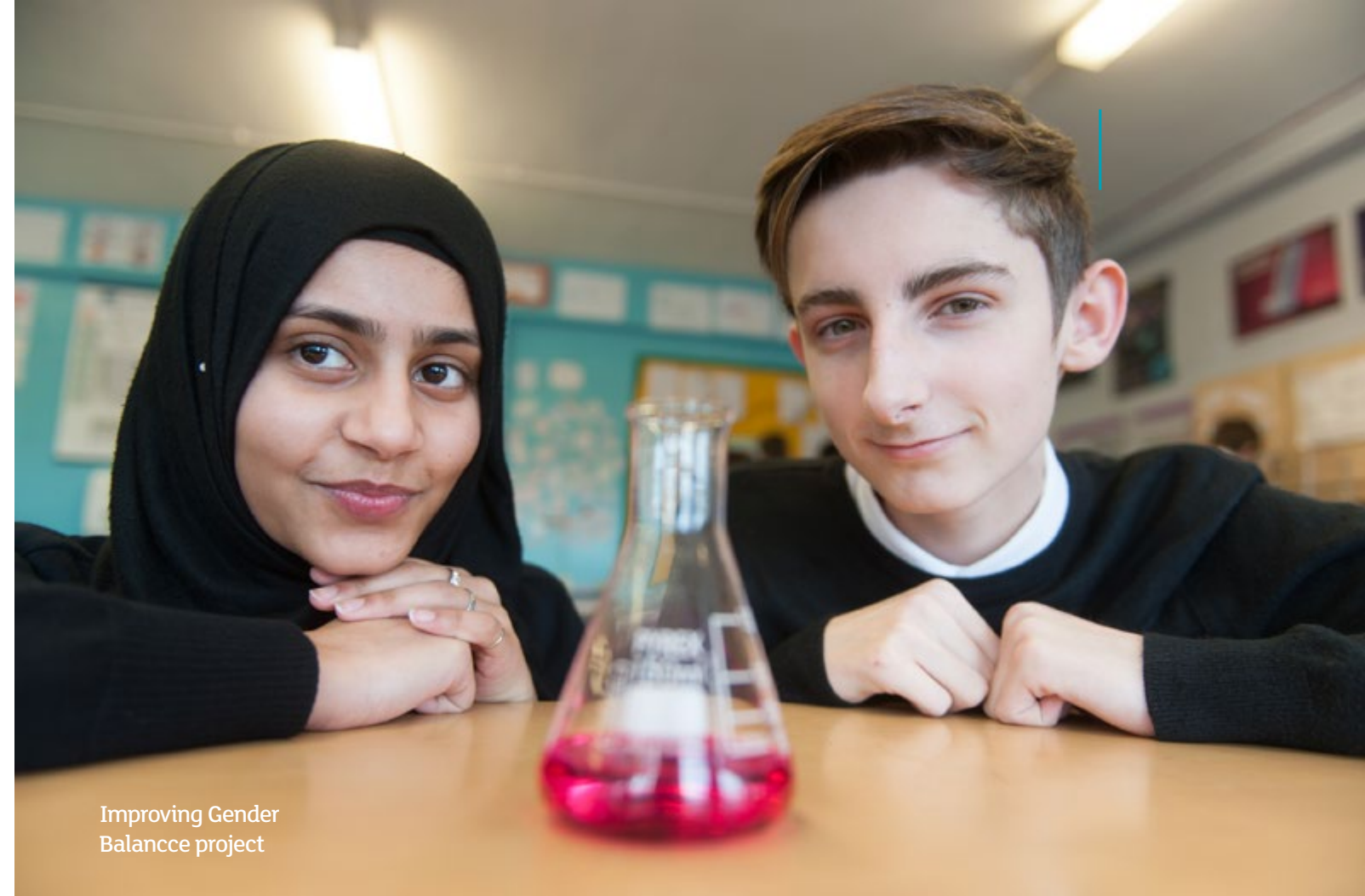
98% found the information provided useful

95% are likely to pass on learning to colleagues and partners

91% are more likely to seek out further training in this area

96% reported increased knowledge of approaches to address gender imbalance

97% have more confidence in their ability to tackle gender imbalance issues



Improving Gender Balance project

“The project officer thinks about things in a sustainable way. When it finishes, we will have moved on as a school and will be analysing and addressing these things ourselves.”

- High School

“Activities were enjoyable, interesting and thought provoking – they challenged our perceptions - made us critically evaluate ourselves.”

- Nursery teacher

“Staff are now aware of messages we present to pupils and actively consider gender balance when designing any course materials, interventions or new courses.”

- Depute head, High School

Our intention was to ensure that learning from the pilot could be used to mainstream successful activity throughout other schools in Scotland. We worked closely with Education Scotland throughout the pilot and are delighted that they are now leading on introducing the IGBS approach in all schools across Scotland from 2018 onwards.

Alan Armstrong, strategic director at Education Scotland said: “We are proud to now be leading the work on improving gender balance in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) learning, and across other areas of learning within early learning and childcare and schools.

“Addressing unconscious bias, gender stereotyping and tackling inequity is important to ensure Scotland’s pupils have the opportunity to realise their full potential, irrespective of their gender.”

BEMIS 'MAs for All' project

SDS also funded BEMIS to run a three-year project aimed at engaging with employers and training providers. The aim was to increase awareness of the barriers facing ethnic and cultural minority young people across Scotland, and to equip them with the necessary tools to attract, gain and sustain apprentices from these communities. The project also worked to ensure ethnic and cultural minority young people and their families have a greater understanding of mainstream opportunities including apprenticeships.

2017/18 was the final year of project delivery. Throughout the project:

- 120 'Pathway to Success' sessions/workshops were delivered within providers, community group settings and schools (circa 4,000 young people and 275 parents)
- 46 training provider/employer sessions were delivered
- 16 facilitators were trained across grassroots community groups in Dundee, Falkirk, Edinburgh and Glasgow
- 15 radio campaigns were run, reaching in the region of 40,700 minority ethnic adults and 8,700 minority ethnic young people
- CPD training was delivered to the new SDS regional equality executives
- two bespoke events were held in 2017 and 2018, reaching over 60 employers, training providers and volunteering agencies and around 550 delegates.
- 1,674 young people registered for additional information and support
- around 600 new applications for apprenticeships were made from minority ethnic communities through SDS training providers/employers
- 102 offers made across the SDS pipeline
- Social media reach from the project grew from reaching approximately 1,000 people in 2015/16, to over 28,000 in 2017/18.

SDS commissioned BEMIS to develop an SQA accredited module for training providers to share the learning on how best to engage with their local minority ethnic communities. This module 'Race Equality - Improving and Sustaining Outcomes for Minority Ethnic Communities' will be available to providers in 2018. Candidates who complete this award will:

- gain race equality knowledge and develop key competencies, awareness and understanding in engaging and supporting the members across diverse ethnic minority communities
- develop inclusive recruitment practices in line with equality legislative frameworks for Scotland
- review the performance of their own organisation in relation to improving the diversity of recruitment onto appropriate provision.

Case study - Xtra-Mile.com

A partnership between SDS and Xtra-Mile.com, a training provider in Edinburgh, is helping to improve the uptake of Modern Apprenticeships in the Hospitality sector from individuals from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds. There was a lack of awareness of the opportunities available through MAs, and for some individuals there was an additional barrier of not having English as their first language.

Local charity Sikh Sanjog was keen to get involved, as the MA was a good fit with the training and employment opportunities offered to minority ethnic women through its social enterprise, the Punjabi Junction cafe.

Four women signed up and have started their apprenticeships, with SDS and Xtra-Mile.com providing them with additional support to explain the process so they got off to a positive start.

Punjabi Junction is delighted by the confidence which the apprenticeship programme has given the women and now an additional two more women are about to be signed up as apprentices.

Punjabi Junction is considering whether MA opportunities might be suitable for other job roles and Xtra-Mile.com plans to engage with other ethnic restaurants and hospitality businesses supporting BME individuals, to continue to build on the positive impact of the project.



Case study - OPITO

Attracting women into the oil industry is a challenge for the Oil and Gas Technical Apprentice Programme (OGTAP) which is managed by OPITO and the ECITB on behalf of sponsoring oil and gas companies including Total, BP and Chevron.

Feedback showed that women may not be interested in pursuing a career within the sector because it was male dominated, as well as more subtle reasons including work-wear provided and language used on the job.

SDS worked with OPITO and the OGTAP sponsors to carry out activities aimed to help employers engage more positively with young women and encourage more females to consider an apprenticeship within the industry. SDS delivered a session to oil company representatives, which provided examples of simple, low-cost actions they could take.

Following this, OPITO, in association with SDS and hosted by North East Scotland College (NESCOL), who deliver the theoretical part of the OGTAP scheme, arranged two female-only open evenings for young women and their families or friends. The event provided information about Modern Apprenticeship opportunities in the oil sector and explained the off-the-job training facilities.

Messaging in leaflets and event marketing were also developed with help from SDS, to include language and images that particularly resonate with women.

The events proved to be a success, with people travelling from far afield to attend. To build on this work, more positive action events are being planned with other partners and better work-wear for women and gender-neutral language is being introduced within the OGTAP scheme.

Commissioning and Contract Management

As previously highlighted, SDS is not involved in the direct recruitment of Modern or Graduate Apprentices. One of the key ways in which we can influence the actions of those who are, is through our commissioning process and subsequent approach to contract management.

In 2017-18, as part of the contract monitoring process, Modern Apprenticeship training providers were required to complete an Equality Action Plan outlining what action they were taking to address under-representation in apprenticeships. In response to feedback from staff and providers, and to support the embedding of equality considerations, we have integrated this within our new quality assurance and improvement approach. Training providers are asked to demonstrate how well they are performing in relation to our equality requirements through the self-assessment and quality action planning process. Providers who bid for a 2018-19 MA contract were asked to evidence their intended approach to improving representation within their contract.

All providers are monitored on their performance through our contract monitoring process. SDS has an expectation of clear, progressive and proportionate action according to variables such as the size of the training provider, the demographics of their local labour market and the sector(s) that they work in. SDS has a formal quality review of providers where equality activity is assessed.

Equality considerations have also been embedded into the commissioning process for Foundation and Graduate Apprenticeships, aligned to the approach for Modern Apprenticeships, to ensure our delivery partners are considering equality from the earliest stage. During the commissioning process for Foundation Apprenticeships, delivery partners are specifically asked to include the steps they will take to attract and support individuals from under-represented groups on the programme.

Examples of positive action activity that providers undertake as part of their commitment to equality include providing taster courses for specific equality groups, focussed recruitment events and pre-apprenticeship courses for specific groups.

We are developing a Quality Management Framework (QMF) for Graduate Apprenticeships that requires learning partners to evidence their processes and activities relating to equality of access. The QMF is currently in development and will be tested with a small number of learning partners to ensure compatibility. However, it is expected to be rolled out to all learning partners during 2018/19. We will begin to receive self-assessments against the quality criteria throughout the financial year and will build an evidence base for quality enhancement and sharing of good practice.

We believe that this approach within our commissioning has been one of the major levers in terms of the positive action being taken by training providers to support the employers that they work with to recruit more diversely. We are beginning to identify incremental improvements in representation across our provider network which is culminating in the improvements seen in the national statistics.

Ellie Mair
Electrical Modern Apprentice
at Chevron North Sea Ltd



Building capacity of our colleagues, training providers and employers

SDS recognises the key role that employers and training providers play in the delivery of our apprenticeships. As such, we are committed to developing resources and support which enable them to understand the challenges faced by under-represented groups and take steps to address these.

In 2017-18 we developed a report for training providers on their own equality performance. This allows them to benchmark themselves against local authority performance via the [local authority equality summaries](#), and sector performance via [Skills Investment Plans](#). These reports build provider capacity to demonstrate how they are taking proportionate and progressive action to improve equality outcomes for their SDS apprenticeship contract, which in turn supports them to meet their contractual requirements as detailed above.

We have begun to review the equality evidence available in Skills Investment Plans and Regional Skills Assessments to further support employers and training providers to identify specific equality actions relevant to their sector and/or geographical area. For example, the recently published [Skills Investment Plan for Early Learning and Childcare](#) identified the need for the sector to focus on attracting under-represented groups such as men or those from BME communities. Promoting apprenticeships within the sector will be a key way of responding to, and achieving, this need for improved diversity.

Throughout 2017-18, we ran training sessions for our contracted MA training providers on a variety of equality topics such as disability equality training (Glasgow Disability Alliance), women into STEM (Equate Scotland), supporting care-experienced young people (Who Cares? Scotland), and intersectionality (Central Scotland Regional Equality Council). In 2017-18, 108 individual providers had one or more staff members attend one or more of our equality training sessions. We also provided tailored information on the funding and support available to them to attract and recruit under-represented groups via our regional equality executives. The training sessions were well received and we are now reviewing options for delivery of these sessions for 2018-19, with the intention of reaching a broader range of providers.

In addition, we promote good practice from employers and training providers and encourage providers to share ideas and lessons learned with each other. As the Foundation and Graduate Apprenticeships develop, we encourage delivery partners to share any challenges or successes in introducing and developing the programmes. We invited all lead delivery partners to attend SDS-held events to allow them to share this learning, and encouraged discussion around key themes including equality and diversity.

The Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board (SAAB) is led by employers and representatives from industry bodies across a range of sectors and provides employer leadership and contribution to the development of apprenticeships in Scotland. We work closely with the [SAAB Equality Group](#) to understand the challenges faced by employers in increasing apprenticeship uptake by under-represented groups. The feedback received has resulted in resources being developed for employers which promote [inclusive recruitment practices](#). These have been published online and embedded within the apprenticeships.scot recruitment process to ensure employers receive timely information and advice.

In recognition that the public sector in Scotland is a key employer (employing 20% of the Scottish workforce), SDS and the Scottish Government established the Public Sector Network. This group actively seeks to improve youth employment in the public sector, including through the use of apprenticeships. The group meets biannually and has a strong focus on building inclusive workplaces and addressing under-representation.

We have also been working with Career Development Institute (CDI), the professional organisation for Careers Advisers, to develop training sessions. For 2018-19, we are delivering webinars and will have SDS colleagues attend 'Engaging the Disengaged' one day session run at the University of the West of Scotland on behalf of CDI learning. We are in liaison with the CDI Scottish Associate regarding future professional development topics relevant to practitioners in Scotland.

Case study - Josh Nisbet

Josh Nisbet has turned his love of rugby into a career thanks to a Modern Apprenticeship in sports coaching.

Josh, who has Down's Syndrome, is a Level 2 Apprentice with Scottish Rugby, working in partnership with Trust Rugby International.

The job sees him developing the sport by delivering training sessions with groups of young people, and it's a role he relishes thanks both to his enthusiasm, and the development support he receives from his employers.

He said: "My Modern Apprenticeship is amazing. I feel really good to have this job and to be helping people out. It's a great journey.

"I go out to universities, schools and colleges and get them involved with rugby, teaching them passing, fitness and running."

Receiving the support he needs from Scottish Rugby and Trust Rugby International has helped him develop a range of skills to assist him in his job.

He explained: "They help me a lot with my teamwork, time keeping, communication, my independence and travelling by myself – it's great."

According to Paul Kesterton, Education Manager at Scottish Rugby, Josh's enthusiasm and willingness to learn is his key characteristic.

He said: "We live in a society which has a broad spectrum of people and we try and reflect that in our apprenticeship programme.

"I don't see him as having a disability, I see him as a rugby coach who has enthusiasm and a really strong interest in the game.

"With that enthusiasm, he's throwing himself in and developing his skills. I've improved my own skills dealing with disabilities over the last couple of years and that's been an advantage to me and also to the business and it allows me to support other candidates on the programme."



Josh Nisbet
Modern Apprentice



Toni Durning,
Modern Apprentice

Financial incentives

Access to additional funding can provide important support to training providers and employers, and incentivise them to take action to improve equality outcomes. As such, we worked with Scottish Government to ensure enhanced funding for MAs is offered up to the age of 29 for disabled and care-experienced young people. This recognises that these young people often experience later entry to the labour market than their peers, and improves their equality of access to apprenticeship opportunities. In 2017-18, 801 individuals were supported by this funding. In 2018-19 we will be evaluating the uptake, effectiveness and impact of this funding and will provide recommendations to the Scottish Government based on the findings.

[Scotland's Employer Recruitment Incentive \(SERI\)](#) delivers part of Scottish Government's commitment to help unemployed vulnerable young people (16-29 years) into sustainable employment. SDS administers the incentive on behalf of Scottish Government however the management and delivery is the responsibility of Scotland's 32 local authorities. Since 1 April 2016, SERI has had a sharper focus of supporting young people with the greatest barriers to employment. It is designed to provide a financial contribution to the additional costs of recruiting and sustaining a young person in employment, including a Modern Apprenticeship. In 2017-18, SERI supported 552 young people to start work. We are committed to ensuring that at least 25% of those supported by SERI are care-experienced, a carer, disabled or have an offending history. Current figures show that the programme has achieved 50% of starts from these groups to-date. Over the life of the programme 44.7% of those supported by SERI have been undertaking an MA and of those 45.1% are from the targeted groups.

Case study - Accessible Fife

There was a recognition by education, skills and health services within Fife of a lack of uptake in apprenticeships in the area from 16-29 year olds with a disability.

With support from SDS, a local consortium was formed by Fife Voluntary Action, Fife College, Fife Council and Department for Work and Pensions.

The consortium developed Accessible Fife: a project that aimed to improve access to Modern Apprenticeships in Fife for disabled people and/or those with health conditions.

The innovative pilot brought in employer partners of all sizes from key sectors to create a pre-Modern Apprenticeship Academy, designed to support people with health problems and disabilities to take up the relevant Modern Apprenticeships.

Academy participants were guaranteed interviews as a result of their disability and partner employers received disability awareness training, if required.

Eleven of the 28 young people who applied for the Academy were recruited and 10 completed the course. Applicants had a range of disabilities including autism, dyspraxia, hearing impairment, ADHD, learning disabilities, and almost all had secondary health challenges, particularly around mental health.

Four of the participants moved into apprenticeships and most of the others went onto placements or other employment programmes. All 11 participants will continue to receive support from Fife Council's Supported Employment Service to ensure they sustain their positive destination.

The learning from this project has enabled SDS to develop its wider promotion of Modern Apprenticeships to employers and people with health problems or disabilities in schools and colleges.

Promotion and marketing of apprenticeships

SDS promotes inclusion in apprenticeships through campaigns and events, as well as promoting projects and initiatives aimed at employers and training providers.

We encourage diversity by sharing positive examples through social media, film, online, press and marketing campaigns throughout the year. We ensure a diverse range of images and case studies are used throughout our marketing materials aimed at young people and their influencers, employers and training providers.

We work with our equality partners to identify role models from under-represented groups, using their stories to challenge stereotypical perceptions about apprenticeships and career choices.

This was a focus during Scottish Apprenticeship Week, which in 2018 again coincided with International Women's Day.

Some examples of how we celebrated these events together are shown on this page. Each year, Scottish Apprenticeships Week is our biggest campaign to market apprenticeships to stakeholders, employers and individuals.

We use this campaign to promote equality and diversity in apprenticeships, with the use of images and case studies of genuine apprentices from under-represented groups and in non-traditional roles. This year also included the launch of employer guides to inclusive recruitment and promotion of the Scottish Apprentice of the Year Awards.

The awards are an opportunity to highlight positive role models and show employers how diversity can benefit their business.

We will continue to use our marketing campaigns and web services to promote a diverse range of positive role models for young people, and to challenge perceptions of the variety of roles available across sectors.

Our regional equality executives also work with local community organisations and schools to promote apprenticeships to a wider audience.



In-work support

For some young people and employers, the knowledge that there will be additional, tailored support available within the workplace provides the confidence required to commence an apprenticeship. Below are examples of the in-work support made available in 2017/18.

Open Doors Scotland

Scottish Government has funded a package of tailored in-work support, commissioned and administered by SDS, for a targeted group of young people (disabled young people, care leavers, carers, and those with an offending history). This specialist support is available to young people throughout Scotland, whose employer considers additional support is required to sustain employment. In 2017/18 the support was delivered nationally by Open Doors Scotland, which is a unique partnership made up of various third sector organisations, led by Enable Scotland.

The in-work support is tailored to the needs of the individual and offers specialist employer services, which can include mentoring, job coaching, training, orientation visits and providing training to the apprentice's colleagues. Help towards essential equipment or work clothes can also be provided. The support package can be accessed at any point within the first 52 weeks of employment.

In 2017/18:

- **50** participants were provided with 13 weeks of in-work support
- **10** individuals had their support extended to 26 weeks.
- **20** young people with complex needs were supported to take part in MAs and are currently progressing in these.
- Enable Scotland ran **100** awareness raising sessions for employers

In achieving this, Open Doors Scotland met all of their delivery targets for the year.

Mentoring for women in STEM (Equate Scotland)

In 2017, SDS commissioned Equate Scotland to test out approaches to supporting female apprentices in STEM roles. The intention was to provide female apprentices working in male dominated sectors with developmental support. The project was amended to focus on supporting apprentices to build networks and access peer-to-peer support, following low uptake for the original offer of mentoring.

This was achieved through biannual 'MA Connect' events, which brought together female apprentices working in STEM sectors. Attendees had the opportunity to hear from other apprentices and professionals in the sector about their career journeys. The events also included workshops on topics such as building professional networks and developing resilience. Attendance and feedback from the events has been positive.

'[I liked] learning from a previous modern apprentice about her career path and meeting other women doing similar jobs to me, as my course is all boys. It's all women so it feels safe.'

- MA Connect Participant (July 2017)

There was also interest from the employers involved in the project in implementing their own support systems for female apprentices. To build on this work, SDS funded Equate Scotland to develop an SQA accredited module for employers which provides a better understanding of the gendered perspective of working in STEM, and enables them to implement effective support systems for women in their employment. A pilot cohort of employers will undertake the module in summer 2018. Feedback from the pilot will be incorporated into the final module, which will be made available to employers by November 2018.

Case study - Hannah Falconer

Gaining work experience gave Hannah the confidence she needed to find a full-time job through the Enhanced Support Modern Apprenticeship.

Hannah is from Edinburgh and has Cerebral Palsy, mild learning difficulties and is a wheelchair user. She joined ENABLE Scotland in March 2016 with a desire to find a paid job but needed to work on her confidence.

Hannah and her employment worker assessed Hannah's skills and qualities, which included working on her confidence in areas like interviews.

Through a work placement at a primary school, Hannah gained new skills and developed her confidence through doing classroom activities with the children.

As a result, Hannah's employment worker recommended she apply for an Enhanced Support Modern Apprenticeship in Childcare offered by Open Doors Scotland. This would enable Hannah to continue her education, gain experience and work full-time.

Open Doors, which is an employment programme that supports disabled people with limited work experience, supported Hannah with her successful application and interview for a Modern Apprenticeship with a local nursery.

Open Doors helped the nursery to make adjustments that would support Hannah, including a buddy system with another member of staff and changes to the physical layout of the nursery.



Hannah Falconer
Modern Apprentice

As of the end of 2017/18, progress against the targets identified by Scottish Government in Developing Scotland's Young Workforce are as follows:

Measure	2021 target	Actual achieved		
		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
% of MA starts self-identified an impairment, health condition or learning difficulty	12.5%	3.7%	8.1%	11.3%
% of MA Frameworks where gender balance is 75:25 or worse	60%	74%	68%	72%
% of MA starts self-identified being from a Mixed or Multiple; African; Carribean or Black and Other ethnic group ¹	5.1%	1.5%	1.7%	1.9%
Number of care leavers who successfully take up an MA	Increase from baseline	0.9%	1.3%	1.6%

Understanding the figures

From our evidence and past activity in our equality action plan, we know that:

- The numbers of MA starts who self-identify as disabled has improved year-on-year since the start of the action plan, increasing in line with our ambitions. We will continue to offer support for disabled individuals to participate and successfully achieve their apprenticeship. We are aware of the need to continue to particularly support individuals with more complex needs to access and sustain apprenticeship opportunities.²
- Gender imbalance in certain sectors/ framework areas, continues to be a challenge. Continued effort will be required from all partners across the education and skills pipeline to challenge stereotypes and attract men and women to sectors where they are under-represented. We will continue to focus our action on initiatives which we believe will bring about sustainable long-term change.
- Participation from ethnic minority groups has also increased year-on-year since the start of the action plan, but has not reached the level we would have hoped by this stage. We will continue to support employers and training providers to engage with individuals from ethnic minority communities, and provide support to individuals to enable them to access and sustain their apprenticeship.
- The proportion of MA starts who self-identify as care-experienced has also increased year-on-year, and although not targeted, is approaching a level we believe is more consistent with the care-experienced population in Scotland. Further work is required to raise the achievement rate for care-experienced apprentices (currently 58%, compared to 76% among those who don't identify as care-experienced). We will continue to meet our duties as a Corporate Parent, promoting the interests of care-experienced young people and supporting them to access and sustain apprenticeship opportunities.

Foundation Apprenticeships

The Foundation Apprenticeships Progress Report outlines the participation statistics for Cohort 1 (2016/18) and Cohort 2 (2017/19) of the programme. The equality data is shown below. FAs represent an important pathway into the workplace, including MAs. It should be noted that these initial cohorts represent much smaller numbers than those undertaking Modern Apprenticeship and we will continue to monitor these figures for trends as the programme grows.

- Gender – the overall gender balance for starts on FAs is a fairly evenly split (50.3% male vs 49.7% female for Cohort 1 and 46.3% male vs 53.7% female for Cohort 2, although there continues to be gender imbalances within certain frameworks).
- Ethnicity – initial statistics on those identifying as from an ethnic minority group have increased from Cohort 1 to Cohort 2 (4.6% to 4.9%)
- Disability – the percentage reporting a disability has seen a slight decrease between Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 (7.8% to 7.4%)

¹ Further detail on participation rates by ethnic group can be found on page 33 of the [Modern Apprenticeship Statistics for 2017-18](#). This data shows that 5.8% of individuals on MAs identify as 'White Other'

² Further detail on participation rates by disability category can be found on page 29 of the [Modern Apprenticeship Statistics for 2017-18](#).

While we have seen improvements in participation across most of the under-represented groups, we cannot be complacent. We will continue to work closely with partners to ensure we support individuals to fulfil their potential, whichever pathway they take. Our ongoing aim for the year ahead is to further embed equality into all stages of the apprenticeship process, from the promotion of apprenticeships to under-represented groups, through to supporting individuals to sustain their apprenticeship.

We will particularly focus on improving participation from ethnic minority groups; addressing gender segregation in certain frameworks; and supporting care-experienced and disabled individuals to sustain their apprenticeships. As Foundation and Graduate Apprenticeships grow, we will seek opportunities to apply our learning from the administration of Modern Apprenticeships and encourage participation from under-represented groups. We will continue to monitor and evaluate our activity to ensure we target our resources at those who require the most support.

Achieving change through local and national partnerships

Addressing areas of under-representation and inequality requires the ongoing concerted effort of SDS and relevant national and local partners to engage with each other and align our work. We will continue to work closely with schools, training providers and employers as our delivery partners to ensure that they:

- are aware of the issues and challenges that contribute to under-representation.
- have access to information and advice on how to more effectively support under-represented groups to access and sustain apprenticeships.

Through our regional structure, we will continue to use close working relationships with local partners to promote apprenticeships and provide clarity on the different pathways individuals can take. This includes working more closely with local Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) groups to raise the profile of equality and apprenticeships in the partnership working between employers and schools.

We have successfully piloted the Improving Gender Balance Scotland project which seeks to address gender bias from early years onwards, and we will continue to work closely with Education Scotland to ensure our Career Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) staff reflect on any potential bias within their own practice and actively challenge gender stereotypes in young people's career decisions.

We will also continue to work with our CIAG colleagues to ensure apprenticeships are promoted to young people and their influencers as a positive pathway, and that individuals are supported to apply for opportunities where appropriate. SDS will consult with our Equality Advisory Group to inform the development of a CIAG Equality Action Plan.

We will work with our delivery partners for Foundation and Graduate Apprenticeships to align our activity in addressing gender imbalance in subject and career choice. In particular, we will ensure we are working closely with colleges and universities to join up any action to address gender imbalance as identified in their Gender Action Plans.

We will also continue to facilitate and support regional initiatives and positive action such as female taster activity in targeted areas to try to address the gender imbalance in apprenticeships.

Commissioning and contract management

The revised MA quality review model is being further embedded, requiring our contracted providers to self-assess their performance in relation to how well they support the recruitment and success of under-represented groups. SDS also formally reviews the providers' performance in relation to their effectiveness in recruiting and sustaining diverse groups in their provision and this informs our forward contracting plans.

Similarly, the Quality Management Framework for Graduate Apprenticeships will be rolled out to all learning providers involved in the programme.

Building capacity of training providers and employers

We will continue to offer development to our contracted training providers which increases their understanding of the needs of different customer groups, and how they can better attract and support those from under-represented groups into apprenticeships. This year we will focus on developing online information and action planning sessions to give more flexibility and allow providers from more rural areas to engage more easily.

We will also offer a supported MA for those with more complex needs and this will include disability awareness training for the employers of these individuals which will be delivered by Open Doors Scotland.

With support from the Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board (SAAB), we will develop information and advice for employers on how to retain and support individuals from under-represented groups in their workforce. This group will also explore the experience of under-represented groups or those who face additional barriers in employment, and consider how SDS can promote advice to employers on supporting, for example, ethnic minority groups or pregnant women in the workplace.

The SAAB Frameworks and Standards Group recently held a consultation on the core principles of Scottish Apprenticeships, which included a specific question on equality and addressing under-representation of certain groups. In 2018/19, the SAAB Equality Group will review the responses to those questions and identify potential improvements to the support given to providers and employers to increase equality and diversity in apprenticeships.

A guide for employers is also being developed for Graduate Apprenticeships. This will include information on the funding and support available to enable under-represented groups to participate successfully in the programme. Supporting this, we will establish a community of practice to enable providers and employers involved in Graduate Apprenticeships to share good practice on delivering the programme, including how to improve diversity and inclusion.

Financial support

We will develop a pilot of additional financial support to increase participation in MAs from minority ethnic individuals. This will be targeted at those groups who face particular disadvantage in the labour market. This will be evaluated and the learning will be used to inform future action in this area.

The enhanced funding rate for disabled and care-experienced people will continue and will be reviewed to evaluate its impact and usage.

We will also continue to promote to employers and providers the funding and support available to support disabled apprentices such as the Department for Work and Pensions' Access to Work programme. For our Foundation Apprenticeships, support for disabled individuals is the responsibility of the schools and colleges. We will work with our delivery partners to ensure support is put in place in a timely manner and monitor this to ensure disabled young people have equal access to FA opportunities.

We will continue to administer [Scotland's Employer Recruitment Incentive](#) (SERI) on behalf of Scottish Government, to help unemployed vulnerable young people between 16 and 29 years old into sustainable employment, including apprenticeships.

Promotion and marketing of apprenticeships

Our marketing and communications work will continue to promote apprenticeships to individuals and their influencers, as well as employers, including via [apprenticeships.scot](#). We will continue to proactively seek opportunities to demonstrate the variety of individuals accessing apprenticeships and the range of opportunities available to them. Our marketing and the stories we share will actively challenge stereotypical assumptions of who can access apprenticeship opportunities and preconceived ideas of the types of roles available in different sectors.

This will include a specific focus on the promotion of apprenticeship opportunities to those who influence young people's career ideas and aspirations, including our careers advisers, education practitioners and parents. This work will consider the differing needs of our customers, including parents of young disabled people and those who do not have English as their first language.

We will promote our apprenticeships to British Sign Language (BSL) users and raise employers' awareness of how to access support to employ BSL users in their workplace.

We have developed a Digital Equality Action Plan which aims to increase engagement from young people from protected groups through ensuring they have input to the development of the [apprenticeships.scot](#) and My World of Work websites, and access to content that is relevant to them.

The introduction of Foundation and Graduate Apprenticeships represents an opportunity to promote pathways from school to employment to under-represented groups by allowing young people to experience the world of work at an earlier stage, and through promoting the level of qualification that can be achieved via apprenticeships.

Understanding and improving participation in apprenticeships

This year we will undertake a range of additional work designed to further our understanding of the needs of particular customer groups when accessing and sustaining apprenticeships, and how they can be met. Details of this work includes:

- Research into awareness and experience of SDS services by refugees, including our apprenticeship programmes. The findings from this research will inform future actions to support this group to access and sustain apprenticeship opportunities.
- A pre-apprenticeship programme pilot specifically for young people from minority ethnic communities who are looking for assistance with apprenticeship applications or interview preparation. Following the pilot, SDS will integrate best practice learning from this work within the Career Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) service.
- A review of the in-work support available to help care-experienced young people to achieve their apprenticeship.
- A review of data and evidence in relation to other, currently non-targeted, equality groups to identify if there is evidence of specific barriers to accessing or sustaining apprenticeship opportunities.
- In 2017, SDS became a [Carer Positive](#) employer recognising that we value and support those with caring responsibilities in our workforce. In 2018, we will undertake research into access to Modern Apprenticeships for young carers to identify the particular challenges for young carers seeking to participate in, or achieve an apprenticeship. This work will inform future actions with employers and training providers to support this customer group more effectively.

Following on from this work, SDS will publish a full equality impact assessment of apprenticeships in 2019, reviewing the evidence for any differences in needs or outcomes between equality groups. We will ensure it also identifies appropriate actions in response to the evidence, to place equality and diversity at the very heart of our activity, and to drive forward change that will make an enduring difference.

4

Shaping future years

SDS fully recognises that achieving equality of opportunity and outcome is a critical priority. We have begun to make good progress in our first year of activity, however, there is much more to be done and we are committed to lead and work in partnership with stakeholders in

what has to be a long-term commitment to achieving real change. We have learned much from the delivery of the plan in year one and this will shape our activities in future years. Our Equality Advisory Group members continue to provide invaluable advice and feedback

which informs our thinking and activities. Through our collective efforts we can obtain the real prize of an equitable and fair society which contributes to a more productive economy and successful country.

Skills Development Scotland
Monteith House, 11 George Square, Glasgow G2 1DY.
T 0141 285 6000 E info@sds.co.uk
www.sds.co.uk

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The Improving Gender Balance project engaged from Early Years onwards