

Curriculum & Assessment Board – Update Paper – Learner Journey Review and Senior Phase Curriculum

Purpose

1. To provide the Curriculum and Assessment Board with an update following publication of the 15-24 Learner Journey Review report on 10 May, considering how this links with actions agreed in relation to the Senior Phase curriculum at the Board's March meeting.

Background/ approach

2. The 15-24 Learner Journey Review was undertaken with the aim of reviewing the learning journey for all 15-24 year olds "to ensure that education provision for young people is as effective and efficient as possible and provides more stepping stones for those needing most support."
3. While recognising the importance of the curriculum prior to Senior Phase (and learning beyond the age of 24), the review specifically focused on the 15-24 stage of learning, as a critical point for young people in their learning journey, being the point of greatest choice and, potentially, overlap in provision.
4. The publication of the 15-24 Learner Journey Review Report on 10 May follows extensive engagement with stakeholders and young people from across the education and skills system throughout 2017.

Key messages

5. Engagement throughout the Review highlighted that:
 - Scotland is rightly proud of its education and skills system, which continues to deliver excellence and equity for so many of our young people. However, we need all of our young people to get as much as possible from that system.
 - Many young people feel there is a disconnect between the personal support, advice and guidance they receive on subject choices and on longer term learning and career options.
 - Additional focus is needed to secure genuine parity of esteem across the vocational and academic offer available to young people to ensure that all learners have access to a more balanced range of options that are valued equally.
 - We need to improve the alignment of courses so that our learners are able to progress through the post-15 education system as smoothly and efficiently as possible.
6. The report established five key priorities for improvement, with 17 recommendations for improvement underneath these:

- **Information, Advice & Support** - Making it easier for young people to understand their subject and career choices at the earliest stage and providing long-term person-centred support for the young people who need this most;
- **Provision** - Broadening our approach to education and reframing the offer; do more for those who get the least out of the system; ensure all young people access the high level work-based skills Scotland's economy needs;
- **Alignment** - Making the best use of the four year degree to give greater flexibility for more learners to move from S5 to year one of a degree, more from S6 to year 2, and more from college into years 2 and 3 of a degree, where appropriate;
- **Leadership** - Building collective leadership across the education and skills system;
- **Performance** - Knowing how well our education and skills system is performing.

Recommendations relevant to the work of the Curriculum and Assessment Board

7. Many of the recommendations within the report relate to young people aged 15 to 18 learning in schools, colleges and other establishments and their transitions through the system. As such, they relate directly to the agreed work of the CAB, particularly in relation to: the Senior Phase curriculum; the development of a narrative on CfE; the current review of National 4; and the work to look at progression and transitions.
8. Recommendations of direct relevance to the CAB are:
 - We will ensure every learner in Scotland has an online learner account to link their skills and attributes to better course choices. This work will start in 2018.
 - We will support practitioners, parents, carers and learners to have access to an online prospectus setting out the learning choices available in their region, building toward a one-stop shop approach. This work will start in 2018.
 - We will ensure learners in schools, colleges and universities receive a joined-up approach to careers, information, advice and guidance. This work will start in 2018.
 - We will take account of the outcomes of the PSE (Personal Social Education) Review, due to be published later this year, and consider what further improvement is needed on wider personal support for young people in schools.
 - We will develop a national communication strategy to explain and promote the breadth of choices in the 15-24 learner journey. This will build on the promotional activity undertaken during Scotland's Year of Young People and be ready by the end of AY19-20.
 - We will raise our aspiration and improve the offer and support for statutory leavers and looked after young people. We will want improvements to be in place from AY19-20.
 - We will embed DYW in the school curriculum by 2021, having achieved the headline target for DYW four years early.

- We will support and enable the Foundation Apprenticeship and other vocational qualifications to be embedded, providing a range of options for all learners in the senior phase by 2021.
- We will minimise unnecessary duplication at SCQF level 7. We will make maximum use of the flexibility of the four year degree to enable learners to move, where appropriate, from S5 to year 1 and, through greater recognition of Advanced Highers, from S6 to year 2 of a university degree programme.
- We will provide system leadership to ensure there is a shared vision about the purposes of post-15 education.

Links with existing CAB actions

9. At the CAB meeting on 8 March, the Board agreed a number of actions in relation to the Senior Phase curriculum:

- Set out a succinct and clear statement of ambition /vision for the (Senior Phase) curriculum
- Develop an overarching public communications and engagement campaign, (jointly with national partners and youth groups), to raise awareness of the range of pathways available to young people through the Senior Phase (this will include efforts to promote the value of National 4 as part of a considered learner pathway)
- Work to explore concerns around narrowing of choice and to fully understand the impact of curriculum design and the importance of the 3 year approach on choices for young people, also looking at how young people are making choices going into the Senior Phase
- Work with local authorities/ RICS/ colleges to develop regional Senior Phase prospectuses, clarifying the offer available to young people in all parts of the country
- Provide a renewed focus on transitions into and out of the Senior Phase and the support and advice young people are accessing in relation to subject choice

10. These actions, along with other agreed actions to develop a wider CfE narrative and to look at progression and transition from 3-15, alongside the need to improve National 4's currency, clearly support the aims of the Learner Journey Review.

11. In scoping how we take forward the implementation of the review recommendations, we will ensure this work is fully aligned.

Next steps

12. In terms of Learner Journey Review, the publication of the report starts a new phase of further engagement with key partners, stakeholders and young people over the coming weeks and months, as we develop plans for implementation.

13. We will consider the Senior Phase actions stemming from CAB in this wider context to ensure alignment as we work to scope out next steps on each of these.

14. We are mindful of the importance of designing and delivering this work jointly with key partners. We would propose the formation of a short-life Senior Phase working group to collaborate on this work, to help shape the Senior Phase related actions from CAB and from the Learner Journey Review (across our organisations/ sectors), as well as looking at other actions needed in relation to wider Senior Phase design. This Group will primarily report to the CAB, but given the 15-24 nature of the Learner Journey Review and the need for a whole system approach, its work will be relevant to other groups, including the DYW Programme Board and the COWA Access Delivery Group.

15. We would aim to identify membership and hold an initial meeting of this working group by the end of August 2018.

16. Feedback from CAB members on this approach would be welcome.