

CONVENTION OF THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

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Paper 3

Title: Demographics and skills in the South of Scotland

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1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

1.1 This paper sets out:

- The national policy context for population, talent attraction and skills which will have an impact on the South of Scotland
- A regional view of the area, including demographic and skills challenges with implications for job creation and future talent attraction; key skills challenges from the Regional Skills Investment Plan (RSIP); and close partnership working and investment to address these challenges
- Call to action over the next three years

1.2 It invites the Convention of the South of Scotland (COSS) to:

- Endorse the extensive regional collaboration that has been led by SDS, SFC, the regions Colleges, HEIs Crichton Campus Leadership Group, and SOSEP to develop the Regional Skills Investment Plan (RSIP) in response to the current skills challenges & opportunities across the region
- Recognise that there's an urgent need to develop a compelling economic ambition for the South of Scotland led by SOSE and the Regional Economic Partnership (REP). This new economic vision will inform both the demand for future skills and the responsiveness of appropriate regional/local skills provision. Accordingly, the RSIP will need to evolve to reflect future economic ambition.
- Endorse the establishment of a Regional Skills and Education Programme Board to oversee the delivery of the RSIP and address education and skills challenges/opportunities in the area, which aligns with and reports to the emerging REP and COSS structures
- Endorse the aims of the Ministerial Population Task Force and the development of a coherent talent attraction/retention strategy and campaign aligned with the ambitions of the Task Force and RSIP
- Support the call for partners to; a) implement the current RSIP actions, b) expedite the development of a compelling economic ambition for the region and c) ensure that future skills provision is fully aligned to the economic ambitions of the South of Scotland.

2. NATIONAL CONTEXT

Scotland's population continues to increase and is at a record high of 5,438,100. This growth is solely down to migration. This is because there have been more deaths than births in Scotland (7,700 more in the year to mid-2018). In contrast, inward migration (80,600) has been greater than outward migration (59,700). However, population growth has started to slow over the past two years following the UK's decision to leave the EU. Projections for the next 25 years show that while Scotland's population will continue to grow, it will be at a slower rate than the rest of the UK and is projected to stall by mid-2043.

A Ministerial Population Task Force, chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs, has been established. The Task Force has agreed the following aim for its population programme:

The Scottish Government's aim is to make communities across Scotland attractive places to live, work, bring up families and to move to; so that Scotland's population profile improves sustainable and inclusive economic growth and wellbeing.

There is more detail on the Population Task Force in **Annex 1**. There are several additional national policies which will have an impact on the South of Scotland. These are noted below with further detail in **Annex 2**.

- **Future Skills Action Plan** – better supporting skills needs of employers and individuals
- **Inclusive Growth** – fair work, greater equality, good quality jobs at heart of economic growth
- **15-24 Learner Journey** – supporting transitions from school to education, skills, training, employment
- **Skills Alignment** – closer alignment of skills demand and provision
- **Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland** – addressing skills challenges in rural areas
- **Expansion of Modern, Foundation and Graduate Apprenticeships** – 30,000 per year by 2020

3. REGIONAL CONTEXT

3.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

The South of Scotland is facing serious demographic challenges over a 25-year period. The region is forecast to see both a reduction in the overall population (from 264,100), and the working age population (16-64). This is significantly worse than the Scottish average and follows a ten-year period of no population growth from 2008-18. This trend will exacerbate skills gaps and shortages in the South of Scotland.

Table 1 – Future Labour supply

Future Supply	
 Population 2016-2041⁸	
Total population: down by 2% or 4,900 people	Working age population (16-64): down by 15% or 24,100 people
Forecast change: South of Scotland: -2% Scotland: 5% United Kingdom: 11%	Forecast change: South of Scotland: -15% Scotland: -4% United Kingdom: 8%

Source: South of Scotland Regional Skills Assessment Infographic (2019)

By 2041 the South of Scotland will have the most dependent population of any area in Scotland.

In 2016 for every 100 people working there were 68 who were not working, but this trend is set to worsen over the next 25 years. By 2041 it is estimated that for every 100 people who are working there will be 95 people who are not working. There will be a 73% increase in those aged 75+. Every other age category is set to decline, including a 16% decline for those aged 30-64 (19,600 people). Overall, 157,300 people (60% of the population) are aged 16-64, but this is smaller than the Scottish average of 65%.

There has been a ten-year decline in the numbers of young people in the South of Scotland and this is set to continue. From 2008-18 there was a 7% decline in young people aged 0-15 and an 11% decline in those aged 16-19. There was only a modest 3% growth of those aged 20-24 in this period. Over the next 25 years there is expected to be a further 7% fall in those aged 0-15, and 10% for those aged 16-19. However, there will also be a 16% drop on those aged 20-24. This declining number of young people available to take advantage of the jobs that will be available are likely to cause further skills shortages in a range of key sectors.

Young people are already moving away from the region to work or study, due to a perception of restricted local opportunities and a limited social/cultural offer. Employment statistics highlight a stable overall employment rate, but this can mask the fact that young people are leaving the region to take advantage of opportunities elsewhere. This combined with a reducing working age population and an ageing overall population mean that there are fewer people available to move into the jobs that become available. There is therefore a need to focus strongly on talent attraction into the region, across all working ages. Expanding the Higher Education offer is an important way of retaining young people.

There is an urgent need for a co-ordinated partnership approach to promote increased talent attraction and retention. It is crucial that partners consider how to attract new people and businesses into the region, to promote inclusive economic growth and improved productivity.

The South of Scotland faces unique challenges in relation to low productivity and poor connectivity which compounds the demographic challenges. Many of the jobs in the region are low-skilled and low-waged and individuals can face transport difficulties accessing the opportunities which are available. Lack of fast and reliable digital connectivity in some areas can also restrict access to training and employment.

The impact of Brexit will be serious in the South of Scotland. Initial research through the RSIP indicates that Brexit is likely to have a negative impact on key sectors across the South of Scotland such as hospitality, tourism, health or land-based sectors. Brexit is likely to exacerbate skills shortage vacancies in the region, which are above the Scottish average. This is also true for skills gaps, which although in line with the Scottish average in 2017 may fall below this in future years. There are currently 1,896 EU nationals living in Dumfries

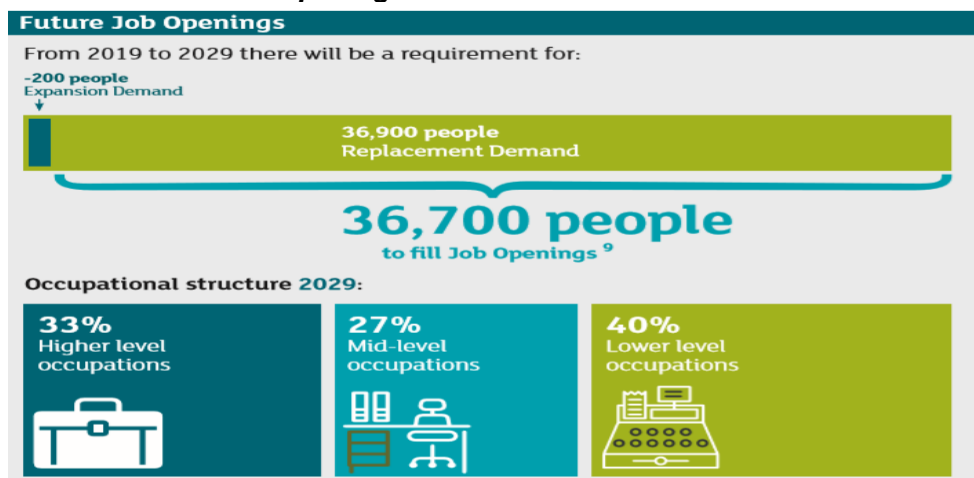
& Galloway and 3,464 in the Scottish Borders (2017/18). This represents 3% and 7% of the total EU nationals living in Scotland respectively. The South of Scotland Alliance has carried out lobbying work on the post-Brexit migration policy as the current salary threshold proposal (£30k) would cause challenges for the region.

3.2 SKILLS

The South of Scotland is facing unique and serious skills challenges. From a skills perspective the South of Scotland is different, not only from urban Scotland but from other parts of rural Scotland such as the Highlands and Islands. The region is characterised by low wages, and fewer higher paid roles compared to the Scottish average. These factors could deter individuals from choosing to live and work here.

From 2019-29 there is no forecast jobs growth. There will be a need to replace 36,700 people to fill job openings, but expansion demand (new growth) will decline by 200 jobs. The largest declines will be in manufacturing and public administration and defence. Table 2 outlines the occupational split.

Table 2 – Future Job Openings



Source: South of Scotland Regional Skills Assessment Infographic (2019)

There are large concentrations of employment in public services and manufacturing, but also in sectors with high levels of seasonal/part time employment (e.g. agriculture, tourism and food & drink). The top three employing sectors by 2029 are forecast to be health and social work (19,500 jobs); wholesale and retail (19,300 jobs) and manufacturing (10,300 jobs). The largest employment growth is forecast to be in arts, entertainment and recreation (11%); administrative & support services (11%); professional, scientific and technical services.

Employers find it difficult to find people with the skills they need. The region has a very high proportion of small and micro-businesses, and this can create challenges in accessing people, training and upskilling as some of these businesses are dispersed over a wide rural area. In addition, skills markets tend to be shallow and dispersed. This means that there can be insufficient demand to support some traditional education and skills development delivery models.

Skills shortages and skills under-utilisation rates are above the Scottish average. 30% of employers reported skills shortages in 2017, which is higher than the 24% Scottish average. 5% reported skills gaps. 40% of employers reported that they had staff who were not fully utilised in their roles, and 56% identified up-skilling requirements.

There is a lack of appetite for risk amongst some businesses which can limit opportunities for expansion and talent attraction. Business support to attract, grow and retain talent is a key area of focus for SOSEP and the new South of Scotland Enterprise agency.

Young people are leaving due to a perception of limited opportunities. The RSIP identified that young people see restricted opportunities in the region, and this is compounded by limited degree level provision. Anecdotal evidence suggests significant numbers of young people are leaving the region to pursue employment and higher education opportunities.

It should be noted that this is based on the status quo and that future growth through South of Scotland Enterprise will lead to significant additional demand for skills workers.

Question – In light of these demographic and skills challenges what would a coherent talent attraction and retention strategy look like?

3.3 SUMMARY OF THE KEY SKILLS CHALLENGES (SOUTH OF SCOTLAND RSIP)

The [Regional Skills Investment Plan](#), was facilitated by SDS and is the product of deep engagement with partners such as the SFC, and members of the SOSEP Education and Skills Group. The RSIP includes a review of labour market information, and interviews with key individuals, organisations, young people and employers across the region. The actions were agreed by consensus with partners through the SOSEP Education and Skills theme group, Executive and Board. Two events were held to mark the launch of the RSIP in Galashiels and Dumfries in June 2019. The RSIP is currently overseen by the SOSEP Education and Skills theme group but this will cease to exist on 31.03.20. There is a need therefore to consider a new Regional Skills and Education Programme Board model, to ensure activities are responsive and targeted.

Key additional challenges identified include:

- **High levels of skills under-utilisation**– The skills under-utilisation rate is amongst the highest in Scotland at 40% in 2017, compared to 35% at a Scottish level. One third of employers in the region had unused skills and talent and this has been increasing since 2015.
- **Key sector employers noted challenges filling specific roles** – CAD technicians, welders, fabricators, netters, design engineers, machine operators, HGV drivers, quantity surveyors, workshop supervisors, senior managers, chefs, and registered nurses.
- **Wider employability (or meta) skills, up-skilling and re-skilling requirements were identified as crucial by key sector employers** – in areas such as digital and those exiting declining industries.
- **Barriers to accessing education, training and employment** - The South of Scotland is a rural region and as a result there are cost, time and transport barriers for individuals who wish to access skills, training and employment opportunities. This is particularly acute for young people, who may not engage with the education and skills system as a result.
- **Lower than average educational attainment and under-representation of apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities** – 39% (16-64) qualified to SCQF L7-12 but 44% for Scotland.

Question – Do members agree that a new Regional Skills and Education Programme Board would be a helpful mechanism to drive key RSIP actions in the South of Scotland?

4. COLLECTIVE ACTION UNDERWAY TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES

The RSIP sets out a collaborative framework for action as set out below. A summary of all activities is outlined in **Annex 3**.

Table 3: South of Scotland Strategic Skills Investment Framework

Strategic Framework		
Mission	By working more effectively together partners across the South of Scotland region will ensure that skills provision is demand-led, accessible and able to meet the needs of employers and residents, resulting in sustained and inclusive economic growth	
Strategic Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving understanding of current and future regional employment opportunities • Improving the availability, awareness and uptake of different education, employment pathways and positive progression for all individuals • Identifying and addressing the skills needs of employers, with more employers investing in the development of effective managers and leaders, driving increased productivity and innovation • Mitigating the impact of the demographic challenge by better developing and utilising the skills base across the wider population, whilst retaining existing and attracting new talent across the region 	
Areas of Action (2019-2022)		
Improving access to education, skills and training	Better meeting the skills needs of employers	Grow ing and developing the workforce

Cross Cutting Themes				
Monitoring and reporting	Governance and delivery	Equalities	Addressing interdependencies	Community Learning & Development

4.1 SDS SUPPORT FOR RSIP DELIVERY

SDS works across the South of Scotland to support employers, individuals and young people. A total of £7.96m was spent in the region in 2018/19. There were 1,156 MA starts in this period and this has been increasing since 2013/14. Since the publication of the RSIP in June 2019, SDS has focused on the early implementation of key actions. These include:

- **Supporting young people to make informed career choices** by engaging with partners to ensure that My World of Work best reflects job profiles and career opportunities in the South of Scotland.
- **Promoting range of apprenticeship pathways to young people**, through engagement with key partners focusing on increasing the numbers of Foundation, Graduate and Modern Apprenticeships.
- **Exploring how best to retain contact with school, college and university leavers.** This project will seek to gather available data on school, college and university leavers, identify any gaps, and recommend how best to retain contact with those who leave the region.
- **New skills alignment activity** - SDS is working closely with academic partners in the region, and the SFC, to carry out an analysis of skills demand and supply in the South of Scotland as part of wider skills alignment activities.
- **Best practice research to explore how best to maximise the skills of older workers** based on national and international comparators.
- **Production of latest [Regional Skills Assessment data](#) to help partners agree skills investment decisions for the South of Scotland.** This data has been used through presentations to college teams to help inform curriculum planning for 2021-21.
- **Supporting individuals into employment at the Textiles Skills Centre of Excellence (Hawick)** through the Employability Fund

4.2 SFC INVESTMENT AND SUPPORT IN THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

SFC allocate around £20m per year in total to Borders College and Dumfries & Galloway College to support delivery of key outcomes for the region outlined in their respective Outcome Agreements. SFC also supports specific HEIs to deliver provision in the South of Scotland including Heriot-Watt at their Galashiels Campus and a range of academic partners at the Crichton Campus in Dumfries. The Crichton Campus Consolidated Outcome Agreement 2019-20 reflects commitments made by each of the HEIs, including Glasgow University, University of the West of Scotland, the Open University, Dumfries & Galloway College and SRUC. Glasgow School of Art have recently joined the partnership.

Responding to current priorities/actions:

- **Exploring how best to increase the availability of degree level courses** in the region and clarifying the role of key partners to help shape and guide this work.
- **Exploring a new tertiary education model for the South of Scotland which would contribute to improving the range of higher-level provision in the region for young people**
- **Supporting research into data held on college and university leavers** and facilitating discussions between colleges and universities around how enterprise and entrepreneurial skills can be embedded within the education curriculum.
- **Continuing to support the delivery of the Crichton Campus Leadership Group (CCLG)'s Statement of Ambition** - The CCLG includes all the academic partners noted above as well as The Crichton Trust, Crichton Foundation, Crichton Carbon Centre, Dumfries and Galloway Council, NHS Dumfries and Galloway, the National Centre for Resilience, Scottish Enterprise and Skills Development Scotland, as well as independent members. Building on over 20 years' experience; significant progress and achievements; its vision and ambition is "to have a transformational impact on the prospects of the region, its economy, its people and its communities."

- In addition, the two colleges and SRUC are delivering key projects funded by SOSEP (noted under 4.3) which will underpin future.

4.3 SOSEP INVESTMENT

SOSEP is funding several projects with an education and skills focus as noted below. There is an Education and Skills theme group, which has supported the development of these projects.

- **Skills and Learning Network (£6.6m)** using digital delivery channels through the creation of a hub delivery model in Galashiels, Hawick, Dumfries and Stranraer with 8 spokes in local high schools. There is a focus on engineering and care with new STEM hubs.
- **Growing Rural Talent project (£289k)** to expand the pilot of the land-based employability award across the South of Scotland; fund an Innovation and Challenge Fund for schools to remove barriers to access; provide training for teachers to become work-based assessors; and fund two co-ordinators to support links between employers, education and partner organisations.
- **Centre of Excellence for Textiles (£610k)** in Hawick to provide those with barriers to employment an opportunity to receive training at the new skills centre in Hawick and then into placement with local employers.
- **Rural Skills and Entrepreneurship project (£156,600)**– to establish a new centre for rural entrepreneurship and deliver Rural Skills National 4 and 5 through mobile learning centres
- **Colleges Articulation project (£79k)** to explore articulation options for students

4.4 LOCAL AUTHORITY INVESTMENT

In terms of local delivery of learning and skills, the two Councils also have important roles to play. The Local Authorities have lead responsibility to ensure effective early years, primary and secondary education provision across the South of Scotland. There are strong links to Dumfries & Galloway and Borders Colleges, as well as with the local DYW Industry Groups. Both Councils also provide a range of employability services, working closely with Skills Development Scotland and Jobcentre Plus. The Councils have recognised the need for new regional approaches that focus on school / employment / learning pathways for young people including Foundation Apprenticeships, alongside strong employability pipelines for unemployed and vulnerable people that in turn lead to skilled jobs. This requires a sophisticated solution which is properly aligned to the labour requirements of the regional economy; it will require changes in culture and approach from the Councils and other partners if it is to be effectively delivered.

Question – What else would COSS and its members like to see done in the South of Scotland to address regional skills and education challenges?

5. CALL TO ACTION

As a result of the demographic, skills and talent attraction challenges there is an urgent need to:

- Endorse the extensive regional collaboration that has been led by SDS, SFC, the regions Colleges, HEIs Crichton Campus Leadership Group, and SOSEP to develop the Regional Skills Investment Plan (RSIP) in response to the current skills challenges & opportunities across the region
- Recognise that there's an urgent need to develop a compelling economic ambition for the South of Scotland led by SOSE and the Regional Economic Partnership (REP). This new economic vision will inform both the demand for future skills and the responsiveness of appropriate regional/local skills provision. Accordingly, the RSIP will need to evolve to reflect future economic ambition.
- Endorse the establishment of a Regional Skills and Education Programme Board to oversee the delivery of the RSIP and address education and skills challenges/opportunities in the area, which aligns with and reports to the emerging REP and COSS structures
- Endorse the aims of the Ministerial Population Task Force and the development of a coherent talent attraction/retention strategy and campaign aligned with the ambitions of the Task Force and RSIP
- Support the call for partners to; a) implement the current RSIP actions, b) expedite the development of a compelling economic ambition for the region and c) ensure that future skills provision is fully aligned to the economic ambitions of the South of Scotland.

ANNEX 1 - MINISTERIAL POPULATION TASK FORCE

1. The Scottish Government's 2019/20 Programme for Government (PfG) has put an impetus on addressing Scotland's population challenge. A Ministerial Population Task Force has been established to address our population concerns by intensifying good work where it is already happening and harnessing more opportunities for change. The membership of the Task Force consists of:
 - Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (chair)
 - Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport
 - Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government
 - Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment
 - Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands
 - Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development
 - Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation
 - Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning
 - Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills
 - Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science

2. The Task Force is supported by a Population Programme Board, which is co-chaired by the Director for External Affairs and the Director for Fair Work, Employability and Skills. The Programme Board consists of a number of Scottish Government Directors and external partners with an interest in addressing the population challenge. This includes Skills Development Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Scottish Enterprise. Once established, our aim is to invite a member from the South of Scotland Enterprise Agency to join the Board.

3. Work is now underway to gather intelligence on all the work currently underway across Government that will help contribute to the programme aim. External partners are also involved in the programme and have been asked to provide similar information. Once collated, this information will allow Government to identify areas of good practice and where further policy development is needed.

4. The Scottish Government's refreshed National Performance Framework includes an indicator around population. This indicator is currently under development and the Task Force is currently analysing data to determine what this indicator will monitor. One option might be a basket of indicators, not a single measure.

5. A Communications Plan is also being developed which will focus on the role of Ministers across Scottish Government and partners to highlight the impact of population change; highlight opportunities and publicise the work of the programme.

ANNEX 2 – NATIONAL POLICIES

- **Future Skills Action Plan** – this sets out how the Scottish Government will respond to emerging socio-economic challenges and enable individuals and employers to access the up-skilling and re-training opportunities they require. This is crucially important in the South of Scotland. The vision is to re-orientate the skills system to ensure it is responsive, agile and financially sustainable. Regional Skills Investment Plans have been developed by SDS and partners which support this work, including a RSIP for the South of Scotland, developed by SDS and SOSEP partners.
- **Inclusive Growth** – is at the heart of national and regional economic growth. This means growth that combines prosperity with greater equality, creates opportunities for all, and distributes the benefits of increased prosperity fairly. The focus is on fair work, good quality jobs, promoting equality and tackling inequality. This will build on the study on Business Led Inclusive Growth in the South of Scotland.
- **15-24 Learner Journey Review** – to consider the journey from the senior years of school, leading to employment, including further and higher education, vocational training and apprenticeships. There is a strong focus in the South of Scotland on employability pipelines that lead to skilled jobs. Sophisticated solutions are required which align with labour market requirements in the region.
- **Skills Alignment** – through closer joint working and alignment between SDS and the SFC, Scotland's people and businesses will be equipped with the right skills to succeed in the economy, now and in the future. An agreed evidence base around skills demand and supply will form the basis of joint skills investment on a sectoral and regional basis, including in the South of Scotland. The SOSEP Learning and Skills Network will contribute to this agenda.
- **Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland** – this will address skills shortages, talent attraction & retention, and demographic challenges by enhancing work-based learning and increasing access to education and skills provision in rural areas. Partners from across the South of Scotland were involved in developing this plan.
- **Expansion of apprenticeships** - the Scottish Government has pledged to support 30,000 new apprenticeship starts each year by 2020. There are opportunities to offer more Modern, Foundation and Graduate apprenticeships in the South of Scotland. There is a need to work with employers to create more quality apprenticeship opportunities, linked to the current and future skills needs of key industries.

ANNEX 3 – SOUTH OF SCOTLAND RSIP ACTIONS

Area of action 1: Improving access to education, skills and training

- 1.1: Development of new Learning and Skills Network using digital delivery channels through creation of hubs in Galashiels, Hawick, Dumfries and Stranraer
- 1.2: Identify further opportunities for widening access through additional digital provision/innovative delivery channels, linked to labour market demand and to support work-based learning
- 1.3: Develop processes and careers guidance materials to share with key partners that are preparing young people, workless individuals, under-employed and career changers for employment opportunities
- 1.4: Explore how best to increase the availability of degree level courses in the region, and clarify role of key partners to shape and guide this work
- 1.5: Establish a regional process for engaging with micro businesses to facilitate a two-way dialogue with colleges, universities, independent training providers and SDS

Area of action 2: Better meeting the skills needs of all employers

- 2.1: Develop a regional approach to LMI sharing
- 2.2: Better co-ordinate activities and funding across agencies to meet the needs of the region's employers by streamlining key information, addressing specific skills challenges and helping businesses to grow own talent
- 2.3: Explore the potential for a shared apprenticeship approach to help small and micro employers to take on an apprentice and SME sponsorship model for Foundation Apprentices
- 2.4: Building on the SOSEP workplan, deliver a series of actions for the South of Scotland's key sectors.
- 2.5: Ensure current and emerging skills initiatives in the region align with skills evidence base and RSIP actions
- 2.6: Identify, develop and deliver enhanced management and leadership skills training with focus on small and micro employers

Area of action 3: Growing and developing the workforce

- 3.1: Develop initiative(s) to support older people to return to/remain in the workforce, focusing on job redesign, up-skilling and implementing best practice
- 3.2: Develop/enhance support to increase participation of marginalised/lower participation groups
- 3.3: Develop a regional talent attraction, retention and return programme to highlight job opportunities, inward investment opportunities, housing affordability, quality of life and cultural offer
- 3.4: Promotion of workforce development, work-based learning and up-skilling options to employers
- 3.5: Developing and enhancing regional digital skills and promotion of digital career pathways
- 3.6: Develop a small number of pilot projects to tackle the transport-related barriers

Area of action 4: A region for young people

- 4.1: Programme to ensure awareness of the widest range of employment and education opportunities (focusing on STEM), which raises aspirations amongst pupils, parents and teachers and which supports inclusion of under-represented and vulnerable individuals
- 4.2: Increase reach and uptake of work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities, based on demand led data, and enable marginalised or under-represented individuals to access these opportunities
- 4.3: Pilot two-year Graduate Attraction Project to implement a paid graduate trainee programme
- 4.4: Provide coherent progression routes at three transition points (school to college/university; school to work; college/university to work)
- 4.5: Explore the options for increasing the range of HE branded provision that is identified and commission in the south of Scotland, and scope appropriate delivery models within a rural context
- 4.6: Gather data on people who leave the region and develop a range of options to retain contact with students who leave the area but may return in the future

Area of action 5: Creating a culture of enterprise and innovation

- 5.1: Feasibility study for a programme of support for key sectors to develop and embed innovation skills, with a focus on SMEs and micro employers
- 5.2: Develop a proposal and pilot programme to embed entrepreneurial skills within the education curriculum/sector
- 5.3: Explore feasibility for Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship
- 5.4: Deliver Rural Skills and Entrepreneurship project to develop a network of rural skills facilities with a centre at SRUC Barony Campus and provide two mobile learning centres to assist with delivery of Rural Skills

Area of action 6: Future proofing the skills system

- 6.1: Identify and implement new approaches to identify skills issues from employers
- 6.2: Explore the feasibility of a south of Scotland annual skills event/conference to discuss key skills challenges and agree a collective response to these. The conferences can also be used to discuss progress and provide additional areas of action for key partners in the region
- 6.3: Complete a review of implications following final decision on Brexit in terms of: impact on skills shortages and gaps in the region; impact on the RSIP actions, and identification of additional activity areas; and impact on provision across the region
- 6.4: Establish process for measuring the effectiveness, responsiveness, agility and economic impact of the skills system through regular performance reviews

* Key sectors identified were Textiles, Food and Drink, Tourism, Land-based industries, forestry and fishing, Renewables, Construction, and Health and Social Care