

The Impact of College Regionalisation on Young People

The purpose of this briefing paper to the *Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce in Scotland*, is to showcase the integral part played by colleges, alongside schools, universities and other vocational trainers for young people and to highlight the strength of the college sector in providing appropriate and necessary training and skills development to support learners and employers/industry, to ultimately benefit the Scottish economy.

Background

2012 figures show that Scotland has 2,128 primary schools, 374 secondary schools and 190 special schools, in comparison to its 39 colleges and 19 universities. During 2011-12, colleges provided learning for over 250,000 learners. Although this is a reduction in numbers on previous years, there has been an increased proportion of students doing full-time courses, and an increase in the proportion of higher education delivered.

The majority of college learners are over 24 years of age and female, however 16-24 year olds accounted for 70% of all hours of learning during 2011-12.

Colleges are the most accessible route into learning for those in deprived communities or with additional needs. They offer an invaluable route to gaining skills, improving employability or gaining a higher education. The college in-take during 2011-12 showed that 63% of learners had no qualification on entry. Despite this, the David Hume Institute report in October 2012 (Occasional Paper – *Further Education, the Scottish Labour Market and the Wider Economy*) reported that college learners will contribute £1.2bn to the Scottish economy by 2020, equivalent to 1% of gross domestic product.

College Funding

Since 2011-12, to the end of the Scottish Government's spending review period 2014-15, the college sector will see cuts to funding of approximately £34m, with a new baseline budget of £521.7m agreed for 2013-14 and 2014-15. This position is much improved on the original cuts proposed of £85m over the same period.

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) is the main funder of colleges; however recently, different funders have also been introduced making this a more complex landscape, with significant income streams coming to colleges from Skills Development Scotland (SDS). The SDS funding is specifically to support the Scottish Government's commitment through *Opportunities for All* to guarantee a place in training or education for every 16-19 year old. Colleges also generate approximately £200m per annum, which is equivalent to 25% of their total income through commercial/other income streams, over and above the SFC and SDS funding levels.

The basis of allocation from the SFC is also moving away from traditional basis to 'need based' funding, funding for growing regions and targeted funding for older learners as a direct consequence of the *Opportunities for All* policy. These are negotiated through new regional outcome agreements – similar to how the university sector has operated for some time.

At the same time, that the actual level of funding has been cut, the relative level too has been reduced as the unit of resource – the weighted student unit of measurement (wSUM) which standardises the cost of delivery on a college programme – has been in decline since 2010-11 from a standard £207 per wSUM to as low as £165 per wSUM in some regions, with variations in value across many regions in Scotland.

The recent significant cuts in funding have had specific impacts, most notably on school-college partnerships. The school-college relationship requires both investment and nurturing to ensure school staff and learners, as well as their families are aware of college offerings e.g. work-based apprenticeship opportunities. College guidance and student support have also been adversely affected, with cuts to college staff often being the last resort to balance budgets whilst maintaining core curriculum provision.

College Regionalisation

The Scottish Government's post-16 reforms aim to create better life chances for young people and support economic growth across the country. As part of this reform agenda, *Putting Learners at the Centre - Delivering our Ambitions for Post-16 Education (2011)* outlines an ambition for all young people to have a place in post-16 education or training. It emphasises the importance of colleges working together more collaboratively, towards a networked approach in support of local and regional growth objectives. It also calls for an increased focus on *outcomes*, asserting that, historically, data collection has been an administrative burden for colleges and that data has not been used to best effect for performance management.

The Scottish Government currently has draft legislation progressing through Parliament which was introduced on the 27th November 2012 by Michael Russell, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning – the *Post-16 Education (Scotland) Bill*. The Bill has been introduced to provide legislative underpinning to a number of proposed changes affecting post-16 education in Scotland, with a range of provisions that will affect governance and delivery of education within both the college and higher education sectors.

Michael Russell had already announced in February 2012, 13 defined regions in which colleges will be expected to work more collaboratively in the future, allowing them to plan regionally and deliver locally.

An up-to-date position of the college merger landscape is shown in Annex 1. There are currently 20 colleges involved in merger processes, forming new colleges in regions across Scotland. These structural changes through mergers and federations are not in themselves regionalisation, which is the delivery of a college provision in a regional context, grouping key specialisms in centres of excellence within a region, or even nationally if required, whilst maintaining local access entry points for those studying at entry level or non advanced level.

The regionalisation process is expected to result in the following:

- having created efficient regional structures
- providing the right learning in the right place
- provision of high quality and efficient learning
- a developed workforce
- sustainable institutions.

Core Purpose of Colleges

Scotland's colleges play an integral part in the Scottish learning system by improving life chances for those from all backgrounds and in helping those furthest away from the labour market move towards employment. They also offer a clear pathway to higher education for those who wish to take it. They are a critical part of an integrated system of learning which covers school, training, college, university and work. Colleges have close ties with industry, delivering skills for the national economy and leverage significant co-investment with business. Colleges are Scotland's key provider of skills; they work in close partnership with Scotland's employers to deliver the skills training in key sectors which employers and the economy needs. By working hand-in-hand with industry, their skills and education programmes are relevant, up-to-date and significantly improve the employment prospects of all of learners.

College Learners

Colleges support people of all ages and backgrounds, both in and out of work. They engage with learners aged between 14 and 85 years of age from every area of Scotland.

Able learners benefit from clear pathways of learning within the colleges and across the education landscape with '2+2' model of articulation for routes to university. The '2+2' model of articulation, is where the 1st/2nd years are delivered in a college through Higher National Qualifications (HNQs) and 3rd/4th years of Degree in a university.

Scotland's colleges are also at the heart of communities across Scotland – often in areas poorly served by other educational provision. They offer opportunities and help to rebuild people's lives to the benefit of the individual as well as their families and the wider community. They play a major role in social inclusion, taking in disproportionate numbers of lone parents, mature students and people from the most deprived postcode areas. They deliver community learning, civic spaces and also contribute significantly to employment opportunities.

Access and Outcomes

Regionalisation will result in fewer colleges but of larger scale. They will embrace the opportunities that economies of scale will bring, with back office services being centralised and delivered more efficiently, freeing up resources for support and delivery to learners.

The new regional colleges and regional strategic bodies are expected to ensure provision is focused on the region and delivery is coherent across that region. College learners, including young people, enter through a variety of routes – through school, as a school leaver, as a modern apprentice, through block or day release from employment and through short or part-time courses while in work. The variety of routes of entry ensures colleges are flexible to the needs of learners whether starting out or developing skills for work.

Particularly for young people, access to the right course at the right place is crucial, with local campus access required for Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Level 1-6 (www.scqf.org.uk) and Scottish Vocational Qualifications Level 1-2 (www.sqa.org.uk) i.e. below Higher National Certificate (HNC). The further up the qualification ladder, the further learners can be expected to travel, to access courses. Young people often want to study Highers, entry level or non-advanced qualifications and those should be available locally, not least because many of these learners will only be 16 years old and relocating to access courses elsewhere in what may be a very large region is not as reasonable an expectation for them as for slightly older learners leaving home and relocating to attend university.

The regional college will be well placed to inform learners, their families and employers what the different qualifications and levels mean. Clarity and consistency across regions of course content within SCQF Level 1-6 and SVQ level 1-2 would assist employers when recruiting learners into the workforce.

The mark of success for a student in college is often not the number of grades or qualifications achieved, but the learning they have undertaken which will enable them to achieve. The focus in colleges is much more vocational and flexible to what the learner needs to get a job, keep a job or get a better job.

Outcomes for learners can take several forms:

- qualifications attainment
- progression through articulation
- gainful employment, 'work ready' skills, including softer skills for employability, as well as maturity/confidence.

For those with learning difficulties, there are other ways of measuring outcomes which wouldn't necessarily mean a qualification. Of particular concern is the important provision for those with the most profound and complex needs, who often take courses that would not lead to recognised qualifications and tend to progress more slowly. The move away from non-recognised qualifications (NRQs) and the focus on outcomes could present a disincentive for colleges to support this group.

Partnerships

Partnerships are vital to colleges operating and delivering both efficiently and effectively for the benefit of young people. Some of the key partnerships that exist with colleges are explored below in detail:

Employers Work Placements

The recent decline in the economic climate has posed many problems for colleges, one of which has been a significant drop in the placement opportunities for students, which are fundamental to some full-time college programmes. Borders College tried to address this issue for their construction programmes by partnering with other public sector bodies such as the Scottish Borders Housing Association. This highlights a best practice model where two predominantly publicly funded institutions have come together to not only give students valuable work experience but provide additional resources to the housing association.

Industry Partnerships

Colleges were originally established to meet the training needs of the industrial developments in Scotland and this requirement has not changed. Aligning college delivery with key industry sectors, marrying up supply and demand is central to the core purpose of colleges. During 2011-12, 91% of colleges delivered bespoke courses to employers. Banff and Buchan College and Shell UK have recently teamed up to develop an engineering programme specifically for the oil & gas sector. The SVQ Level 2 in Performing Engineering Operations, the Institute of Leadership and Management Certificate, an industry work placement and the Higher National Diploma (HND) Mechanical Engineering. The partnership also created a 'Girls into Energy' programme, which provided an introductory experience to the energy industry, predominantly male, for female pupils from the local secondary schools.

Articulation: College/University Partnerships

Since 2008, the SFC has funded regional articulation hubs and assisted institutions to progress articulation developments, both regionally and nationally. A well known college articulation hub is the Edinburgh, Lothians, Fife and Borders Regional Articulation Hub (ELRAH) which partners five universities and seven colleges. This successful hub, established in 2009 has developed articulation agreements and routes that enable college students to use HNCs and HNDs to progress into years 2 or 3 of university degree programmes. The SFC has increased the universities' indicative numbers to take account of additional places provided for in recent funding announcements.

Articulation from colleges into universities is the main way in which people from the most deprived backgrounds in Scotland can achieve a degree level qualification.

Vocational Education for Young People Still at School

The current provision of vocational education for young people still at school in Scotland is varied depending on local arrangements. There are excellent examples of well-planned, targeted and successful provision in partnership with colleges, however, not all schools/local authorities engage to the same extent. An excellent example of where colleges continue to effectively engage with its local schools is, Forth Valley College who have built on the highly successful provision of Highers which pupils are unable to access in schools, such as psychology and mechatronics. In conjunction with Falkirk Council, the college has introduced a range of vocational *Skills for Work* programmes on all three of their campuses (Alloa, Falkirk and Stirling) which are due to be piloted in 2013-14. Often these arrangements reach out to the learners' families and educate the whole support structure around a young learner.

Government – National and Local Partnerships

Colleges have established collaborative models in many sectors over the years. Industrial sectors are not identical in their structures or needs nor are local authorities. Some regional colleges have multiple local authorities within their region. A successful industrial/government collaboration is through the work of the strategic group for care delivery. This demonstrates how colleges, NHS boards and local authorities are working together to produce a comprehensive map of education and training aligned to workforce planning in care delivery. Another excellent example is the Energy Skills Partnership, a collaboration of 25 colleges working with industry bodies to develop and deliver demand led skills programmes, build capability and capacity across Scotland's colleges and support economic development.

Most partnerships with local community learning and development (CLD) providers also work well, delivering a range of programmes including adult literacies and computing skills.

Colleges have made a positive contribution, over several years, to outcomes for learners in their communities through working with community partners. This is reflected in high levels of satisfaction from community partners about the way colleges work with them and respond to identified needs. Community partnership working has also been subject to consistently positive evaluation by Education Scotland during the 2008-2012 review cycle.

Paradigm Shift

The *Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce* in Scotland has a unique opportunity to influence and change the view of how colleges are understood but more importantly presented to the wider society. What would a new view of colleges look like? How should colleges adapt to meet the challenges of the new learning, funding and governance landscape?

It is clear that colleges require to enhance their profiles and raise impressions. This could be achieved by courting champions of the sector and communicating testimonies of those with relevant experience and expertise. Leaders of the college sector should engage with key stakeholders to shape a successful service and future not only for our young people but for all our learners, for the benefit of the Scottish economy.

College Merger Landscape – As at May 2013

Annex 1

Region	Regional Lead	College(s)	Current College Principal	New Regional Principal/ New College Name	Merger Date
Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire	Ken Milroy	Aberdeen College	Rob Wallen	Rob Wallen/TBA	November 2013
		Banff and Buchan College	Paul Sherrington		
Ayrshire	Stephen Brannagan	Ayr College	John Muir	Heather Dunk/Ayrshire College	August 2013
		James Watt College (Kilwinning Campus)	Alastair Milloy		
		Kilmarnock College	Jane McKie		
Borders	John R Wright	Borders College	Liz McIntyre	N/A	N/A
Forth Valley	Hugh Hall	Forth Valley College	Linda McKay MBE	N/A	N/A
Dumfries & Galloway	Barbara Kelly	Dumfries & Galloway College	Carol Turnbull	N/A	N/A
Edinburgh and Lothians	Ian McKay	Edinburgh College (merger of Edinburgh's Telford College; Jewel & Esk College; and Stevenson College Edinburgh)	N/A	Mandy Exley/Edinburgh College	1 October 2012
Fife	Tony Jackimciw	Adam Smith College	Martin McGuire	Hugh Logan/Fife College	1 August 2013
		Carnegie College	Geoff Fenlon		
		Elmwood College (non-landbased element)	N/A		
Glasgow	Rt. Hon. Henry McLeish	John Wheatley College	Alan Sherry	TBA	1 November 2013
		North Glasgow College	Ronnie Knox		
		Stow College	Robert McGrory		
		Anniesland College	Linda McTavish CBE	Susan Walsh/Glasgow Clyde College	31 July 2013
		Cardonald College	Susan Walsh		
		Langside College	Andrew Haddon	N/A	September 2010
		City of Glasgow College (merger of Central College Glasgow; Glasgow College of Nautical Studies; and Glasgow Metropolitan College)	Paul Little		
Highlands and Islands	Michael Foxley	Argyll College UHI	Fraser Durie	N/A	N/A
		Inverness College UHI	Diane Rawlinson		
		Lewis Castle College UHI	Iain Macmillan		
		Moray College UHI	Mike Devenney		
		North Highland College UHI	Dr Gordon Jenkins		
		Orkney College UHI	Dr Bill Ross		
		Perth College UHI	Dr Thomas Moore		
		Sabhal Mòr Ostaig UHI	Prof. Boyd Robertson		
		Shetland College UHI	Professor David Gray		
		West Highland College UHI	Lydia Rohmer		
Lanarkshire	Linda McTavish	Coatbridge College	John Doyle	N/A	N/A
		South Lanarkshire College	Stewart McKillop	N/A	N/A
		Cumbernauld College	Heather Urquhart	Martin McGuire/New College Lanarkshire	1 November 2013
		Motherwell College	Hugh Logan		
Land Based	N/A	SRUC – Scotland's Rural College (merger of Barony College; Elmwood College; Oatridge College; Scottish Agricultural College)	N/A	Professor Bob Webb/ SRUC	1 October 2012
Tayside	Kish Srinivasan	Angus College	John Burt OBE	Christina Potter/Dundee and Angus College	1 November 2013
		Dundee College	Christina Potter		
West	Michael Yuille	Clydebank College	Gordon Paterson	Audrey Cumberford/West College Scotland	1 August 2013
		James Watt College (Inverclyde Campus)	Alastair Milloy		
		Reid Kerr College	Audrey Cumberford		
West Lothian	Alex Linkston	West Lothian College	Mhairi Laughlin	N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A	Newbattle Abbey College	Ann Southwood	N/A	N/A