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An overview of provision in Scotland in seven types of education for adults

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An overview of education provision for adults, and in particular disadvantaged adults, was undertaken for ten countries as part of the EU-funded Horizon 2020 project ENLIVEN (Encouraging lifelong learning for a vibrant and inclusive Europe) (Grant agreement number: 693989). This briefing summarises the approach and the Scotland overview produced as part of this wider project.

Introduction

Lifelong learning participation rates vary widely across European countries and among socio-economic and socio-demographic groups in society. An overview of determinants of participation has revealed that different players have to cooperate with each other: the individual adult, the education and training providers, and the governments in separate countries who are responsible for implementing education, labour market and other types of social policies (Boeren, 2016). The aim of this aspect of the ENLIVEN project was to deepen our knowledge about the second of these: provision and providers offering adult lifelong learning activities in Europe, especially for those who are most vulnerable in society. An overview of the range of provision and providers was undertaken for each of ten countries, organised by seven types of adult education most likely to be relevant and accessible to adults who are disadvantaged, for example those with a low level of prior education attainment, those in low skilled or precarious jobs, and those who are unemployed. The seven types of education are: basic skills and basic education; second chance education at upper secondary levels; post-secondary vocational education and training (VET); apprenticeships; training that forms part of active labour market policies (ALMPs); workplace and job-related learning; personal and social learning. Cross-country comparative analysis of provision was undertaken and is available in the full report (Boeren et al., 2017 <https://h2020enliven.files.wordpress.com/2017/09/enliven-d2-1.pdf>). This briefing focuses on summarising provision in Scotland.

Summary data on employment and lifelong learning participation

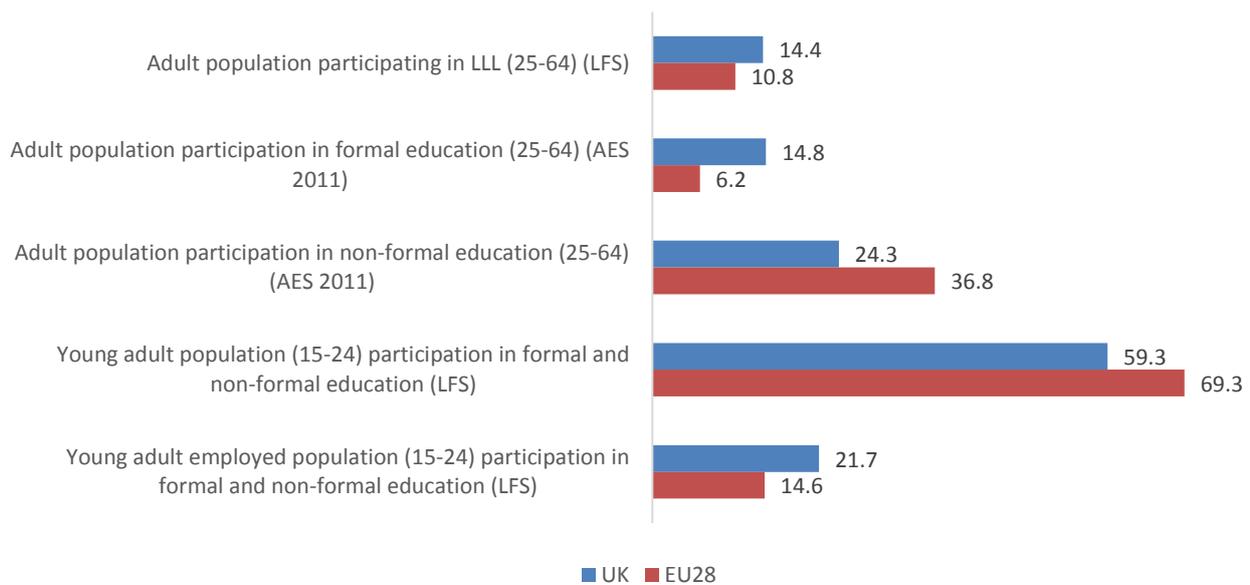
Employment and education indicators for Scotland and combined EU-28 countries, 2016 (percentages) (Source: Eurostat)



Scotland's unemployment and youth unemployment rates were much lower than the average for the combined EU 28 countries (EU28 rate) in 2016. Relevant to Scotland (and the wider UK) is concern about unstable and low quality employment, including a rise in self-employment which is often of a precarious nature despite the UK's relatively low measure of involuntary part-time employment. Between 2008 and 2017, there was an 11 per cent increase in part-time employment, a 14 per cent increase in the number of temporary workers and a 14 per cent increase in self-employment in Scotland (ONS, 2017).

In 2014/15, 60.2% of young people had attained an upper secondary level qualification by the time of leaving school, higher than previous years (Scottish Government, 2016b). Scotland has a very high rate of tertiary attainment amongst those aged 30-34 compared to the EU28 average. Conversely, the early school leaver rate among 18-24 year olds for Scotland is higher than the EU28 rate. The NEET rate of 15-24 year olds is 9.4%, a little below the EU28 rate (2016 figures).

Adult participation rates in lifelong learning for the UK and combined EU-28 countries (percentages) (Source: Eurostat)



Based on UK figures from the EU's Labour Force Survey (2016) and Adult Education Survey (2011), there are high levels of adult participation in formal (accredited) education, and among those in employment, compared to the respective EU28 rates. Employed young adults are relatively likely to participate in education and training according to UK-wide data. Overall, the Eurostat data indicate that there continues to be a need to improve engagement of unemployed young people in education and training, provide opportunities to increase qualification levels among adults, and increase the participation of older adults in non-formal education.

Types of adult education provision

Basic skills and basic education

This category refers to adult participation in learning at an education level equivalent to primary or early secondary education, intended to act as the foundation for further learning, low skill employment, or forms of active citizenship.

Programme	Provider	Purpose
Accredited units in literacy; Core Skills qualifications; English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	Colleges; local authority community learning centres; publicly funded bodies (libraries, prisons, community centres, health centres); third sector bodies, including Workers Education Association; UnionLearn; employers	At SCQF levels 3-6, to gain accredited qualifications in basic skills.
National 1-3 and National 4-5	Colleges - provided in colleges or in workplace	At SCQF level 1-5, to gain national qualifications at primary and lower secondary level.

In Scotland, there is a national strategy for Adult Literacies (Scottish Government, 2011), and a wide range of settings, in the public and third sector, as well as in workplaces, in which literacies education can take place. Recognised qualifications in Core Skills and ESOL can also be undertaken by adults. College students may study for national qualifications at primary and lower secondary level (National 1-3 and National 4-5), or employed persons may be supported to complete such qualifications in the workplace. In addition there is targeted basic skills provision for offenders, and depending on the focus of particular community or voluntary groups, targeted provision for those disadvantaged or vulnerable in other ways. Estimating the extent of provision in relation to learner characteristics is problematic.

Second chance education at upper secondary level

This category refers to adult participation in learning at a level equivalent to upper secondary education, intended to act as a foundation for learning at tertiary level, intermediate skill employment, or forms of active citizenship.

Programme	Provider	Purpose
Highers and Advanced Highers	Colleges	Second chance school qualifications
Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP)	Colleges, in partnership with universities	Access courses into HE
Universities' own pre-access courses	Universities	Access courses into HE

Adults who have left initial education may undertake Highers and Advanced Highers qualifications in colleges, although extent of provision varies. Data which specify how many of these awards were undertaken by those of adult age are not available. Adults

seeking to gain qualifications to enter higher education are more likely to do so through an access course. The Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP) is delivered in colleges, in partnership with universities. In 2014/15 the completion rate was 76 per cent. Three quarters of those who completed entered university and 20 per cent entered Higher National study in college (SWAP, 2015). There is a target set by the Scottish Funding Council for 35 per cent of participants to be from the 20 per cent most deprived areas (achieved for enrolments in 2014/15, but only 33 per cent completion); and for 12 per cent of participants to have a disclosed disability (14 per cent achieved in SWAP East in 2014/15) (SWAP East, 2015). Data on the number of participants on universities' own pre-access courses are not reported in national participation data. In addition entry to the Open University may be accessible without academic qualifications.

Post-secondary VET

This category refers to adult participation in VET at post-secondary levels, intended to prepare for employment in a specified occupation or sector, or to provide access to other tertiary or post-tertiary education.

Programme	Provider	Purpose
Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)	Usually assessed in the workplace, by colleges, private training providers or employers	At SCQF levels 4-11, competence-based, practically oriented qualifications
National Progression Awards (NPAs)	Colleges; in partnership between schools, colleges and employers	At SCQF level 2-6 (level 6 is post-secondary), to develop skills for employment, but also to change attitudes and encourage ambition
National Certificates	Colleges	At SCQF levels 2-6, intended to provide access to employment or progression to Higher National qualifications
Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Higher National Diploma (HND)	Colleges	At SCQF levels 7-8, short cycle tertiary vocational qualifications.

Colleges provide vocational courses that span secondary level to post-secondary level. National Progression Awards (NPAs) are mainly delivered by colleges for short study programmes, such as return-to-work courses or part-time learning for those already in work. National Certificates are aimed at 16-18 year olds or adults in full-time education (www.sqa.org.uk). Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) range from semi-skilled worker level to higher education level. The qualifications within each sector are developed by the relevant Sector Skills Council (www.sqa.org.uk).

Higher National qualifications (Higher National Certificate or HNC, and Higher National Diploma or HND) are developed by the SQA in partnership with colleges, universities and industry, and available in a very wide range of subjects. They may be studied full-time, largely in college with some time spent in an employment setting; or through various forms of part-time provision for those in employment. They are recognised as good quality

qualifications in their own right by many employers, but may also allow transition into degree level study, at the discretion of individual universities, although the SFC does provide funding for a set number of ‘articulation’ places specifically to support such transitions (SFC, 2013). Twenty one per cent of graduates from HNCs and HNDs enter employment, and 51 per cent enter further study (SFC, 2017).

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are defined as employees’ participation in dual training programmes in a specific occupation leading to recognised professional qualifications. They therefore are a particular form of combined VET and workplace learning.

Programme	Provider	Purpose
Modern Apprenticeships	Colleges; private training providers; third sector training providers	At SCQF level 5-11. Most qualifications are at levels 5 and 6. Provide occupational qualifications (usually SVQ) and Core Skills through combined work and study, with employee status.

The Modern Apprenticeship (MA) scheme is the overarching publicly-funded apprenticeship scheme in Scotland. The government, through Skills Development Scotland, provides funding for the training element of MAs through contracts with training providers. The employer provides a salary to the apprentice, but for apprentices aged under 25 receives government assistance in the form of exemption from payment of employer national insurance on their salary. There are over 80 MA ‘frameworks’ or programmes which have been developed by Sector Skills Councils. There is no set duration, as the apprentice is expected to demonstrate growing competence (www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk).

There is ongoing expansion of the MA programme, including the development of Foundation Apprenticeships (for those still in school to gain occupational experience and vocational accreditation); and at the other end of the scale Graduate Level Apprenticeships for employed persons to gain vocational qualifications with a range of entry and exit points from Higher National Diploma level (SCQF level 8) to a Masters degree level (SCQF level 11).

MAs are a key programme in the Scottish Government’s (2014b) ‘Developing the Young Workforce’ youth employment strategy. There are targets for increasing the number of starts to 30,000 each year by 2020. An Apprenticeship Levy, a UK Government policy, came into force in 2017 for all high-wage bill enterprises, with the requirement for that levy to be used by employers to create new apprenticeships (for new and existing employees) (Department for Education, 2016). The levy applies to Scotland despite not being a favoured policy there, and is being used in Scotland partially to meet the general target for MA expansion (Scottish Government, 2017).

MAs can be undertaken by those of any age in employment, but the majority of uptake is amongst the 16-24 age group. For young people, they are intended to provide a training route for those not continuing in education, or young people and older adults who have previously left school possibly with low qualifications (SDS, 2016a). There are concerns

about, and targets set to address, under-participation of young adults who are BAME, care-experienced, with a disability, or from an area of relatively high deprivation; and to address gender imbalance in MA frameworks (SDS, 2015). The latter is a concern partly because female dominated MAs lead to less well-paid professions than MAs which are male dominated (Riddell and Weedon, forthcoming).

Three quarters of the leavers in 2015/16 had achieved their MA (SDS, 2016a). Ninety-one per cent of those who had completed their apprenticeships (of 2,000 former apprentices surveyed) were still in employment six months after completing the MA, 67% with the same employer. Eighty-one per cent of those in work six months later reported some progression: working at higher level, for higher pay, or with more responsibility (SDS, 2016b).

When employment is an outcome of a programme, the quality of that outcome matters too, and there is some evidence in the case of MAs not just of good employment rates but of some progression in employment (SDS, 2016b). However there is little in-depth research on the experience of apprentices and the quality of training they receive. The OECD (2013) suggest that the issues for MAs are in ensuring appropriate provision of generic skills to apprentices, the funding arrangements for those over 25 with few qualifications and no relevant work experience, and the use of apprenticeships for those already in post. It would be helpful also to know how progression differs in relation to MA frameworks, sectors, employer type and training provider. The OECD has provided SDS with a proposed framework for effective evaluation (OECD, 2016).

Training as part of Active Labour Market Policies

Training as part of ALMPs may be defined as participation in work-related activity, either voluntary or mandatory, by those unemployed, at risk of unemployment, or those requiring support to make the transition into employment.

Programme	Provider	Purpose
Work Programme (Work and Health Programme from April 2017) Work Choice/Work Entry Support (part of Work and Health Programme from April 2017)	Private sector providers; third sector providers.	Work Programme is main UK Government ALMP. Aims to get unemployed people in receipt of JSA and ESA into employment. Mandatory programme when under UK Government control. Work Choice provides support to disabled unemployed people aged 18 and over, which can include training. Work Entry Support is available for up to six months. From April 2018 unemployment programmes fully devolved to Scottish Government.
Help to Work	JobCentre Plus; private sector providers; third sector providers.	Post-Work Programme under UK Government. Aims to support long-term unemployed (2 years on Work Programme), including through intensive support to overcome barriers to work and Mandatory Community Placement lasting 21 weeks. Responsibility for support for the unemployed devolved to Scottish Government from April 2018.

Work First/Work Able	Skills Development Scotland; third sector providers.	Introduced under new devolved powers by Scottish Government in April 2017 to replace Work Choice. To support into employment those with a health condition (Work First) and those with a disability (Work Able).
Sector-based work academies and Work experience/Traineeships	JobCentre Plus; colleges; private sector providers and employers; third sector employers.	UK Government programmes. Sector-based work academies provide pre-employment training, work experience and a guaranteed interview; Work Experience/Traineeships provide unpaid work experience for claimants under 25. Not mandatory to join, but one way of meeting requirements as claimant.
Employability Fund	Skills Development Scotland; Colleges; private training providers; third sector training providers.	Scottish Government programme which brings together a range of national training programmes. Local training providers work with employers to understand their skill needs and help them find and train individuals. The provision can be in the form of employability, personal development or core skills activity; and work experience.
Activity Agreements	Public sector (local authority) providers; third sector providers.	An agreement between a vulnerable young person aged 16-19 and an advisor that sets out an individualised learning and activity plan which helps them to prepare for further learning or employment.
Certificate of Work Readiness	Colleges.	Developed by the SQA in partnership with colleges, intended to show employers that recipients have relevant experience for the workplace
Community Jobs Scotland	Third sector employers.	Scottish Government and Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations programme. Unemployed and vulnerable young people aged 16-29 are supported into finding jobs with training in third sector organisations that last up to 12 months (full-time) or 18 months (part-time).
Inspiring Scotland 14-19 Fund	Third sector providers.	Non-government programme. Provides funding to 20 third sector organisations ('Ventures') which provide a range of different forms of support and opportunity to vulnerable young people struggling to make the transition from school into a positive next step.

The Work Programme (and its successor) was introduced by the UK Government in 2010 as the key ALMP aimed at getting unemployed people into work (a 'Work First' as opposed

to 'Learn First' programme), and will run in Scotland until March 2018. The content of the support and any training provided through the programme is determined by the service providers. Results rather than content are assessed by the UK Government. Those with health conditions may be claiming Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) rather than JSA. Failure to attend mandated activities that form part of the Work Programme results in financial sanctions. Of referrals to the Work Programme, only 23.8% resulted in a job outcome payment for the Prime Contractor, but the results were far lower for ESA than JSA claimants (Scottish Government, 2015b). ESA claimants require targeted and potentially more complex support than do JSA claimants, which contractors are less successful in addressing. After two years claimants may be transferred into 'Help to Work'.

Powers over unemployment support are being devolved to Scotland. Initially, continuity of the Work Programme is expected, with programme changes specific to Scotland being implemented partially from April 2017 and fully from April 2018 (www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk). A commitment has been made by the Scottish Government to reduce the use of sanctions for non-attendance in activities that are part of voluntary programmes (Scottish Government, 2016a).

Pre-employment schemes for young people ('Sector-based work academies', and 'Work experience') also form part of ALMP provision (www.dwp.gov.uk). The Scottish Government has had ongoing responsibility for developing employment programmes not directly linked to receipt of unemployment benefits. The 'Employability Fund', run by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is intended to be an important aspect of delivering the Scottish Government's (2012a) Opportunities for All policy, which guarantees the offer of an education or training place to all 16-19 young people not in education or employment. The Employability Fund in 2016-17 had a 48% positive outcome rate, which includes progression into job, MA, self-employment or advanced learning (SQW, 2016).

'Activity agreements' are targeted at young unemployed vulnerable people, including care-experienced young people, early school leavers, young people with a disability or health condition, young people with criminal convictions, carers, young people no longer engaged with their families. Three quarters of leavers in 2015/16 achieved a 'positive outcome' (Youthlink Scotland, 2016). An example of a non-government scheme is the 'Inspiring Scotland 14-19 Fund'. and on this scheme three quarters of participants in 2015 subsequently entered employment, education or training (Inspiring Scotland, 2016).

Mandatory schemes linked to the receipt of benefits are a concern from an educational perspective, because they may reduce the chance of positive engagement and outcomes. Government-funded ALMPs and third sector employability scheme do have the potential to help disadvantaged adults, particularly the unemployed, those in unstable employment and young people leaving education at an early stage, if they provide training and development opportunities, have a focus on the individual's situation and needs, provide job search support, and especially if they can lead to gaining qualifications. This requires long-term support, something that ALMPs do not provide if their focus is on getting people into work, and in some cases only offering short-term placements or basic skills training. Much if not most provision under the UK-wide government schemes has not met these criteria, although for younger adults there is more varied provision than for older adults. In terms of success, the Work Programme has had low positive outcome rates, while other schemes such as the Employability Fund (SQW, 2016), Certificate of Work Readiness (Eskogen, 2015) and Work Choice (Scottish Government, 2015b) have only had around a 50% positive outcome rate. This may reflect the schemes themselves, or the fact that they

support those who may be particularly distant from the labour market. However, the nature of the provision, and the circumstances and attitudes of the person engaging with the provision are not sufficient for ALMPs to be successful. They need to be linked with local labour market needs, and cannot be successful without appropriate jobs for participants to apply for and enter. The demand side needs to be addressed (through public investment where private investment is not achieving this) not just the supply side.

Workplace and job-related learning

This category refers to learning and training relevant to the participants' current workplace. In some cases, workplace and job-related learning may be delivered by an external provider on behalf of the employer or be initiated by the employee. However, in many cases the learning or training provider is the employing organisation, either through structured learning (courses) or less structured learning (such as on-the-job training, work shadowing, seminars).

Employers providing training, employees receiving training and main types of workplace training in Scotland in last 12 months, 2015 (percentages) (Source: UKCES Employer Skills Survey 2015)



There is overall a high level of engagement in workplace learning, in terms of the percentage of enterprises providing training. Participation in workplace learning is more likely for those working in larger enterprises. For small organisations the pressure on finances and time for training are greater than for larger organisations. Those in the service sector, and particularly in service provider roles, are the most likely to receive training. Overall, enterprises in the education, public administration, and health and social work sectors were most likely to have provided training; those in agriculture and construction the least likely (UKCES, 2016). Not evident from overall participation data is that workplace learning opportunities which help to develop a career are most likely to be accessed by those already in higher skill or higher status positions. Those with higher skills drive much of this learning themselves to support their development, or to meet professional regulatory requirements, rather than the education and training being employer-driven (Riddell et al., 2009). Much of the training in Scottish workplaces appears to be focused on the specific job, potentially more than on training for development (of the person or the enterprise). There are though a great breadth of formal qualifications that

can be undertaken in the workplace, such as SVQs or MAs, and available at different levels of competence (www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.org.uk).

Personal and social learning

Personal and social learning refers to participation in non-formal non-job related learning activities that may serve the purposes of providing personal or social benefit. There is a large array of providers, in the public, third and private sectors, delivering personal and social learning. This is in many circumstances referred to as community learning and development. Neither the overall number of providers nor participants is known.

A national CLD workforce survey (Education Scotland, 2015) identified that organisations mainly worked in youth work and community capacity building and/or community development, and to a lesser extent in adult learning. CLD covers a very wide spectrum of activity, and within that targeted provision to different groups is available. National data are not available that would identify the extent of targeted activity for particular groups. However, some of this provision is in colleges, and here participation in courses leading to non-recognised qualifications has dropped from 10.6% of learning hours in 2007/08 to 2.8% in 2015/16 (SFC, 2017). This reflects the Scottish Government's funding strategy for colleges, which has prioritised funding on full-time places, which tend to be courses leading to national qualifications.

The provider landscape

There are a wide range of providers of adult education, in sector, scope and location, and a strong history of adult participation in learning. The diversity of provision shows an openness and flexibility to involve different types of provider, which may be able to bring varied strengths and opportunities to learners in response to differing needs. Although there are positives to diverse provision, it may cause potential confusion for those seeking to learn or train, and those seeking to work in partnership in development and delivery.

There is a strong role for public sector providers. Colleges have however been subject to funding cuts and changes in funding and strategic focus by the Scottish Government, which has the positive intention of increasing their role in tackling youth employment issues and increasing engagement of young people with education after leaving school, particularly amongst those from disadvantaged backgrounds. On the other hand, these funding changes have reduced their contribution to part-time learning, including non-recognised courses and those in the personal/social sphere. This has had a disproportionate effect on older adults and women, who were the most likely to undertake these courses (SFC, 2017).

There is public sector provision beyond colleges and higher education institutions - including local authority funded community education provision, youth work and libraries - providing a range of activity, the extent of which is difficult to quantify. Similarly, a wide-ranging third sector, which includes voluntary, charitable and not-for-profit organisations, provides adult education in the form of formal education (such as accredited core skills, literacy, apprenticeships), non-formal education (through community-based learning), and training as part of voluntary ALMPs. The number of organisations delivering adult education in various forms is not known, let alone a more detailed breakdown of the kinds of learning being provided and to whom - with the exception of basic skills and ESOL courses that lead to national accreditation.

The number of private training providers in Scotland, operating mainly in the field of workplace and work-based learning, is also not known. Again where accreditation is the result of activity, learner numbers are incorporated into national data (even if not identifiable as being the outcome of private training provider activity); but data on the range of activity undertaken particularly on behalf of employers are not available at a national level.

There is also a complex wider landscape of representative, umbrella and development bodies operating in areas related to employability, skills, community development, adult education and youth work. There are efforts to achieve joined-up working between the various bodies, for example through community learning and development plans that form part of Community Planning Partnerships, but the different roles can be complex for those wishing to engage with them, such as employers, industry representatives and third sector organisations, and for potential learners.

Conclusion: provision and its accessibility for disadvantaged adults

In Scotland, there are national strategies for adult literacies (Scottish Government, 2011), ESOL (Scottish Government, 2015a), youth employment (Scottish Government, 2014b), community learning and development (Scottish Government, 2012b), transitions of people with additional support needs (Scottish Government, 2014c) and annual strategic guidance for further education and higher education (see www.sfc.ac.uk). There is a commitment to supporting and encouraging a wide range of education and training for those who have left initial education, and of using partnership working in the local context.

There is a range of provision in each adult education category. In principle therefore, there are not noticeable gaps. Thousands of people are participating in the full range of provision types each year. In many areas in this work it has not been possible to identify programmes specifically aimed at targeted groups with particular disadvantages or needs. Apart from where there has been specific evaluation carried out, the extent to which this is meeting needs amongst learners, and particularly amongst disadvantaged groups is not clear. Who are those not accessing these opportunities, and is there sufficient capacity of accessible provision for those people if they want to access them? One of the largest employment-related schemes for young people is the Modern Apprenticeship programme, and the under-representation of key groups is at least measured, acknowledged and a target in place to try and improve the situation (SDS, 2015). However, the same data are not available for schemes like the Employability Fund; detailed data on the characteristics of college students in relation to types of provision are not currently published; participation data for non-accredited higher education institution courses and activities are not available; data from the original Work Programme lack detail, though suggest poor overall outcomes (Scottish Government, 2015b) – although the programme is being devolved to Scotland

There are funded opportunities available in all categories, but again it is not known whether that is sufficient for those who want to participate. In particular, are the plethora of programmes targeted at young, vulnerable people, unemployed or with low qualification levels (of which only some of the largest known and usually publicly funded schemes have been listed) sufficient to meet the needs of these young people, and if not which young people are still struggling to be engaged or identified? These are issues to further explore through case study work which will form the second phase of the research.

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Further information

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