



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

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Dear Jamie,

Thank you for appearing at the Education and Skills Committee on 14 March 2018¹. I know the Committee found it useful to explore the policy area in your remit and to ask questions on behalf of stakeholders and members of the public.

The Committee has agreed that I write to follow up a number of points with you.

Members of the Committee had a number of questions on the data for Modern Apprenticeships. Please provide the completion rates for modern apprenticeships of individuals who have an identified additional support need and for individuals with a disability. Please also provide the most recent annual figures for individuals starting Modern Apprenticeships disaggregated into levels 2 and 3.

The Committee also wished to explore further how industry's voice influences education in our schools so that our education system is response to skills demand both at a local and national level. The Committee would also be grateful for clarification on who, or what bodies, are accountable for ensuring that industry's voice is heard and that the education system is responsive, again both at a local and national level.

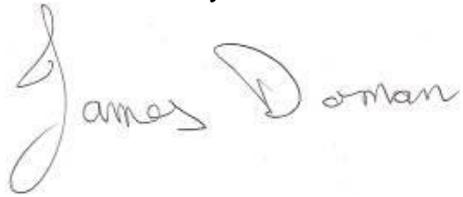
I also indicated that I would send on any questions the Committee had received that we did not have the opportunity to ask you during the meeting. Those questions are listed in the Annexe to this letter and I would be grateful if you would provide answers for each one.

We will highlight your responses, given both at the meeting and in response to this letter, to the stakeholders and individuals who provided the Committee with the questions.

¹ The *Official Report* of the meeting has been published and can be found here:
<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11428&mode=pdf>

I would be grateful for a response to this letter by 24th April.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Dornan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'J'.

**JAMES DORNAN MSP
CONVENER**

Ask the Minister Questions

1. Given the remarkable and positive progress made by the DYW Programme, does the Minister not have any concerns on proposed changes to education governance that will likely disrupt and put at risk the DYW Programme's progress?

COSLA

2. When will the DYW Regional Groups clearly demonstrate added value, given some were set up some time ago with significant resources invested in them?

COSLA

3. What needs to be done to ensure all teachers buy-in to the ethos of DYW and take a more flexible approach to allowing young people out of school to take up work inspiration and work-based learning opportunities?

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

4. **Background:** It is great news that youth unemployment has been successfully tackled through recent collaborative efforts through a greater focus on full-time courses. Equally, it is encouraging that the Scottish Government's Outcome Agreements recognises the importance of part-time courses, too.

Question: What do you believe is the right balance for the college sector right now between part-time courses for people studying while in work and full-time courses?

Colleges Scotland

5. What is the minister working on to improve the numbers of young women entering traditionally male training and professions, and vice versa?

Culture Counts

6. **Background:** More and more people in Scotland are taking up apprenticeships, but the number of disabled apprentices is still very small.

Question: What will the minister and the Scottish Government do to increase the numbers [of disabled apprentices]; given that such a big part of the apprenticeship process is employer-led?

Kate Samuels

7. **Background:** Last year, Colleges Scotland welcomed the Scottish Government fulfilling its commitment to reduce youth unemployment by 40%, four years ahead of schedule. This achievement represents a great example of the collaborative efforts of Scotland's schools, colleges, and skills agencies. However, it is clear that a renewed focus must be directed towards those young people with protected characteristics who are less likely to have positive outcomes.

Question: How will the Scottish Government ensure that opportunities available through Developing Scotland's Young Workforce are targeted effectively towards these young people?

Colleges Scotland

8. Will the Apprenticeship Levy be practically used to address the DYW equalities targets i.e. gender, disabled young people and those young people who have been 'looked after', given the lack of sufficient progress with the equalities key performance indicators (KPIs) for DYW?

COSLA

9. What provision does the Government have in place to ensure the recognition of learning and continued employment of apprentices who are directly and indirectly impacted by the closure of their employers or training provider, such as we saw with Carillion?

NUS Scotland

10. As we celebrate the achievement of apprentices around Scotland what progress has been made in reducing the cost of travel for apprentices?

NUS Scotland

11. Background: Scottish Government has reduced the contribution to Modern Apprenticeship Funding to Hospitality and Food and Drink businesses and training providers, by 47% since 2014.

Question: How can the quality of experience be assured and apprenticeship opportunities be available with such a dramatic decrease? Many SME's in Hospitality cannot afford to pay for any aspect of the apprenticeship themselves how will government address this?

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

12. What is happening to ensure that businesses on the ground are given the right support to help make apprenticeships work for them?

Culture Counts

13. For large employers who previously recruited apprentices and now pay the apprentice levy too, what additionality can they see or do you think they are now simply paying more tax?

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

14. Background: Colleges in Scotland are working with Skills Development Scotland, schools and employers to continue contributing to the delivery of the apprenticeship target and are keen to increase the apprenticeship programme.

Question: Would you favour a change in the way apprenticeships are awarded that could benefit colleges over private sector companies? If so, what changes would you like to make?

Colleges Scotland

15. Background: The world of work is changing and business is clear that upskilling and retraining staff has a crucial role to play in helping to close skills gaps. To that end, the introduction of a Flexible Workforce Development Fund was welcome. However, the £10,000 cap per employer significantly restricts the range of high quality training the Fund should be designed to support, while businesses would also benefit from the delivery model being opened up to include all accredited training providers, rather than being restricted exclusively to the college sector.

16. Question: With an external evaluation of the first year of the FWDF underway, is the Scottish Government open to making significant changes to the Fund based on the feedback they receive, particularly around the delivery model and the size of the cap, to ensure the FWDF delivers maximum benefit to individuals, employers and the Scottish economy?

CBI Scotland

17. Background: Feedback from CBI Scotland members shows that age restrictions on apprenticeships prevent some employers, notably in the retail sector, from getting support

in their efforts to help the long-term unemployed back to work. This includes, for example, women returning to work after having children and people who have previously worked in traditional industries.

Question: While the focus in recent years has understandably been on tackling youth unemployment, is the Minister willing to look at where age restrictions on apprenticeship frameworks could be lifted to broaden the availability of apprenticeships to help support the long-term unemployed back to work and to allow apprenticeships to be used as a way of upskilling existing staff members?

CBI Scotland

18. Background: Business is committed to investing in skills – 9 in 10 have a learning and development strategy and more than 8 in 10 have a dedicated training *and development budget*.

Questions:

- With the Apprenticeship Levy entering its second year, how does the Minister see the Levy impacting on business' relationship with the skills system in the long term?
- What areas does the Minister see as opportunities for closer collaboration to meet the skills needs of the future?
- And is the Scottish Government looking at collaborative models elsewhere that we could learn from?

CBI Scotland

19. Background: Local Authorities are clear that the loss of the Apprenticeship Levy has adversely impacted on their ability to do more within their communities and as the largest employer in most areas.

Question: Is there scope to return the Levy paid by councils back to them to continue their initial good work in this area?

COSLA

20. How can the value of work based learning through apprenticeships be better communicated to young people and their parents?

COSLA

21. What are the plans for how the Apprenticeship Levy will be distributed up to 2021 and what opportunity is there for the future development of flexible workforce fund to include higher funding to large levy payers?

Developing the Young Workforce, Edinburgh, Midlothian & East Lothian Regional Group

22. Would it be Possible to broaden the academic awards recognised for MAs (beyond SVQs) to align with existing career pathways?

Developing the Young Workforce, Edinburgh, Midlothian & East Lothian Regional Group

23. How will Graduate Apprenticeships be funded after the current cohort of students?

Developing the Young Workforce, Edinburgh, Midlothian & East Lothian Regional Group

24. It is vital that all sectors are represented and consulted on within tech advisory groups, how will you better consult and include Health and Social Care?

Developing the Young Workforce, Edinburgh, Midlothian & East Lothian Regional Group

25. Health and Social Care as one of our key sectors requires more support for the challenge of workforce development. Currently this is restricted by financial models based on low contribution rates for many awards required in workforce, e.g. healthcare clinical and non-clinical, Social Services and Healthcare – needs to be better for 19-24yrs. How can this be improved?

Developing the Young Workforce, Edinburgh, Midlothian & East Lothian Regional Group

26. Background: The Scottish Government's Race Equality Action Plan 2017-2020 commits to work with Skills Development Scotland to annually review their Equality Action Plan for Modern Apprenticeships to monitor progress towards improvements.

SDS has committed that by 2021, BME groups will undertake Modern Apprenticeships at a rate equal to the BME population (4.0% at the 2011 Census.) As of December 2016, the rate of BME groups undertaking Modern Apprenticeship had only increased 0.2% from December 2015 to 1.7%. It is likely that the BME population of Scotland is growing faster than 0.2% per year, so in effect we are likely going backward in terms of representation. Additionally, most Modern Apprenticeships are available in cities in which the BME population is much higher than 4.0%, which further adds to the challenge of equal representation.

Question: What actions are the Scottish Government planning to undertake to help Skills Development Scotland progress on this goal?

Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights

27. Background: We note the Government's intention to increase the number of Foundation Apprenticeships.

Question: When are we going to see foundation apprenticeships offered in every school across Scotland?

Scottish Chambers of Commerce

28. Background: Business investment in apprenticeships in Scotland remains buoyant and we are continuing to see growth by business which is confirming business investment in training, with record levels of opportunities being posted. However, SCC, has been promoting to its members the Graduate Apprenticeship option. We see this as a major step forward in providing more opportunities for our young people and business, coupled with the lever to support skill shortages in the future. This has become even more critical with Brexit, and the labour market supply challenges. This demand by business is not being matched with available funding from the Scottish Government.

Question: How is the minister proposing to alleviate this situation to ensure that demand is met for business, to open up even more opportunities for young people?

Scottish Chambers of Commerce

29. Background: The Scottish Government announced a £10M Flexible Training Fund for colleges. We understand this fund has been set up with proceeds from the Scottish Apprenticeship Levy Tax, with the objective being to develop and support needs of business.

Questions: Business is asking what ownership, influence and control over how this money is being spent is being provided for the business community? It appears that business is not taking up the offer from colleges currently, can he confirm this? Could we utilise this fund perhaps through bids or other processes, to engage business and provide them with the opportunity to train in areas and disciplines that they need, as opposed to potentially being in a situation where it could be deemed as being “provision led”?

Scottish Chambers of Commerce

30. Background: DYW Local Panels has been deemed to be successful in terms of outputs/impacts in the majority of geographical areas in Scotland. Part of this success has been due to (a) locally driven; (b) business led and (c) ability to form effective partnerships/relationships.

Questions: Do we have national indicators which do not only measure quantity but focus on quality? And is one measurement the alleviation of skill shortages for Scotland?

Scottish Chambers of Commerce

31. Background: In relation to the Apprenticeship Levy Tax. We appreciate this has been introduced by Westminster. During a lengthy consultation process by the Scottish Government, ideas were put forward to engage more small and medium sized businesses who were part of the large company supply chains to be able to access the levy pot.

Questions: How has the Minister progressed this area, how many small and medium sized businesses have benefitted from its introduction? and how is it being measured?

Scottish Chambers of Commerce