

Career Information, Advice and Guidance services delivered by Skills Development Scotland in Falkirk

A report by HM Inspectors

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1. Introduction

The external review

The external review by Education Scotland took place between 23 and 27 September 2019. The review focused on Career Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) services delivered by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) in Falkirk.

We examined activities that impact on the quality of customer experience. We evaluated these against the three key principles of **outcomes and impact**, **service delivery** and **leadership and quality culture**, using the 13 reference quality indicators outlined in [External quality arrangements for the review of Career Information Advice and Guidance services delivered by Skills Development Scotland](#), published in July 2018. Further details can be found at: <https://education.gov.scot/what-we-do/inspection-and-review/about-inspections-and-reviews/Careers%20service%20reviews>.

The external review team talked with customers, staff at all levels in the organisation, external agencies and other users of the service.

2. The service area and its context

In carrying out the external review of services delivered in Falkirk, Education Scotland took the following area context fully into account.

The Falkirk local authority area has a population of approximately 160,000 and covers an area of over 297 square km. The area is a mix of urban and rural, with the largest settlements being Falkirk itself, followed by Grangemouth, Bo'ness, Larbert, Denny and Bonnybridge. The area has some of the best travel connections in Scotland, is equidistant between Glasgow and Edinburgh, and is at the heart of the rail and motorway networks, as well as sea connections through the port of Grangemouth and the River Forth. The population is expected to grow to 162,800 by 2020. In 2016, 24 out of 1,046 areas considered to be within the 15% most deprived areas in Scotland were within the boundaries of Falkirk, four of which are within the 5% most deprived areas.

Falkirk is the main town in the authority and the administrative centre for the area. Falkirk primarily relies on the public sector, retail and tourism for employment in the town. Grangemouth, originally developed around the port, it is now known internationally as a centre of the petrochemical industry, including the INEOS oil refinery. Grangemouth is one of the main ports in the UK and is one of the largest container terminals in Europe handling nine million tonnes of cargo every year.

Falkirk's economy is forecast to grow at a rate slightly below the Scottish average over the next decade. Due to their size, human health and social work services, and wholesale and retail trade industries are all expected to contribute substantially to growth. The fastest growing industries between 2018 and 2028 are forecast to be professional, scientific and technical, with an annual growth of 3.1 per cent per year. This is closely followed by information and communication at 2.7 per cent per year. Manufacturing however, is considered essential to the success of Falkirk's economy.

There are expected to be a total of 25,400 job openings in Falkirk between 2018 and 2028, driven by both expansion (1,700 jobs) and replacement demand (23,700 jobs). The largest number of opportunities is expected in elementary, clerical and service occupations. The construction sector is expected to enjoy the strongest growth over the next decade. Employment is forecast to decrease in energy (300 jobs), engineering (200 jobs), and chemical services (200 jobs). Falkirk's manufacturing sector is expected to see most job losses between 2018 and 2028, with employment forecast to fall by 1,200 jobs over this period.

Falkirk is expected to experience an ageing of the population over the coming decade.

There are eight secondary schools in Falkirk. A number of these schools contain specialist support units. For example, for young people with hearing impairment or those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. In addition there are three specialist schools for young people with additional support needs (ASN). The area team also deliver CIAG services within Her Majesty's Young Offenders Institution (HMYOI) Polmont.

3. Outcomes of external review

Section A: Grades

The review team awarded grades for each of the six key themes based on the following criteria:

excellent: outstanding and sector leading
very good: major strengths
good: important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory: strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak: important weaknesses
unsatisfactory: major weaknesses

Key theme	Grade
Customer progression and achievement of relevant high quality outcomes	very good
Meeting the needs of stakeholders	very good
Delivery of key services	very good
Management of service delivery	very good
Strategic leadership	very good

There is one example of excellent practice which is described later in this report.

Section B: Customer progression and achievement

Areas of positive practice

- The SDS team has made good progress towards the achievement of key outcome measures and targets over the last three years. Almost all key outcome measures have been met or exceeded in the last year.
- The area team met or exceeded the minimum service delivery expectations for young people in school for almost all of the ten SDS performance measures in 2018-19.
- The Participation Measure for Falkirk has improved by 1.2% over the last three years and is currently at 92.3%, which is now above the national performance figure of 91.6%.
- The proportion of young people entering a positive destination on leaving school is 94.6%, which is slightly above the national performance figure of 94.4%.
- Over the previous three years, almost all young people have a known destination on leaving school.
- In three of the eight secondary schools, the proportion of young people entering a positive destination on leaving school is above the national performance figure.
- The area team met or exceeded both the national performance figures and the minimum delivery expectations for Next Steps Customers for all SDS performance measures in 2018-19. In particular, the percentage of Next Steps customers supported by SDS progressing to learning, training or work sustaining for six months was 72% for 2018-19, 13 percentage points above the national performance figure.
- Overall, in secondary schools in Falkirk, 80% of young people have registered to use My World of Work (MyWoW), which is 6% higher than the national performance figure of 74%.
- In the most recent SDS Your Views survey, results indicate positive trends over the last three years and are higher than the national average across all key indicators and the majority of all other indicators, demonstrating high levels of commitment and satisfaction from staff.
- The overall centre users' satisfaction has increased by 23 percentage points and is now in line with the national performance figure.

Areas for development

- The proportion of young people entering a positive destination on leaving school in 2017-18 is below the national performance figure in five of the eight secondary schools, and is 0.4 of a percentage point below the figure for 2015-16.
- The number of young people in schools with a recorded preferred occupation has dropped by 29.5 percentage points and is now 9.5 percentage points below the national performance figure, and 10.4 percentage points below the minimum expectation.

Section C: Meeting the needs of stakeholders

Areas of positive practice

- The area team takes good account of the range of customers in the area and works effectively with partners to improve access to services for customers.
- SDS staff deliver an appropriate range of well-planned services from the main centre in Falkirk and an extensive range of partner premises across the area. For example, services are delivered from Falkirk Council Hub in Grangemouth, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Denny Library, Social Work Lunch Clubs and community learning and development (CLD) locations. Services are also delivered from within HMYOI Polmont to assist young offenders return to their communities after their sentences are completed.

- SDS staff work proactively with partners to respond to local and national priorities, including the Scottish Government's Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Youth Employment Strategy. Careers staff make effective use of labour market information (LMI), their knowledge of the area and local priorities to tailor services to support customers.
- Strong links exist with a broad range of community partners, in and beyond school settings, to provide flexible, responsive and appropriate services. The area team is particularly effective in working with partners to target and tailor joint activities for vulnerable young people and those most at risk for not progressing to a positive destination.
- The Falkirk team is agile in working with partners to respond quickly to emerging need and provide timely interventions to support adult customers. For example, in supporting customers facing redundancy through delivery of Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) services. All stakeholders value highly the services and support they receive.
- Almost all careers staff deliver a very proactive and flexible service for young people in schools. This support helps young people to make good progress with the development of their Career Management Skills (CMS) and make well informed decisions regarding the learning pathways available to them.
- Almost all young people value highly the support they receive from careers staff. This prepares them well to access further learning or employment on leaving school.
- SDS has established highly effective and productive relationships with a range of community and voluntary organisations including Forth Environment Link, Canal College and Falkirk and District Association for Mental Health. The arrangements from these relationships support customers to improve their confidence, acquire new skills, benefit from volunteering experiences and improve their progression and career prospects.
- Careers staff engage well with a range of partners across the area to support care-experienced customers to develop their CMS and to achieve, and sustain, positive destinations. This includes promoting their services to kinship and foster carers.
- Overall, careers staff work effectively with young people with ASN requirements to identify and tailor the delivery of services to meet the needs of these customers. The service provided prepares and supports these young people well during their transition into further learning or employment.
- SDS staff regularly engage with parents and carers of young people, which helps to develop their understanding of the choices and opportunities available to their children or young people in their care. As a result, they are able to provide more informed support for young people when planning their next steps beyond school.
- Stakeholders value highly the services provided by the area team in supporting the progress of customers to further learning, training or employment. All partners express very high levels of satisfaction with SDS service delivery.
- Staff in the local college have positive and productive working relationships with SDS. College learners benefit from targeted support that helps develop their CMS and them make choices about next steps.

Area for development

- For a few young people, the relevance of the group work sessions did not fully meet their needs or requirements.

Section D: Delivery of key services

Areas of positive practice

- The SDS team deliver a range of services that are well planned to meet the needs of customers in the Falkirk area. They work together well to identify the diverse needs of all customers and adapt their delivery approaches to meet the needs of specific customer groups to good effect.
- SDS staff share their expertise well in relation to equality issues to better support the needs of specific groups, for example lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI+) customers.
- The SDS team engage actively in a broad range of targeted engagements to meet the needs of customers most at risk of not progressing to a positive destination. For example, in Next Steps, Canal College, Generation A and HMYOI Polmont.
- SDS staff have established very good productive relationships with all partners including community partners, senior staff and pastoral care staff in schools, and CLD colleagues.
- Customers in schools value SDS careers advisers highly and find them approachable, knowledgeable and responsive to their needs. Young people welcome their flexibility and the ease with which they can be contacted.
- Young people are actively encouraged to register for MyWoW from first year in secondary school. They find MyWoW resources helpful in assisting them plan and make choices for the future.
- Almost all schools in Falkirk have embraced the MyWoW Ambassador programme. In most schools, ambassadors are helping to raise awareness of career resources with young people, parents and carers. In turn, young people in ambassador roles are developing leadership skills and building their own confidence.
- SDS staff, working in mini teams, make very effective use of warm handovers to the post-school advisers to support customers in their transition from school to further learning, employment or training.
- The Needs Matrix is used very effectively to ensure the needs of customers are met well. It provides a clear focus around which SDS staff engage effectively with a range of partners to assess the need of customers and ensure services are targeted where and when they are needed most and adjusted according to customers' changing circumstances.
- SDS staff promote their services well, making effective use of newsletters and social media to engage with particular groups.
- School and SDS staff make effective use of School Partnership Agreement (SPA) discussions to plan service delivery with schools. This is differentiated across schools to recognise the local context for service delivery and support required for the implementation of the Career Education Standard (CES). As a result, additional improvement actions are being taken forward into almost all school improvement plans (SIP). For example, most schools have made a good start implementing the CES with some subject areas in these schools making good progress.
- SDS staff demonstrate very good knowledge of the local labour market and local employment opportunities. They use this information very effectively in both one-to-one and group interventions to raise awareness of the local context with adults and young people.
- Almost all young people in schools feel well supported by the careers advisers who are in school on a regular basis. Most customers in school value the ease with which their careers adviser can be accessed.
- Most group work sessions are planned effectively and staff use an appropriate range of resources which are well matched to the needs of customers. In most schools, careers advisers work very closely with teachers to plan inputs to the personal and social education (PSE) programme. In these schools, this results in more impactful group sessions and

clearly identified opportunities for further consolidation of young people's CMS within the school curriculum.

- School careers advisers use coaching tools and techniques effectively in their one-to-one interventions with young people. This helps young people to engage effectively in the development of their CMS and make informed decisions about their future routes and pathways.
- SDS staff develop strong relationships with adult customers. During one-to-one sessions they build positive relationships and develop a good rapport with them. They use appropriate levels of communication and adopt an effective coaching approach.
- SDS staff make good use of feedback from stakeholders and adult, school and Next Steps customers to inform developments and improvements to service delivery.
- Staff use a range of formal and informal approaches to review the delivery of services and plan for improvement. The Observation Framework is in use across the team, and staff value the opportunity to receive feedback from their peers and their managers. Regular My Contribution meetings allow staff to discuss their learning and development needs and to identify any personal goals they may have.
- The Falkirk team make good use of planned Team Time activity that supports their reflective practice, their ongoing professional development and is used well to share ideas and shape services.

Areas for development

- In a few schools, awareness of the services on offer is insufficiently promoted and not all young people are aware of the range of services available for their use.
- Overall, the pace of implementation of the CES is variable across some schools and subject areas, diminishing the impact on some customers.
- On occasion, the resources used during group work sessions are not matched appropriately to the level of ability of some customers, and do not support them to make progress.

Section E: Management of service delivery

Areas of positive practice

- The SDS Head of Region and Area Manager are highly influential and much-respected contributors to a wide range of strategic partnerships. For example, such as the Falkirk Community Planning Partnership groups including a range of thematic groups, such as employability, corporate parenting, community justice, and the regional DYW Board
- Links with partners are strong, well-developed and productive. SDS staff and their partners have a clear focus on ensuring operational groups' activities deliver the desired impact and take forward shared and agreed priorities for their localities.
- Senior school and local authority staff speak positively about the services provided by SDS staff and value their relationships. Partners state that SDS services support customers well.
- SDS staff and partners make effective use of a wide range of national, regional and local data to inform local planning and strategy. For example, Regional Skills Assessment information, LMI and local knowledge.
- Partners work closely with SDS staff to provide flexible, responsive and appropriate arrangements to meet customers' and local communities' needs. This is especially strong in relation to meeting the diverse needs of particularly vulnerable groups.
- Third sector engagement provides the opportunity to engage with the Next Steps customer group and adult customers in a community setting, providing the opportunity to use volunteering as a way of re-entering the labour market.

- The SDS team work collaboratively with school staff to promote Foundation Apprenticeships, with most schools increasing significantly the number of young people undertaking these qualifications.
- SDS staff and their partners use the Needs Matrix well to inform planning at regular 16+ meetings in schools. They are effective in planning services, referrals to agencies and preparing customers for future transitions.
- Schools value the revised approach to the SPA which enhances the link with the schools' improvement planning processes. As a result, additional improvement actions are being taken forward into SIPs.
- Particularly strong and productive partnership working with the local college over a number of years has allowed alternative pathways to be developed which help to meet the needs of college learners. A well-considered Joint Action Agreement has been developed to support the college learners and provide capacity building continuing professional development (CPD) for targeted staff.
- SDS and DWP staff work well together to provide a flexible and responsive service for post-school customers, enabling them to make informed career and employability choices. A joint action plan with DWP effectively supports the planning and review of the service offer.
- SDS staff have also developed partnership agreements with Falkirk Council Children's Services to provide services and support for care-experienced young people. A partnership with HMYOI Polmont allows SDS staff to support offenders in developing their CMS prior to their release.
- Careers staff work closely with partners to develop appropriate arrangements to share information in compliance with statutory requirements. This allows SDS and partners to provide ongoing support to customers and aids transitions.
- Overall, data input by schools to the Data Hub has improved over the past three years. SDS staff are proactive in building the capacity of schools to use Data Hub information to support the needs of young people. School staff are beginning to use this information to inform planning of their provision and support young people to make more effective transitions to positive destinations on leaving school.
- Partners use data well to track and monitor the progress of young people and to support their successful transition to positive destinations. This results in very few young people with unknown destinations.

Area for development

- Information recorded in the Data Hub for the category Preferred Occupation of young people in schools fell by almost 30 percentage points and is insufficiently robust to enable effective use of this data for planning purposes.

Section F: Strategic leadership

Areas of positive practice

- The SDS management team has developed clear and well-articulated priorities for the Falkirk area which ensures the SDS service offer is effectively delivered. They take good account of the needs of the area's communities and people and are understood well by the SDS area team.
- Staff take good account of local and national priorities to at local level to plan the development and delivery of CIAG services.
- SDS managers work closely with key partners to share strategic priorities which supports joint planning for a clear shared vision for the Falkirk area and ensures collective resources are well targeted according to need.

- Strategic links are strong. The Head of Region and Area Manager, are viewed by strategic partners as key players to support improved employment and educational outcomes for young people and adults in the local authority area. Their contribution is highly valued by all partners.
- Strategies to secure improvement to services and outcomes for customers are well developed overall. SDS managers ensure that specific activities such as Team Time, My Contribution, and reflective practice activity are appropriately focussed on the development of the quality of the service offer.
- The Area Manager and Team Leaders provide clear and strong leadership for the team. They ensure clarity of purpose remains at the forefront of the team's work with customers and partners to facilitate effectively the achievement of service delivery requirements for customers and their communities.
- Team Leaders work together closely and have implemented arrangements to improve consistency and equity in their approaches, for example in their approaches to My Contribution meetings.
- The team demonstrate agility, flexibility and adopt a customer-centred approach when working collaboratively with partners. As a result, SDS staff and partners work well together to deliver a responsive service to achieve positive outcomes, particularly for the most vulnerable customers.
- Teamwork is strong and effective. SDS managers work effectively with staff to ensure Everyday Leadership is well-embedded within team practice and underpinned by SDS core values. Staff feel well supported by their team leaders and are empowered to take responsibility for developing creative solutions to challenges and tailoring approaches to service delivery.
- Staff find regular one-to-one meetings with their Team Leader, including My Contribution discussions, purposeful and productive. Staff value opportunities to discuss and plan for their professional development and set goals.
- SDS managers have developed a local approach to team development and succession planning which meets the challenges of recruiting and retaining well qualified staff in the Falkirk area.
- The Falkirk management team are committed to the development of leadership capacity. They ensure team members have opportunities to develop areas of interest or expertise which will enhance aspects of service delivery or support colleagues in the Falkirk team. Almost all team members benefit from undertaking extended roles. They support staff well to achieve professional qualifications.
- Managers have ensured effective arrangements are in place to support new members of staff joining the team, through direct support and ensuring buddy and mentoring support is in place with experienced team members.
- The Area Manager and Team Leaders work closely with each other and their staff to ensure the team, individually and collectively, have a clear understanding of key performance measures and how these inform work priorities. As a result, team members have a clear understanding of how their performance impacts on overall team performance.
- SDS managers and staff have a strong commitment to the culture of quality enhancement. Staff and customers evaluate their experiences regularly. They listen carefully and take action on feedback to continually improve and enhance services.
- Formal arrangements for quality assurance and improvement are understood well and used effectively by staff overall. Staff are fully engaged in the Business Excellence improvement agenda of the area team. They contribute well to the work planning process and participate fully in the review and monitoring of the Continuous Improvement Action Plan (CIAP). This approach is leading to improved outcomes for customers.
- Good use is made of the weekly Team Time that allows staff to share ideas, gain updates from leads in specific areas and discuss improvement.

- Managers monitor performance information and progress against planned activities closely and retain a constant focus on ensuring improving outcomes for customers. They are highly responsive where there are early indicators of potential issues in relation to progress against targets or plans.
- Team Time and one-to-one meetings with staff are used effectively by managers to monitor and assess progress with the area CIAP and ensure further actions are taken forward. As a result, the team is making good progress with almost all identified improvement actions.

Area for development

- The full benefits of a more systematic approach to implementing the Observation Framework have not yet achieved a consistently high quality of service delivery.

Section G: Capacity for improvement

The SDS management team has developed clear and well-articulated priorities for the Falkirk area which ensures the SDS service offer is effectively delivered. Staff take good account of local and national priorities. Strategies to secure improvement to services and outcomes for customers are well developed overall. The Area Manager and Team Leaders provide clear and strong leadership for the team. Team Leaders work together closely and have implemented arrangements to improve consistency and equity in their approaches. The team demonstrate agility, flexibility and adopt a customer-centered approach when working collaboratively with partners. Teamwork is strong and effective. The Area Manager and Team Leaders work closely with each other and their staff to ensure the team has a clear understanding of key performance measures and how these inform work priorities. SDS managers and staff have a strong commitment to the culture of quality enhancement. However, the full benefits of a more systematic approach to implementing the Observation Framework have not yet achieved a consistently high quality of service delivery. Managers monitor performance information and progress against planned activities closely and retain a constant focus on ensuring improving outcomes for customers.

The SDS Head of Region and Area Manager are highly influential and much-respected contributors to a wide range of strategic partnerships. Links with partners are strong, well-developed and productive. SDS staff and partners make effective use of a wide range of national, regional and local data to inform local planning and strategy. Overall, data input by schools to the Data Hub has improved over the past three years. However, information recorded in the Data Hub for the category Preferred Occupation of young people in schools fell by almost 30 percentage points and is insufficiently robust to enable effective use of this data for planning purposes. Partners use data well to track and monitor the progress of young people which results in very few young people with unknown destinations.

The SDS team deliver a range of services that are well planned to meet the needs of customers in the Falkirk area. They work together well to identify the diverse needs of all customers. The SDS team engage actively in a broad range of targeted engagements to meet the needs of customers most at risk of not progressing to a positive destination. SDS staff promote their services well. However, in a few schools, awareness of the services on offer is insufficiently promoted and not all young people are aware of the provision available for their use. School and SDS staff make effective use of SPA discussions to plan service delivery which is differentiated across schools. Most schools have made a good start implementing the CES with some subject areas in these schools making good progress. However, the pace of implementation of the CES is variable across some schools and subject areas, diminishing the impact on some younger customers. Almost all young people in schools feel well supported by the careers advisers. Most group work sessions are planned effectively and staff use an appropriate range of resources which are well matched to the needs of customers. However, on occasion the resources used during group work sessions are not matched appropriately to the level of ability of some customers and do not support them to make progress. For a few young people, the relevance of the group work sessions did not fully meet their needs or requirements. In most schools, careers advisers work very closely with teachers to plan inputs to the PSE programme. School careers advisers use coaching tools and techniques effectively in their one-to-one interventions with young people. SDS staff make good use of feedback from stakeholders and customers to inform developments and improvements to service delivery. Staff use a range of formal and informal approaches to review the delivery of services and plan for improvement.

The area team takes good account of the range of customers in the area and works effectively with partners to improve access to services for customers. The area team is particularly effective in working with partners to target and tailor joint activities for vulnerable young people

and those most at risk for not progressing to a positive destination. Overall, careers staff work effectively with young people with ASN requirements to identify and tailor the delivery of services to meet the needs of these customers. The Falkirk team is agile in working with partners to respond quickly to emerging need and provide timeous interventions to support adult customers. All partners express very high levels of satisfaction with SDS service delivery.

The SDS team has made good progress towards the achievement of key outcome measures and targets over the last three years. Almost all key outcome measures have been met or exceeded in the last year. The Participation Measure for Falkirk has improved by 1.2% over the last three years. The proportion of young people entering a positive destination on leaving school is slightly above the national performance figure. Over the previous three years, almost all young people have a known destination on leaving school. However, the proportion of young people entering a positive destination on leaving school in 2017-18 is below the national performance figure in five of the eight secondary schools. The number of young people in schools with a recorded preferred occupation is below both the national performance figure and the minimum expectation. The overall centre users satisfaction has increased by 23 percentage points and is now in line with the national performance figure.

Section H: Main points for action

- SDS managers should ensure the observation framework and reflective practice activities are used systematically by staff to achieve a consistently high quality of service delivery.
- The local authority should continue to work with SDS to ensure that the pace of implementation of the CES is consistent across all secondary schools and curriculum areas.
- The local authority, with support from SDS, should continue to improve the accuracy of their data entry to support effective planning for all customers.

4. Examples of excellence

Everyday Leadership in action: engaging and supporting the most vulnerable

The SDS team in Falkirk have been particularly effective in identifying the needs of the most vulnerable groups and those at greatest risk of not progressing to a positive destination through effective Everyday Leadership, providing a strong emphasis on equalities and focussed, productive partnership working.

Working closely with a broad range of strategic and operational partners on an ongoing basis has enabled the SDS team in Falkirk to identify those individuals who are not engaging with SDS CIAG services, and who are at risk of not progressing to, or sustaining, a positive destination. In addition, team members share their expertise well in relation to equality issues to better support the needs of specific groups, for example supported by the Equalities and Customer Support System (CSS) champion. Using this customer knowledge, and that gained from individual customer engagements, the team develop service delivery opportunities which are flexible, responsive and meet the needs of their most vulnerable customers to very good effect.

The culture of Everyday Leadership is strong in the Falkirk Team, and has been embraced by both the managers and the wider team. It is used effectively as a catalyst for continuous improvement to service delivery and the team empowerment that comes from this ensures the team is agile in responding to evolving needs of individuals and customer groups. The SDS core values underpin this approach, and team members identify what they need to do to ensure they deliver the best possible service for their customers.

As a result, the team is very responsive and flexible in addressing customer challenges such as their lack of confidence, low motivation, experience of criminal justice, the impacts of being care-experienced and low attainment. These barriers were affecting customers' initial engagement with CIAG services and, their ability to sustain that engagement to improve their CMS, and to move into positive destinations. The Falkirk team identified ways to engage with their customers differently, and took responsibility for the design, planning and delivery of innovative approaches.

Through close working with a range of partners including Falkirk Council Children's Services, Falkirk and District Association for Mental Health, local schools and training providers, the Falkirk team have created and delivered programmes for their customers which support them to develop their CMS and to progress to and sustain positive destinations. These include Generation A, a programme which helps young people to overcome their confidence issues which are preventing them from engaging with SDS and progressing into a positive destination. In all three programmes delivered to date, 83% of young people who took part have progressed and sustained positive destinations. Another opportunity identified by the Falkirk team is Braes High School Positive Transitions programme. Using school leaver destination information, Braes High School and their SDS Adviser identified a need to provide intensive support to pupils at risk of not achieving a positive destination. The school's Careers Adviser worked with the local CLD worker to design and deliver a programme for S4 and S5 pupils who were losing interest in school, or whose attendance had become an issue. The programme has run for two years and in both years 100% of the pupils involved have either returned to school or moved into a positive destination. Working with partners at Canal College the Falkirk team identified that some of the post-school Next Steps customers who were not engaging with SDS were working with Canal College. This led to the SDS Advisers co-delivering part of the Canal College employability programme, resulting in the re-engagement of some of the most vulnerable Next Steps customers.

Some examples of feedback received from participants in these team led initiatives include:

“I feel more confident; Got to know new people; It’s opened doors for me; I have more hope of finding a job; More confidence to speak out in front of small and larger groups”

“I felt better about myself every time I came; I value my self-worth more; showed my fun side.”

“It’s given me confidence and opened doors; made me feel I’m ready to find a job; helped me believe in myself; helped me love and respect myself and want good things”

The alignment of Everyday Leadership, focussed partnership working and understanding of equality related issues, has enabled the Falkirk team to use their individual strengths to take ownership of service design and delivery and adopt creative solutions to affect improvements and target services. As a result of this approach, continuously improving services and outcomes for the most vulnerable customers is now part of the culture of the Falkirk team and central to delivering on their priorities for the coming year.

5. What happens next?

Following publication of this report, SDS and partners are expected to produce an action plan to address the main points for action and/or areas for development in the report and other quality assurance and enhancement activities.

A follow up visit will be carried out involving SDS and partners 18 months after the initial review to determine if satisfactory progress has been made towards the main points for action.

Scott Anderson
HM Inspector

6. Further information

The review and judgements relate to the service area as a whole. For further information about Education Scotland, the external review methodologies, or other information about reviews, see <https://education.gov.scot/>.

For further information about Skills Development Scotland, see <http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/>.

Appendix 1: glossary of terms

ASN	additional support needs
CES	Career Education Standard
CIAG	Careers Information, Advice and Guidance
CIAP	Continuous Improvement Action Plan
CLD	community learning and development
CMS	Career Management Skills
CPD	continuing professional development
CSS	Customer Support System
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
DYW	Developing the Young Workforce
HMYOI	Her Majesty's Young Offenders Institution
LMI	labour market information
LGBTI+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex
MyWoW	My World of Work
PACE	Partnership Action for Continuing Employment
PSE	personal and social education
SDS	Skills Development Scotland
SIP	school improvement plans
SPA	School Partnership Agreement

Appendix 2: external review process

HM Inspectors undertake an independent review of the quality of provision of CIAG delivered by SDS on behalf of the Scottish Government under a service level agreement between the Scottish Government and Education Scotland. External review teams include HM Inspectors and associate assessors.

During external reviews, members of the review teams observe group activities, one to one coaching sessions and hold discussions with customers, staff and stakeholders. They consider information on the quality of career information, advice and guidance. They meet with recipients of the service and obtain feedback from groups, partners and staff who work for SDS.

The purpose of this report is to convey the main outcomes arising from the external review, to acknowledge service's strengths and to provide a clear agenda for future action to improve and enhance quality.

This external review results in judgements of **grades** that express the external review team's overall evaluation of **outcome and impact**, **service delivery** and **leadership and quality culture** and a judgement on capacity to improve based on the evidence from all key areas, in particular outcomes, impact and leadership.

The report also uses the following terms to describe numbers and proportions:	
all	100%
almost all	over 91%-99%
most	75-90%
majority	50-74%
minority/less than half	15-49%
few	up to 15%

Appendix 3: policy context

SDS all-age career information, advice and guidance services aim to support young people and adults to make a positive transition into continued education, training or the world of work. SDS achieves this by supporting customers in their development of CMS which lay the foundations for success in their future careers.

The services provided by SDS in schools are driven by the ambitions of Curriculum for Excellence. Accordingly there are significant interdependencies between the roles and responsibilities of schools and wider partners, the design and delivery of school curriculum and the services provided by SDS. Planning for successful service delivery through SPAs requires effective collaboration between SDS and its partners.

In March 2011, the Scottish Government published a [framework](#) for the redesign and improvement of CIAG services. As the largest provider of CIAG services in Scotland, SDS has a lead role in implementing this change. This change has been implemented through an integrated service involving face to face meetings, communication through contact centre and an online CMS environment, MyWoW.

In December 2014, the Scottish Government published [Developing the Young Workforce – Scotland’s Youth Employment Strategy](#). The recommendations of this strategy set out further changes to CIAG services, specifically in relation to the collaborative design and implementation of the Career Education Standard (3-18) with SDS, Scottish Government and Education Scotland. These changes have resulted in earlier intervention with school young people through SDS CIAG services and focused support around key transition points for young people. The CES builds on advice and guidance in Curriculum for Excellence and in particular, [Building the Curriculum 4: skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work](#).

Underpinning service delivery is the commitment of SDS to work with partners in schools, local authorities and Education Scotland to build capacity to deliver the ambitions of Curriculum for Excellence - Building the Curriculum 4, in particular development of CMS. This partnership approach supports schools to deliver this component of Curriculum for Excellence, whilst creating a learning context for young people that is compatible with and builds upon the service delivery commitments of SDS. As a result, much of the work of SDS requires effective collaboration with a range of partners at national and local levels.

Currently, this service is delivered on-site in Scotland’s 359 local authority secondary schools and one grant-aided secondary school. Services include a blend of one-to-one careers coaching support, facilitated group sessions, drop in sessions, and supported access to MyWoW. The level of intensity of support is determined by an assessment of pupil needs made in discussion with schools. The greatest proportion of careers coach support is provided to those young people who have been identified as requiring an enhanced level of support to promote progress towards securing and sustaining a place in education, training or work. This means those individuals would receive a ‘medium’ or ‘maximum’ service offer.

SDS has a key role to play in the delivery of the Scottish Government’s [Opportunities for All](#) initiative, under which all 16-19 year olds will receive an offer of a place in learning or training. SDS work in this area has been reinforced with the passage of legislation allowing SDS and key partners, including Local Authorities, schools and Further Education Institutions to share data on all the young people they work with. The [Post 16 Education \(Scotland\) Act 2013](#) and the statutory guidance mandate SDS and key partners to share data in order to support young people in their post school transitions.

Appendix 4: background information

Terminologies used in this report

The term 'service area' is used to describe the geographical area referred to in this report. SDS uses a variety of approaches to deliver CIAG services. This is often referred to as a blended service. SDS promotes a Universal Offer to support all secondary school young people. In addition, a Targeted Service Offer is aimed at young people who have the greatest need and who require enhanced support to progress them towards entering or sustaining a positive destination. SDS offers access to a range of services for post-school customers. The different offers are shown below:

SDS School Universal Service Offer consists of:

- access to MyWoW web service
- group-work sessions on:
 - Transition support at P7/S1 transition
 - Subject choices and Career Management Skills in S2/S3
 - Senior phase group sessions
- drop-in clinics for career management and employability
- opportunity for any pupil to request a face to face session

SDS School Targeted Service Offer consists of:

- Targeted one-to-one support in S3 for those with the greatest need (and optional group activity where appropriate)
- Structured programme of one-to-one career guidance throughout the senior phase
- Senior Phase supported transition to a dedicated post-school team member for those who require on-going support towards positive participation

SDS Post-school Targeted Service Offer (Next Steps) consists of:

- Open access to public centres (47 locations throughout Scotland)
- Access to MyWoW web service 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Structured programme of one-to-one careers guidance
- Employability support and group activity
- Partnership approach including structured referral arrangements with DPW/JCP
- Telephone access to SDS contact centre

SDS All age Service Offer (universal) consists of:

- Access to MyWoW web service 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Access to one-to-one career guidance
- Telephone access to SDS contact centre
- PACE
- IES joint work activities with JCP
- Open access to public centres (47 locations throughout Scotland)

Further information on Skills Development Scotland's services to individuals and employers can be found at www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk. MyWoW web service can be accessed at www.myworldofwork.co.uk.

Staff roles

SDS uses a number of titles to describe the roles of the staff. These include Careers Adviser, Work Coach, Trainee Careers Adviser and Personal Adviser. Throughout this report, the term careers staff is used to refer to all staff involved in delivering CIAG services.

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