



SDS and MCR Pathways Partnership Agreement

Purpose

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and MCR Pathways (MCR) aim to collaborate together to improve the outcomes for young people facing disadvantage in school and when transitioning from school into new pathways (Employment, Apprenticeships, University, College etc).

Strategically, this approach is an excellent fit for SDS's Strategic Plan '*Skills for a Changing World*' 2022-2027 which commits the agency to seeking and intensifying active collaboration with partners across the skills landscape who are instrumental to Scotland becoming a fairer, wealthier and greener country. In addition, the partners aims align perfectly with the Career Review '*Careers by Design*' and the Career Services Collaborative's vision of cross organisational collaboration to build capability across Scotland's career related learning ecosystem to ensure **all** young people benefit from the right support at the right time to enable them to effectively shape and lead their own successful careers.

The partnership aims to optimise their respective services and those of other career related partners to mobilise school-based collaboratives that enable and support the strategic outcomes and objectives of the school, under the Career Services Collaborative vision and operating model.

The partnership will build on the strengths of national, regional and local community services and collaboratives (e.g. LEP's, Colleges) (where appropriate) to seek to tackle, reduce and eradicate the care experienced/ disadvantaged young persons' positive destination gap that blights Scotland.

Background

There are around 15,000 disadvantaged young people across Scotland's secondary schools at any one time. They are made up of young care experienced, young people on the edges of care (at risk), young carers, young asylum seekers and those who have suffered significant family bereavement or disruption at home,

SDS's Career information, advice and guidance service (CIAG) is a national all age career service that supports care experienced and disadvantaged young people through its career qualified advisors and differentiated service offers. Service offers are delivered in every mainstream secondary school and additional support needs schools. SDS deliver a 'targeted' needs-based service and also offer flexibility within their service offers delivering intensive support to disadvantaged young people across the senior phase, in line with their needs.

MCR is a targeted young people skills support service that provides weekly 121 learner centred career related relationship based mentoring sessions (up to 1 hour) to disadvantaged young people on a weekly basis overseen by a school based MCR Pathways co-ordinator (introduced 2014). Sessions are delivered by highly trained and life experienced mentors (volunteers). The Programme is delivered in 122 secondary schools, with plans to onboard 300 schools in total by 2026 (in line with school need).

Together we aim to harmonise our approach to supporting disadvantaged young people through the 'one trusted adult' approach that has shown to have the biggest impact on young people's outcomes.

This means that SDS CIAG could provide an enabling service to MCR, supporting Co-ordinators and Mentors with data, intelligence and resources as well as swift access to expert career guidance at appropriate points in the young person's career journey. The main support to disadvantaged young people would be delivered through MCR. This would also free up SDS qualified advisor resource to support more universal learners – together *widening access to career related learning for all pupils*.

In this context, partners will drive forward the principles of the Career Review to create a skills first personalised young persons' service that will deliver in each school and in each school community (especially important due to rise in part time timetables/all-time rise in absenteeism in schools), driven by the needs of the young person, led by partners including the school to truly optimise outcomes. Reversing a top-down services approach to introduce new conditions for young people to thrive. The service would become 'a team around the young person' flexible and modular based service provision to support learners' decisions, options and preferred outcomes. It would also create enough room for the deployment of services depending on the needs of the young person, the school, the partners, the community but still guarantees collective consistency in quality and impact.

Aims of Collaborative Working

Both partners are deeply committed to ensuring disadvantaged young people have access to and receive dedicated, high-quality services in schools so that they move through in their future pathways successfully, confidently and sustainably.

Both partners are already key change agents in ensuring *The Promise* is met by 2030 towards '*All Scotland's children and young people will grow up loved, safe and respected*' and committed to tackling Child Poverty '*reduced by 10% by 2030*'. Fundamentally both partners can influence the policy landscape that could support transformational changes to the delivery of services for young people, especially within a Corporate Parenting context.

Our overall collaboration aim remains closely engineered to the skills delivery landscape where there is the real opportunity to significantly support structural access to economic opportunities, end poverty and improve health, cultural and social outcomes for disadvantaged families and communities.

As partners we will use the vehicle of NSET (National Strategy for Economic Transformation) within tightened public and third sector finances, economic instability, cost of living crisis to equip Scotland people (especially those at highest

risk of economic failure) with the skills Industry needs. Our skills outcome approach has to be one of high resilience, broad adaptive and multi diverse by nature to support young people to thrive in a world where work is ever-changing.

We will work collaboratively to create a mutual environment of trust, respect, honesty, and accountability, no less than young people would expect.

Customers

We will work together to identify areas of alignment and delivery interaction and seek to develop our aims of a young person first service. We will jointly utilise labour market and career intelligence and available data to inform decisions, identify priorities and support an effective partnership response, co-ordinating resources to create and improve opportunities and outcomes. Creating a joint customer journey will ensure effective delivery across our organisations and across the career's ecosystem in line with the Career Services Operating Model. This approach will build on and strengthen the existing SDS/DYW partnership model already in place.

Main areas for service delivery collaboration have been identified as:

- Develop integrated service offer to support vulnerable young people in school. Building on SDS's service offer and MCR Pathways mentor role as a key influencer in a disadvantaged young person's life (care experienced, on edges of care, family in prison, asylum seek and those that have suffered significant family bereavement or disruption at home). This includes positive post-school transitions enabled by the whole collaborative.
- SDS share young people centred resources to support delivery of career related learning through MCR mentors. For example, professional learning in areas such as LMI, Industry toolkits, Career Development Plans, Industry Webinars, MY WOW developments, to support MCR Mentor practice in line with SDS standards.
- MCR Pathways share young people engagement resources to support system wide delivery of career related learning. For example YP feedback and impact (MCR have embedded the voice of YP into their delivery of services), Employer and Industry engagement outcomes to support SDS/DYW/MCR aim of developing young workforce.
- SDS and MCR Pathways work jointly on evidence-based actions to ensure additional support for YP is identified early and built into delivery.

Strategic Engagement

- SDS and MCR Pathways with DYW and School Family Partners develop scalable system wide School based local collaboratives. Includes pooling resources, integrating impact etc.
- SDS jointly with MCR Pathways will provide opportunities for all SDS staff across Scotland to mentor disadvantaged Young People in School once a week (nearest school/one hour), in line with the presence of MCR in schools (122 schools).
- MCR Pathways will support all SDS staff in their mentoring journeys. This includes online support to enhance their experience and learning. Also

includes invitations to national wide celebration events/social activities and access to Strathclyde University Business school leadership programme.

- MCR Pathways will contribute and support *SDS Corporate Parenting Strategy* in partnership with existing partners.
- SDS and MCR Pathways test new collaborative Learner profile as a universal/targeted pipeline approach.

Resources

- SDS share access to organisational support services. This includes data sharing, research and development and sector intelligence.
- Partners will engage in the development and alignment of our digital services to ensure they are connected for the customer. Digital developments will seek input, where appropriate, on the development and improvement of digital resources for shared customers.
- Our people will engage with purpose, promoting a smooth and effective working relationship through the development of partnerships to align services and provide a coordinated solution-based approach. Working together, they will drive forward and coordinate the right support in the right way at the right time. Building on excellent local practice already in place.
- Learning and Development (CPD). Through Continuous Professional Development we will identify learning opportunities to upskill our people on the diverse range of provision and support in each organisation, ensuring we have the capability to provide the right support for those who rely on these services.
- Shared access to SDS premises and asset facilities support where appropriate.
- Communications, and related resources (webinars, e-modules, joint approach to National Campaigns SCW etc). We will work together to identify opportunities for shared events, promoting a joint approach to external communications, including social media, to support individuals and business with their recruitment, employment, redundancy, skills, and training needs. We will agree a joint approach to internal communications when appropriate.

Engagement

Joint Strategic Meetings

- SDS Senior Director & MCR Pathways CEO to meet Quarterly to set strategic direction for partnership. Outcomes and actions to be shared after each meeting.

Operational Meetings

- SDS Head of CIAG and MCR Deputy CEO meet quarterly to progress outcomes from Strategic meetings and review the joint working activity. Outcomes and actions to be shared after each meeting.

Note: the quarterly cycle of both meetings means 6 weekly alternate engagement

SDS/MCR Regional Meetings

- Both organisational Regional Leads (Head of Operations and Heads of Schools) to grow joint working arrangements and meet 4-6 weekly. At each meeting joint working and any action plans should be reviewed. Outcomes and actions to be shared after each meeting.

Partnership Planning and Events

- HOO (north) SDS lead and MCR Head of Marketing for meetings between SDS and MCR Pathways on a quarterly basis.

Actions from Meetings

- Specific Actions to be agreed at each meeting to progress joint activity, establishing a subgroup when required to work on specific initiatives or projects, and reporting back to strategic/operational group.

Agreement Review

Partnership Agreement to be reviewed yearly.

Agreed by:

Signature:	Signature:
Name:	Name:
Position:	Position:
Date:	Date:
MCR Pathways	Skills Development Scotland