

PE1603/CC

Skills Development Scotland Letter of 16 January 2017

Thank you for your letter of 30 November 2016 inviting us to provide input into the Committee's public petition *PE1603: Ensuring greater scrutiny, guidance and consultation on armed forces visits to schools*.

You had asked for input on any aspect of the petition and also specific input in relation to:

- transparency of the armed forces' work in schools
- how there can be confidence about this work not disproportionately targeting young people in particular communities
- any guidance SDS may offer to schools in relation to visits by the armed forces.

We hope our submission in Appendix A below provides useful information on our engagement and how we work in partnership with the armed forces and schools through the delivery of our Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) service.

I hope this is useful for the Committee in examining the issues raised.

Appendix A

How there can be confidence about this work not disproportionately targeting young people in particular communities

As with other sectors, careers events are organised according to local labour market demand and need; armed forces will have more interactions with young people and schools where there is a military base. Even where this is the case, our Careers Advisers provide impartial careers advice to young people and would therefore not promote joining the armed forces over any other careers. Advice given is based on the young person's interests and we would always advocate discussing careers choices with a parent or guardian.

Transparency of the armed forces' work in schools and guidance SDS may offer to schools in relation to visits by the armed forces.

Armed forces have their own approved processes and rules for engagement with schools. For example, armed forces careers can present but they cannot recruit at schools.

We do not have specific guidance for staff or schools in relation to cooperation with the armed forces. However exhibitors at careers events are of course expected to act in an inclusive and transparent manner at all times.

It should be noted that individual schools may have their own guidance for exhibitors at the careers events they hold.

General Comments

Working in Partnership

We have a good working relationship with the armed forces as an employer and as such we undertake a range of routine engagement with them across different regions in Scotland. This engagement varies depending on the local labour market and the interest of individuals in joining the armed forces.

We engage with the armed forces like any other employers or publicly funded bodies. For example, we would invite all uniform services to attend careers events, alongside other local organisations that are recruiting, such as the NHS and Local Authorities. These events are often jointly organised with other organisations such as the Department for Work and Pensions. In specific regions, uniformed services events have been held, with representation from the Army, Navy, Police Scotland and the Fire Service. Local schools are notified of these events and are given the opportunity to send pupils to them. Young unemployed people in the area would also typically be invited.

Although we run an all-age career service, generally the recommended group for attending careers events with exhibitors is senior phase pupils (S4-S6), although this decision is the prerogative of individual schools.

Our cooperation with the armed forces also includes the organisation of their attendance and participation at careers events in schools. We have also invited the

armed forces to take part in regional Higher Education Conventions as they offer graduate level careers, which they have attended.

CIAG for young people who show an interest in joining the armed forces

We support pupils, parents and teachers with a range of Career Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) services¹. CIAG is a tailored service offering young people advice based on their individual interests and ambitions.

We have dedicated careers advisers working in every school across Scotland, providing balanced and impartial support regardless of a young person's background.

Career choices are discussed impartially at one-to-one meetings with a qualified Careers Adviser. During CIAG, regardless of the job, we do not promote one career or job over another. We also recommend to pupils that they discuss their career choices with their parent or guardian. If the individual is interested in exploring the armed forces as a career choice, the individual may be directed to contact the armed forces office for additional information on available opportunities and support.. Some colleges, for example [Edinburgh](#), run pre-Army preparation courses, aimed at preparing individuals for selection tests. We would inform individuals of these opportunities when it is of interest to the individual and would refer them to the College for further information.

Our web service for individuals [My World of Work](#) also provides detailed information and resources on [Armed Services](#) careers.

Developing Career Management Skills

From P7, our CIAG service encourages young people to develop Career Management Skills (CMS). CMS empowers individuals to identify the skills they have and those that they need to develop to help them realise their potential at any stage in their life. It helps them to understand themselves and identify their strengths, horizons and networks, so that they can take a balanced view of the right career step for their individual circumstances. A careers fair is therefore not the only influencer on a young person's decision in relation to future career choices.

We also provide intensive and targeted, face-to-face coaching to those who need the most support, agreed in partnership with the school. These pupils will receive one to one career guidance coaching a number of times throughout their school journey, beginning in S3. Those who may be targeted include, for example, pupils who reside in areas of multiple deprivation or those who are uncertain about career choice.

The service ensures that individuals receive balanced and comprehensive advice and guidance throughout their school years. Pupils are therefore able to make informed decisions about their future career and educational choices, with support from our Careers Advisers, the school and their parents or guardians.

¹ Our careers services for individuals are shaped by the Scottish Government's [Career Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy](#) and the recent refresh of the [Youth Employment Strategy](#), which aligns with the recommendations of the [Commission on Developing Scotland's Young Workforce \(DSYW\)](#).

Our service offer to all secondary schools includes:

- One-to-one engagements with pupils when making their subject choices in S2 or S3;
- group engagements for all pupils in the senior phase during their final year;
- drop in sessions for all pupils where every school pupil can access a face to-face appointment regardless of their; circumstances or academic ability, should they wish to do so;
- a broad range of tools on our My World of Work web service. My World of Work offers up-to-date information, advice, tools and resources, supporting the work of our network of Careers Advisers in schools and centres throughout the country. The site received a positive Aspect Review from Education Scotland in 2015;
- a Contact Centre seven-days-a-week with the Exam Results Helpline in August to support individuals with CIAG following their results;
- group sessions at primary 7 transition or early in S1 to support individuals during this key transition phase.