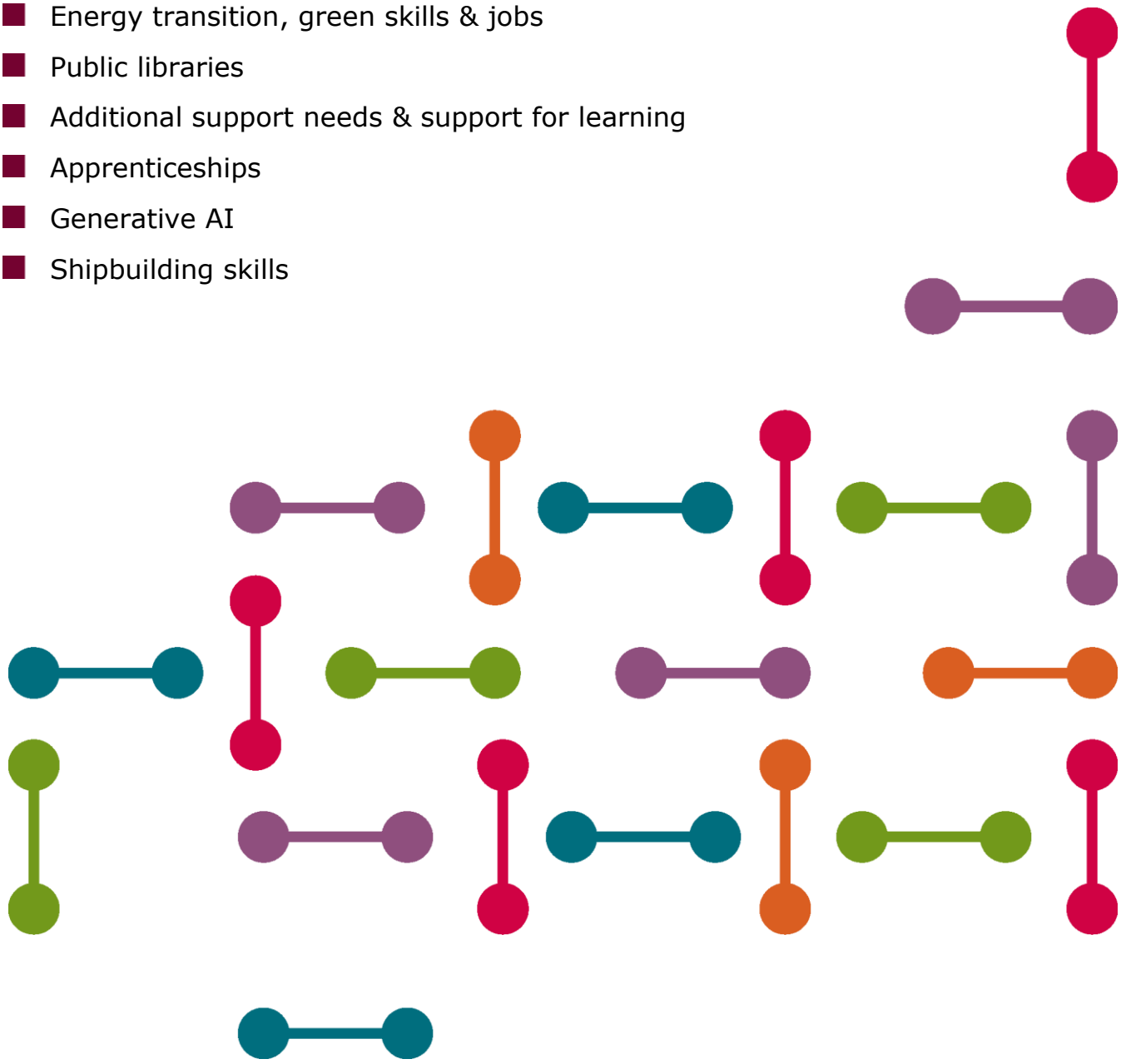
Informed Scotland

Learning and Skills Digest

Issue 121 | May 2024

HOT TOPICS

- International students & graduates
- Computing science in schools
- Energy transition, green skills & jobs
- Public libraries
- Additional support needs & support for learning
- Apprenticeships
- Generative AI
- Shipbuilding skills



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Business

PEOPLE

PAUL SHEERIN
Chief Executive, Scottish Engineering, is to Chair a new Shipbuilding Skills Delivery Group for UK's **National Shipbuilding Office** (*see page 6*).

TRACY BLACK
Scotland Director, **CBI**, is now Chief Strategy Officer; Mags Simpson, Deputy Director of Policy in Scotland, is Interim Scotland Director.

CLAUDIA CAVALLUZZO
Executive Director, **Converge Challenge**, is leaving after six years in post; Adam Kosterka, Deputy Director, is Interim.

EMPLOYMENT

- Employment in Scotland from January to March 2024:
  - Unemployment was 120k, down by 5k over the quarter at 4.4% (4.3% for UK), but up by 28k from 3.1% in 2023 (up from 3.9%).
  - Male unemployment was 5.7% (4.5% UK), 3.0% for females (4.1%).
  - Employment was 2,613m, down by 38k (by 46k over the year) at 73.1% (74.5% UK).
  - Male employment was 75.6% (77.4% UK), female was 70.8% (71.6%).

Based on 'official statistics in development' (see Informed 118*).*

- **Skills Development Scotland** (**SDS**) published *Economy, People & Skills* May 2024, its monthly report with evidence and insights on the economy, business and jobs.

- *Police Officer Quarterly Strength Statistics 31 March 2024* showed there were 16,356 full-time equivalent police officers (down 259 since 2023).

- Scottish Government published *Scotland's devolved employment services: Statistical summary*. As of 31 December 2023:
  - 66,440 joined Fair Start Scotland (FSS) since its launch in April 2018.
  - October to December 2023 there were 7,114 starts in FSS or No One Left Behind (-11% from the previous quarter, -1% from 2022).
  - 1,104 on FSS started a job this quarter (-16% from the previous quarter, -4% from 2022).
  - 32% of those receiving No One Left Behind support have entered employment, 15% training, further or higher education (FE/HE).

- Scottish Government published the latest weighted Scotland estimates from **Office for National Statistics**' (**ONS**'s) *Business Insights and Conditions Survey*. Between 7 and 19 May 2024, 23.7% of businesses experienced a shortage of workers, particularly in construction (38.3%) and admin & support services (33.3%).

DEVELOPING THE YOUNG WORKFORCE (DYW)

- Youth employment for 16 to 24 year-olds in Scotland from January to March 2024:
  - Unemployment was 10.5%, up from 6.1% a year ago (12.6% for UK, up from 11.3%).
  - **UK-wide**: employment was 50.4% (-5.1ppt).

In Informed 1 *in May 2012, youth unemployment was 23.1% and youth employment was 51.9%.*

- **ONS** published *Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)*. From January to March 2024:
  - 900k 16–24 year-olds in UK were NEET (+88k on 2023), 12.6% of the age group (+1.1ppt).
  - 320k (35.6%) of those NEET were unemployed (-2.7ppt); rest were economically inactive (unavailable/not looking for work).

Business

SDS published the *Interim Participation Snapshot for 16–19 year olds*, on involvement in learning, training & work at national & local levels.

- 92.3% of 224,614 young people were participating (+1.5ppt from 2023): 96.9% of 16s (-0.2ppt), 87.5% of 19s (+4.9ppt).
- 92.9% of females (+1.3ppt) and 91.8% of males (+1.6ppt) were participating.
- 86.8% from 20% *most* (+1.9ppt) vs 96.8% from 20% *least* deprived areas (+0.9ppt).

Interim reports are now only published in May and December.

PwC and **Connectr** published the *Youth Employment Index 2024: Helping young people make the most of the green transition*, covering 38 **OECD** economies including the UK. The Netherlands, Switzerland and Iceland were top.

- The UK was 22nd (down 4 from 2023), driven by high proportions of young people in part-time work, significant levels who are NEET and rising inactivity due to worse mental health.
- In 2022, 16.2% of 16–24 year-olds in Scotland were NEET; UK GDP could be boosted by 1%/year if the NEET rate in all UK regions matched that of south-west England at 7.8%.
- 72% want to work for an employer aligned to sustainability, but barriers to green jobs include career pathway ambiguity, lack of green skills education and misinformation.

West College Scotland is working with **Prince's Trust Scotland** on the Trust's Schools Transition Programme and three new initiatives:

- School-to-College Transition: hands-on experience in an electrical environment
- 'Get Into' Placement: in the electrical industry, possibly leading to an apprenticeship
- Engineering & Manufacturing Career Pathway Partnership: an introduction, plus mentoring and practical experience with **National Manufacturing Institute Scotland** staff.

Prospects Luminate published *Early Careers Survey 2024*, based on responses from 6,102 UK school, college & university students, graduates, apprentices and unemployed young people.

- 54% said money was their biggest challenge (+2ppt from 2023); 50% balancing commitments; 48% mental health (-2ppt).
- 49% of school leavers were planning to do full (49%) or part-time (3%) study, 24% an apprenticeship or degree apprenticeship.
- Engagement with careers advice was up after a post-pandemic slump; industry and career professionals were top sources of guidance, however disadvantaged groups were less likely to access the resources available.
- 54% used careers websites for careers advice; 38% relied on friends, 36% on family.
- 32% of those looking for an apprenticeship or job felt unprepared (-3ppt); those who had received careers advice in the last 12 months were more likely to feel prepared.
- 80% completed some form of work experience in 2023 (+5ppt): 40% a part-time job, 30% volunteering, 17% internship/work placement.
- 29% of internships/placements were paid.
- 62% of respondents were fairly/very certain about their career plans (+2ppt).
- 39% had changed career plans (-11ppt), 48% said this was due to the cost of living (+8ppt).
- 20% of 2023 graduates plan to leave their current employer this year (-14ppt).
- 54% of ethnic minority graduates felt disadvantaged by their ethnicity (+11ppt), 20% felt their social class set them back.

Packed with details worth delving into.

Business

APPRENTICESHIPS

SDS published *Modern Apprenticeship [MA] Statistics, Q4 2023–2024*.

- 25,365 people had **started** MAs by the end of Q4, down 82 from Q4 2022–23.
- 59.6% of starts were aged 16–24 (+0.7ppt).
- 37.6% were female (-0.5ppt).
- 82.9% were at Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 6+ (+2.0ppt).
- 17.0% had a disability (+1.7ppt), 4.5% were of an ethnic minority (+1.2ppt), 2.3% were care experienced (+0.2ppt), all highest ever.
- 23.5% lived in the 20% most deprived areas (-0.4ppt), 13.8% in the 20% least (+0.1ppt).
- 25.3% were in construction & related (-0.7ppt) 23.3% sport, health & social care (-0.7ppt).
- At 31 March 2024, there were 38,607 MAs **in training** (down 399).
- 70.0% were aged 16–24 (+1.1ppt).
- 88.1% were are SCQF level 6+ (+2.1ppt).
- 20,013 (76.0%, +3.3ppt) of 26,329 leavers **achieved their MA**.
- 251 were made **redundant** (down 55).

Adopt An Apprentice was not available in 2023–24.

SDS published *Provider Sustainability Review*, a survey of 206 MA learning providers of the extent to which sustainability is a consideration in how they administer and deliver MAs.

- The vast majority are already incorporating sustainability practices; 46% have set sustainability targets.
- The majority deliver learning content on sustainability to MAs.

House of Commons Library published *Degree apprenticeships*, a research briefing on Graduate Apprenticeships and their counterparts in the other UK nations ('degree' in England and Wales, 'higher level' in Northern Ireland). It explains how they are regulated and funded. *Also see a **UCAS** consultation on awarding Tariff points to university applicants with SCQF level 6+ apprenticeships and their equivalents, page 15.*

SKILLS, QUALIFICATIONS, LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

Learning & Work Institute launched Ambition Skills, funded by **City & Guilds** and **NOCN**, to explore the economic and social case for the UK to have a higher skills ambition, and the key policy and investment changes needed to achieve it.

- It will involve four work strands: assessing the current situation; understanding demand and need; setting a series of benchmarks; and developing a plan for change.
- The first project report was published: *The great skills divide: How learning inequalities risk holding the UK back* (*data are mainly from England and there is no mention of Scotland*).

West College Scotland has been awarded a Health & Social Care VR [virtual reality] Learning Grant from Scottish EdTech company **Care Reality**. The funding will be used to expand awareness and use of VR and extended reality (XR) in immersive learning experiences for those in or aiming for the health and social care sector.

Queen Margaret University (**QMU**), Edinburgh, is to run a new online short course on Developing a Food Sensory Analysis Panel for those working in the food industry from September 2024. It includes workshops and practical work.

Business

- UK and devolved governments published *UK shipbuilding skills taskforce report: Government response*, welcoming the **UK Shipbuilding Skills Taskforce**'s report *A Step Change in UK Shipbuilding Skills* and toolkit published in 2023.
  - A new UK-wide Shipbuilding Skills Delivery Group is being set up to take forward the recommendations (*Chair appointed, see p. 3*).
  - It aims to support a collaborative sector that is better understood by the public, offers a range of opportunities to train and progress, and ensures there is a pipeline of talent.

*The Taskforce, chaired by Paul Little, Principal of **City of Glasgow College**, was set up by the **National Shipbuilding Office** in 2022.*

- **Open University** (**OU**) Business School launched a two-year pilot Black Leadership & Empowerment Programme.
  - Participants will be able to access 150 hours of free learning via OpenLearn including two badged open courses: Introducing Black Leadership and Advancing Black leadership.
  - A 30-credit module aims to help consolidate learning and enhance study skills.

- **Fife College** and **NHS Fife** signed a new five-year partnership, including the development of work placements, internships and Modern Apprenticeships to help widen participation and enhance local employment opportunities.

ENERGY TRANSITION, GREEN SKILLS & JOBS

- **Nesta** launched the Green Jobs Explorer, a prototype tool based on 4m job adverts, to explore & compare environmental aspects of occupations.
  - It uses three proxy measures to determine how green an occupation is: the emissions of the industry, the green skills applied in the role and the amount of time spent on green tasks.
  - Average 1.5% of green skills make up job ads; environmental consultants require max 22%.
  - Green jobs are not equally spread across the UK: in Scotland 1.14% of skills are green; the highest proportion of green skills in job adverts UK-wide are in Highlands & Islands.

- **Energy Skills Partnership** launched a new heat pump training partnership involving **Glasgow Clyde** and **Dumfries & Galloway Colleges** and **UHI Inverness** with **Panasonic** to upskill heating and plumbing installers. In addition to the colleges' **BPEC** accredited heat pump courses, Panasonic will provide air-to-water training for the trainers, apprentices and installers.

- **RenewableUK** and **Offshore Energies UK** are to trial an 'energy skills passport' to enable recognition of industry training, skills, qualifications and expertise across the sectors.
  - The passport will align technical qualifications, map safety standards and create career pathways for relevant roles.
  - Backed by £3.7m Scottish Government Just Transition Funding to **OPITO**, other partners include trade unions and skills bodies.

A final version is to be made available later in 2024. It could also be adapted for other sectors.

- **West College Scotland** and **Renfrewshire Council** launched the Renfrewshire Net Zero Workforce Development Fund, offering grants to 40 SMEs to enhance their infrastructure and provide workforce training. Relevant courses include those on electric vehicle charging, ground & air source heat pumps & solar thermal systems.

- **Mitsubishi Electric** opened a new Livingston Training Centre for heat pump installation, to provide hands-on and VR training to 1k+ people per year. The Centre will also offer renewable heating training to local colleges and schools.

Business

Institute for Public Policy Research published *Skills Matter: Shaping a just transition for workers in the energy sector*, analysis of the transferability of skills and future career options for workers in the gas sector.

- 93% of the sector's ~115k workers share over 50% of tasks with 'green' or 'blue' occupations.
- Current government policies have inadequate training and career guidance provision.
- Recommendations include: annual £1.1b Green Training Fund to provide free training to those who may need to change jobs; commitment to career guidance, training and retraining.

Also calls for a skills passport – see p. 6.

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce published the 39th *Energy Transition Survey* with **ETZ** and **KPMG**.

- Skills/workforce availability is an increasingly key issue influencing the level of business activity; government policy is most important.
- The survey recorded the lowest expectation of core UK staff growth since 2021.
- Businesses continue to experience challenges in attracting staff for a range of roles, though easing slightly for managerial & professional.
- Concerning large increase in firms losing staff to retirement, other UK regions & overseas.
- Over 40% said it's more difficult to attract staff to the north-east of Scotland from the rest of the UK and overseas than five years ago.
- Confidence is up slightly for securing the new and traditional skills needed for long-term objectives, but much lower than 2022.

Robert Gordon University published *Delivering Our Energy Future: Pathways to a 'just and fair' transition*, stating 'If Scotland fails to capture a significant share of future renewables activities, selective oil and gas activities may need to be sustained until 2030 to retain the Scotland based offshore energy workforce, skills, supply chain and economic contribution'.

Construction Leadership Council published *Roadmap of Skills for Net Zero: Competencies for domestic retrofit*, a framework of the core knowledge, skills & behaviours needed to deliver retrofit of homes at scale. Recommendations for education and training providers include:

- Introduce core modules on the basics of retrofit, building physics and carbon & climate literacy as a minimum requirement for all construction qualifications and training.
- Ensure all retrofit-specific courses are delivering the knowledge & skills required, working with industry to align courses.
- Coordinate with other providers to develop materials, facilities and recruit teachers.
- Work with accreditation bodies to validate qualifications and courses.

Part of the Council's Industry Skills Plan for the UK construction sector.

BUSINESS CONFIDENCE & THE ECONOMY

Scotland's Chief Statistician published *Gross Domestic Product Q1 2024*.

- GDP grew by 0.7% during Q1 (0.6% UK) and by 0.2% over the year (0.2%).
- Over the quarter, services output grew 0.5% & production by 2.1%; construction fell by 0.9%.

Scottish Engineering's *Quarterly Review Q2 2024* reported 'an improving and optimistic picture', with positive forecasts for all measures and sectors. Skill challenges continue; all sizes of business have increased training investment plans, from 67% of larger firms to 30% of SMEs.

Business

RBS *Purchasing Managers' Index* saw the sharpest rise in private sector activity in April in Scotland for 12 months, due to growth in the service sector. Manufacturing recorded a steeper decline, leading to one of the largest gaps between the two sectors in over 26 years of data. Scotland recorded the second rise in workforce numbers in UK monitored regions behind Northern Ireland.

Federation of Small Businesses' *Small Business Index Scotland Q1 2024* reported a marked increase in business confidence at +10.7, the most positive since Q1 2022, and above the UK average of +5.5. The increase was driven by improvements in consumer spending and the economy more broadly.

ENTERPRISE, DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH

Scottish Government announced £5m extra funding for 'end-to-end support' for start-up companies, to be delivered by **Codebase** in partnership with **Scottish EDGE**. This will include:

- Expanding the Scottish EDGE business funding competition
- Pre-start support for the earliest stages of business creation and product development for under-represented groups
- Support to maximise the economic impact of university spin-outs & commercialise research.

UKTN published *Tech report: Scotland*, an overview of the tech ecosystem and the factors affecting tech and business growth.

- Concerns re skills shortages include: lack of green skills; insufficient focus on developing a strong talent pipeline from schools & colleges.
- Lack of workforce diversity is more noticeable in Scotland than elsewhere; more is needed to attract highly skilled people from abroad.

UK Government announced Dundee is to receive £20m Levelling Up Partnership (LUP) funding, the first in Scotland to do so, aiming to reduce inequalities. Measures include:

- £5m for **Dundee & Angus College**, including to build a new campus for digital, green and energy transition skills development
- £2.5m towards opportunities for young people
- £1.2m for **Dundee Museum of Transport**
- £1.1m for **University of Dundee** to develop a legal tech education centre with **Thorntons**.

Three other areas are to receive LUPs: ***Argyll & Bute, Na h-Eileanan Siar*** *&* ***Scottish Borders****.*

Prince's Trust, with **NatWest** and **British Business Bank**, launched Grant Hub, a new initiative to provide 18–30 year-olds with access to grants and loans to help them to start and develop their business ideas.

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE & RESEARCH

UK Research & Innovation (**UKRI**) announced ten projects to receive a share of £4.6m Sustainable Aquaculture Partnerships for Innovation funding. All ten projects involve Scottish universities, research bodies or business, including **Scottish Association of Marine Science** and **Universities of Aberdeen**, **Edinburgh**, **Glasgow** and **Stirling**.

University of Strathclyde is to lead a new £12.2m MediForge Hub to develop manufacturing using advanced technologies for the sustainable production of medicines. Partners include **Glasgow School of Art**, **Universities of Leeds** & **Sheffield** and **Imperial College London**. The hub is one of five supported by **UKRI** Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council.

Schools

PEOPLE

DONNIE MACLEOD
Head of Service (South): Education, Glasgow City Council, will be Executive Director of Education, **Fife Council** from August 2024.

FALKIRK COUNCIL
Deborah Davidson, Education Manager, Fife Council and Jill Pringle, Curriculum & Quality Improvement Service Manager, South Lanarkshire Council will be Heads of Education in August 2024.

OMAR KETTLEWELL
Principal Teacher, Braehead Primary School, South Ayrshire, is new Convener, **General Teaching Council for Scotland** (**GTCS**).

ANDY BROWN
former maths teacher and acting head teacher, is Scottish Government's first **National Mathematics Specialist Adviser**.

ASSESSMENT & QUALIFICATIONS

- Scottish Government published *National Standardised Assessments for Scotland [NSA]: National report for academic year 2021 to 2022*, including MCNG – the Ghàidhlig counterpart. This is the sixth annual summary of Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) outcomes for learners in P1, P4, P7 and S3, the fifth of MCNG.
  - 544,688 SNSAs were completed, ~89.3% of the possible maximum number (down from 93.4% in 2018–19).
  - Assessments were in aspects of numeracy, reading/literacy and writing.
  - Results are described along a series of six capacity 'bands' per stage.
  - Outcomes include comparisons by deprivation, gender, disability, ethnicity and support needs.

See more information about NSA; a note was also published on how NSA is intended to be used by practitioners, headteachers and local authorities.

- **Scottish Qualifications Authority** is to enable students to access some of their marked exam papers via their schools and colleges from results day on 6 August 2024, following a successful limited pilot in 2023.
  - The Scotland-wide trial will help learners decide whether to appeal their results, and help them and their teachers understand where they need to strengthen their learning.
  - The trial will give access to papers in geography, graphic communication, media, music and statistics.

The trial will run until the end of September 2024; further information and guidance is due in June.

- **Planit** published *Essential Guide: Study tips*, for all secondary school students, to support coursework or exam preparation. The guide includes advice on being organised, how to approach study and revision, study method ideas and taking care of oneself during exam time.

TEACHER EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & DEVELOPMENT

- **GTCS** has appointed **Professional Standards Authority for Health & Social Care** (**PSA**) to undertake an independent review of its Fitness to Teach process. The PSA findings, due by the end of 2024, will be considered as part of a wider GTCS Council review of the Fitness to Teach rules.

- **Education Scotland** opened applications for the Building Racial Literacy professional learning programme, delivered online and open to all staff. It empowers educators to identify and implement anti-racist behaviours and processes.
Applications close on 19 June 2024.

Schools

- Scottish Government published *Pupil projections and implications for teacher resourcing needs in Scotland: Education workforce modelling and research*, independent analysis by **WPI Economics** to support workforce planning over the next decade. Findings include:
  - Scotland has lower pupil–teacher ratios (PTRs) than other UK nations.
  - Secondary school PTR was lower than OECD average & ~middle of G7 countries in 2021; primary PTR was ~above the OECD average.
  - Statutory contact time was above the OECD average in 2020, especially upper secondary.
  - School-age population in Scotland is peaking.
  - Teacher workforce numbers show a mild contraction for two consecutive years to 2023.
  - Modelling suggests that a constant, rather than increasing, teacher stock could more closely match expected teacher resourcing needs, and reduce contact time to 21 hours by 2028.

COMPUTING SCIENCE, DATA LITERACY & GENERATIVE AI

- **Reform Scotland** published *Computing the Future: Creating digital leaders, not just consumers*, highlighting a 'dramatic decline' in computing science in schools based on research including via Freedom of Information requests.
  - 32,616 pupils in 31 local authoritues attend a secondary school with no qualified computing science teacher (~12% of secondary pupils).
  - This rises to 54% of pupils in **Dumfries & Galloway** and 47% in **Highland**.
  - 66 schools have no computing science teacher; 25 schools with a roll of over 1k have only one qualified computing science teacher.
  - Not all pupils have computing as a compulsory subject in S1 and S2, and many of those who do are taught by specialists in other subjects.
  - The number of computing science teachers has fallen by 25% since 2008 to a record low of 578; only 16 were recruited last year.
  - There has been a long-term decline in entries to computer science at National 5 and Higher.
  - Girls comprise only 20% of entries to Higher.
  - Recommendations include creating a permanent role for **Scottish Teachers Advancing Computing Science** (**STACS**).

*Chief Entrepreneurial Adviser Mark Logan told **Scottish Parliament's Education, Children & Young People Committee** that education bodies don't believe the subject is 'in a dynamic crisis'.*

- **Education Scotland** published *Effective use of data*, a set of new resources developed with practitioners and leaders. It includes: workshop templates; information to support tracking and monitoring; a literature review on using data for improvement in education; a glossary of common terms; podcasts that explore effective use of data.

- **Data Education in Schools** at Moray House School of Education & Sport, **University of Edinburgh**, opened applications for two free four-day data literacy professional development courses for primary and secondary teachers in south-east Scotland.
The deadline for applications is 14 June 2024.

- **University of Edinburgh** Centre for Research in Digital Education is working on Towards embedding responsible AI in the school system: Co-creation with young people, a nine-month project with **University of East Anglia** & **Digital Skills Education** backed by **UKRI** funding.

- **Daydream Believers** and **Education Scotland** published GenAI [generative AI] in Education: Exploration Hub, a website developed with industry 'to inform and empower educators to be curious experimenters with the latest technologies in machine learning'. It includes: tools and ideas for research and practice with GenAI; a list of resources; details about ethics.

Schools

LITERACY INSTRUCTION & POLICY

■ **Winston Churchill Trust** published *An investigation of literacy instruction and policy in the United Kingdom and Ireland*, a comparative analysis of school-related factors that contribute to literacy achievement: curriculum; reading instruction; initial teacher education; assessment; inspection. Includes a detailed section on Scotland.

- The Republic of Ireland's high literacy levels are described as 'no mystery' due to various factors; & England's standards are improving.
- However in Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland several of these factors are less effective.
- It highlights **Education Scotland**'s new guidelines and professional learning resources on early reading pedagogy, prompted by the need for more explicit guidance on teaching reading. (*The first of a suite of resources due out this year – see* Informed 118.)

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING (ASL)

■ **Scottish Parliament Education, Children & Young People Committee** published *Additional Support for Learning inquiry*, the final report of the inquiry launched in Oct 2023 (*see* Informed 115).

- The policy behind educating pupils with additional support needs (ASN) in mainstream rather than special schools is the best route; however, Scottish and local governments are failing to implement it properly.
- A lack of support staff to cope with the number of those with ASN can leave pupils feeling frustrated.
- A move towards open-plan schools could be extremely overwhelming for those with autism or who are neurodivergent but are 'masking'*.
- Recommendations include: review placing requests; undertake research on the prevalence and impact of masking; urgently address gaps in specialist provision.

**Masking: concealing natural feelings, preferences and reactions to the world around them.*

■ **Children in Scotland** published *Relationships and behaviour summary paper*, produced with **Enquire**, based on the views of secondary school-aged Inclusion Ambassadors from across Scotland who have a range of ASN. Recommendations include taking a rights-based, child-centred approach to issues relating to behaviour and relationships in school.

■ **QMU**:

- launched a new Toy Box Diversity Lab website to support discussions between primary teachers & pupils about disability equality and representation in the school curriculum, and to encourage them to think about accessibility. Resources include activities and videos.
- is to offer a new online short course on Disability Confidence for Educational Practitioners from September 2024. The course runs for six weeks, including practical strategies for action research with learners.

REMOTE LEARNING PLANS & CURRICULUM DESIGN

■ Scottish Government published *Readiness for Remote Learning Report*, a summary of findings from an **Education Scotland** survey completed by 24 local authorities in June–August 2023.

- Almost all confirmed they have a contingency plan for remote learning; it would take around a week for all authorities, schools, teachers and learners to move to remote learning.
- It also explores the steps local authorities are taking to ensure readiness, e.g. providing staff training, engagement in the **Digital Schools Award** programme and provision of devices.

Schools

Education Scotland published *Evaluation of curriculum design in Scotland* by **HM Inspectorate of Education**, the report of a thematic inspection of schools and early learning & childcare settings during 2022–23.

- Strengths include the opportunities for pupils to learn outdoors more often, and staff using the local area to provide stimulating learning environments to develop knowledge and skills.
- Barriers to designing and developing the curriculum include: recruiting & retaining staff; access to digital technology; and balancing time for collaborative professional learning.
- More needs to be done to ensure a curriculum with breadth, depth and progression for all learners.
- Senior leaders need to implement efficient, responsive, effective improvement planning processes which include explicit, regular and robust reviews of their curriculum.
- Schools must ensure their curriculum is flexible and responsive to developments and supports learners to develop the skills and knowledge needed to live and thrive in times of change.

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT & TRAVEL TO SCHOOL

Tes Scotland reported that Scottish Government has withdrawn all funding for **National Parent Forum of Scotland** (**NPFS**).

- It will instead establish a new National Parent Panel to be run by **Connect** (formerly **Scottish Parent Teacher Council**) from the start of the new school year.
- NPFS, established by government in 2009 as a volunteer-led body, published an independent *Organisational Review*, describing 'significant strengths' but difficulties planning due to 'lack of understanding regarding future funding'.

Hopefully the NPFS factsheets and In a Nutshell resources, a valuable source of concise info for parents & others over many years, won't be lost.

Sustrans published *Hands up Scotland survey 2023*, a review of how 483,160 pupils travelled to 3,229 schools and nurseries. Findings include:

- 49.3% said they normally travel in an active way (-0.1ppt from 2022 but higher than pre-pandemic in 2019 at 47.8%).
- 41.3% walk (-1.3ppt); 4.7% cycle (+0.8ppt, highest recorded); 3.3% scooter or skate (+0.4ppt, highest recorded).
- 16.4% travel by bus (+0.6ppt); 9.7% 'park & stride' (+0.2ppt); 24.1% travel by car or taxi (-0.6ppt).

LEARNING RESOURCES & PROJECTS

Gen+, supported by **Peter Vardy Foundation**, is to pilot a new Gen+ Explorer programme for P6/7 pupils, using meta-skills as part of the transition to secondary school. Gen+ offers courses for 9–14 year-olds that progressively develop skills and learning in nine key meta-skills: resilience, organisation, collaboration, initiative, creativity, communication, critical thinking, leadership and adaptability. *Interest in the pilot can be registered here.*

ITZA is launching One Planet, an online resource on climate change and how to protect the planet, for pupils in Scottish schools.

- It aims to help teachers facilitate independent learning on building a sustainable economy.
- Backed by **Scottish Building Society**, content partners include **BBC**, **HarperCollins**, **NatureScot**, **World Wide Fund for Nature**.

ITZA plans to roll out One Planet to English-speaking schools around the world from 2025.

Schools

- **Education Scotland** opened applications for the Food for Thought education fund 2024/25 for all schools, offering up to £3k towards a project that educates learners on aspects of food & drink. *The closing date is 27 June 2024.*

- **Glasgow Caledonian University** (**GCU**) researchers have created a short film to raise awareness of the impact of cyberbullying and online abuse on teenagers. The animation, developed as part of an EU-funded partnership project, will be available to show in secondary schools in Scotland from September 2024.

- **Scottish Library & Information Council** (**SLIC**) opened the £150k School Library Improvement Fund 2024 to applications from state nurseries and schools for library projects on literacy and numeracy, information and media literacy, or mental health support. *Applications close on 4 September 2024.*

Further & Higher Education

PEOPLE

PROF STEVE MCLAUGHLIN
Deputy Principal for Research Impact, **Heriot-Watt University**, is now Vice-Principal & Provost.

PROF NEIL SIMCO
Deputy Principal Academic & Research, **University of the Highlands & Islands** (**UHI**), is to retire in July 2024.

UHI ORKNEY
Seonaidh McDonald, Impact & Performance Manager, Innovate UK, is new Principal;
Pauline Black, Senior Lecturer (Music Education), University of Aberdeen, is new Deputy Principal.

PROF ROBERT MACINTOSH
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Business & Law, Northumbria University, will be Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation), **University of the West of Scotland** (**UWS**), from autumn 2024.

UNIVERSITY & COLLEGE FUNDING

Scottish Funding Council (**SFC**) published *University final funding allocations for 2024–25* and *College final funding allocations for 2024–25*. These confirm details set out in indicative allocations published in April (*see* Informed 120) with information on any changes.

Higher Education Statistics Agency (**HESA**) published *HE Provider Data: Finance 2022/23*, with income and expenditure of UK higher education institutions (HEIs). **For Scotland**:

- Total **income** was £4.61b, ~unchanged from 2021/22 (£51.5b for UK, up from £46.9b).
- Income from tuition fees & education contracts was £1.79b (+£0.09b); funding body grants £1.19b (-£0.01b); research grants/contracts £938m (+£53m).
- Total **expenditure** was £4.37b, down from £5.05b (£48.6b for UK, down from £50.9b).
- 51.8% was on staff costs (-11.1ppt).

COLLEGES, STUDENTS & STAFF

SFC published *College Performance Indicators 2022–23*; due to the pandemic, comparisons with previous years are to be treated with caution.

- 42,669 **full-time FE students** were enrolled on recognised qualifications (down 254 from 2021–22).
- 66.3% successfully completed their course (+7.3ppt) (SFC goal was 73.2% by 2019–20).
- 11.1% completed but did not gain the intended qualification.
- 25.4% withdrew from their course (-3.9ppt).
- 25,791 **full-time HE students** were enrolled on recognised qualifications (down 3,840).
- 65.5% completed their studies (+3.0ppt) (SFC's aspiration was 74.4% by 2019–20).
- 14.0% completed but did not gain the intended qualification.
- 20.5% withdrew from the course (-3.1ppt).
- **Male students** were 6.7ppt more likely to successfully complete FE courses than females (+0.1ppt); **females** were 2.5ppt more likely to complete HE courses than males (-1.4ppt).
- Younger students are less likely to complete successfully than older students; however younger students are more likely to enrol on full-time courses which have a lower pass rate vs part-time programmes.
- 88.2% of the 3,547 **full-time permanent teaching staff** (down 130) held a recognised teaching qualification (+1.9ppt).

Further & Higher Education

APPLICANTS, STUDENTS & STUDENT EXPERIENCE

UCAS announced new measures to support students who may disregard applying to university due to financial barriers or who believe they will not achieve the entry requirements.

- From September 2024 the £28.50 application fee will be waived for those in recepit of Free School Meals.
- Applicants will be able to view historic grade data and offer rates for each course, to help increase transparency about admissions.

Higher Education Policy Institute (**HEPI**) and **TechnologyOne** published *A Minimum Income Standard [MIS] for Students* with Centre for Research in Social Policy, **Loughborough University**, comparing what is needed by students across the UK with the current support available.

- For Scottish students, maximum government maintenance support falls short by £7,232 (highest for Northern Irish students: £10,496).
- Maintenance support in Scotland covers 61% of the MIS (44% for NI students).
- The gap is £10,374 if students are from Scotland (support covers 52% of their costs).
- Scottish students need to work 16 hrs/week at the minimum wage to reach MIS (23 hrs NI).
- It calls for the level of support to be increased.

UCAS launched a consultation on its proposed model for allocating Tariff points to apprenticeships at SCQF level 6, and level 3 from rest of the UK. It proposes that a 24-month apprenticeship would carry 96 points, 18-months 64 points (minimum entry for an undergraduate course is 72–128).

The consultation is open until 20 June 2024; the aim is to apply the model from September 2024.
Also see a report on degree apprenticeships, p. 5.

Royal College of Midwives (**RCM**) published *Scotland Student Midwives: Finance report*.

- 45% of students are aged 30+, 13% 40+.
- 47% have caring responsibilities; 78% of these say this impacts on their studies.
- 96% receive a bursary (usually £10k/year); 69% lost benefits when they began studies.
- 71% have taken on extra debt due to studies; 76% expect to graduate with new debt.
- 60% worry they'll have to drop out for financial reasons.
- RCM is calling for action including: the bursary to rise in line with inflation; travelling costs to clinical placements to be refunded.

HEPI published *Trans and non-binary student experiences in UK higher education*, covering application, study and post-graduation. Challenges faced include lower academic readiness, financial difficulties, mental health issues and difficulties gaining employment. Recommendations are made for improving inclusion and support.

INTERNATIONAL & TRANSNATIONAL STUDENTS & GRADUATES

UK Government published *Rapid Review of the Graduate Route* by the independent **Migration Advisory Committee** (**MAC**).

- The Graduate route visa allows international students to remain in the UK for two or three years after graduation from a relevant course.
- MAC recommended retaining the Graduate route in its current form; UK Government has confirmed it will remain for all UK universities, with new measures to future-proof against potential abuses.

Further & Higher Education

House of Commons Library published *International students in UK higher education*, a research briefing exploring government policy, funding, student numbers and economic impact.

Universities UK International published *International Graduate Outcomes 2024* with **QS**, based on a survey of 10.5k graduates from 196 countries or territories from HEIs in GB, including 5% in Scotland.

- 59% chose to study in the UK due to the perceived high quality of its universities.
- 73% said the Graduate route visa met their expectations.
- 53% felt more could be done in terms of career support and professional placements.
- 71% feel a lasting connection with the UK; 57% are more likely to engage in business with the UK as a result.

HESA published *Students in transnational education [TNE] 2022/23*.

- 45,875 students enrolled at **Scottish providers** were based wholly overseas (up 760 from 2021/22).
- 12.8% were based within the EU (-0.2ppt).
- **UK-wide**, 66% of TNE students were studying at undergraduate level, 34% postgraduate.
- China, Sri Lanka and Malaysia had the most TNE students studying for UK qualifications.

London Economics published *The Exchequer benefits and costs associated with the Graduate Route visa* for **HEPI**, **Kaplan International Pathways** and **National Union of Students**.

- There were an estimated 66,410 Graduate route visa holders in the UK in 2022/23 tax year: 56,460 graduates & 9,950 dependants.
- Total net benefit to the UK Exchequer of hosting visa holders in 2022/23 was estimated at £70m (£1,240 per international graduate).
- An estimated 350k Graduate route visa holders could be in the UK by April 2025.

GRADUATES

Scottish Government published *Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) from Universities: 2021/22: Scotland*, data tracking UK-domiciled graduates from Scottish HEIs five years after graduating. Findings include:

- Graduates from the 20% *most* deprived areas earned £4k less than those from the 20% *least* deprived areas (+£700 from 2020/21).
- Disabled graduates earned £2,600 less than those with no known disability (-£300).
- Female graduates earned £2,100 less than male graduates (-£400).
- Those from a non-white background earned £700 less than white graduates (-£400).

Derived from LEO data on earnings and employment outcomes for graduates by England's Department for Education.

TEACHING, LEARNING, QUALITY & STANDARDS

Advance HE published guidance documents to support UK HEIs in 'the technical and nuanced work of securing the rights to freedom of speech, academic freedom, and protection from harassment for all staff and students'. Includes the legal frameworks & an activities & events checklist.

Nursing & Midwifery Council has awarded **Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education** (**QAA**) a three-year contract to provide quality assurance of nursing and midwifery education across the four UK nations from September 2024.

Further & Higher Education

QAA published *When quality assurance meets innovation in higher education*, findings from a Collaborative Enhancement Project led by **New Model Institute for Technology & Engineering** based on views of 176 staff from 65 providers. Findings include:

- Key drivers of innovation include student satisfaction, inclusivity and the need to meet the needs of changing student populations.
- Effective innovation is most likely when academics work alongside quality teams in a constructive and collaborative way.

*Includes a case study from **Edinburgh Napier University**.*

Advance HE published two refreshed documents in its *Essential Frameworks for Enhancing Student Success* series:

- *Framework for Flexible Learning* for leaders, staff, students and employers
- *Framework for Student Access, Retention, Attainment & Progression*, for staff with a remit to support students to achieve their potential.

QAA published an Awarding Map to support educators in implementing measures to close awarding gaps, i.e. 'variations in final attainment averages achieved by different demographic groups'. The resource identifies guidance materials on supporting students throughout their studies, shaping classroom culture, designing inclusive curricula and assessments, and preparing graduates to enter the world of work. *Available to QAA members.*

Advance HE published *How do 'care' or 'pastoral support' activities contribute to core strategic outcomes in higher education?*. Literature review findings include tangible benefits for students and staff receiving support, but an absence of structural recognition and reward in organisations for support or care, with activities often carried out by women. *Available to Advance HE members.*

DIGITAL & BLENDED LEARNING & AI

Jisc published *Extended reality in learning and teaching: Report 2023/24*, based on 157 responses from 110 institutions (55% FE, 39% HE) mostly in England.

- 78% had invested in XR; 55% said they were getting 'moderate to extensive' use out of it.
- In FE, XR is mainly used for teaching in health, public services, science, technology, engineering & maths (STEM) and social care; HE also uses it in arts, humanities and social sciences.
- 34% in FE/41% in HE believe that XR helps 'prepare for life and work'.
- Barriers include: cost; time; lack of specialist skills; concerns for accessibility & sustainability due to turnover of devices as tech develops.
- FE wants advice, guidance and training; HE wants more DIY resources and sector insight.

Jisc published *Student perceptions of generative AI*, based on in-person discussions with over 200 FE and HE students, an update of findings from an August 2023 report.

- There has been a distinct change in how students are using GenAI, and a maturing expectation of institutions to support them.
- They increasingly see GenAI as a collaborative tool rather than purely as an answer provider.
- They emphasised the importance of GenAI-ready skills relevant to their future work.
- They are increasingly aware of and concerned about equity, bias and accessibility issues.
- There is a growing expectation for comprehensive GenAI integration across the curriculum and education.

Further & Higher Education

Jisc published *Digital sustainability in tertiary education: Trends, challenges, and sector insights*, based on a survey of 98 members, 66% in HE.

- 45% in HE say their institutions have net zero targets for 2035 or earlier; 56% in FE have sustainability objectives but no targets.
- The main needs include upskilling staff and students and increased leadership awareness.
- A roadmap for digital sustainability support is provided, plus best practices and strategies.

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION & PROJECTS

University of Strathclyde is to create the following, due to open from September 2024:

- A base at **Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University**, an 'all women' HEI in Saudi Arabia, supported by UK and Saudi governments. Strathclyde staff will deliver STEM, business and humanities courses, the first UK university to establish a formal presence in the kingdom.
- **University of Strathclyde, Bahrain**, in partnership with **S Eleven Educational**. It will offer science, engineering and business courses.

University of Glasgow signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Arab American University Palestine** (**AAUP**) to promote medical collaboration, including hosting students from AAUP in Glasgow to gain experience of UK clinical practice and medical education.

Heriot-Watt University signed:

- an MoU with **EMCC Global** professional industry body in coaching, mentoring and supervision. It aims to develop joint research projects, and will enable students to attend networking and training events with coaches, researchers and industry leaders.
- an MoU with **Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence** to establish an international Centre for Doctoral Training in Robotics and AI in the UAE.

PARTNERSHIPS & AGREEMENTS

Scottish Government announced it is to hold a consultation on plans to dissolve the **Glasgow** and **Lanarkshire Regional College Boards**, and 'to establish different regional collaboration mechanisms'. The consultation will go live in the coming weeks and be open for 12 weeks.

University of Strathclyde is to offer an Executive Space Course, on cyber security in space, developed with **International Space University**. The course is aimed at professionals working in the space sector or who want to develop a better understanding of it. Participants will gain postgraduate-level microcredentials.

Further & Higher Education

GCU is to set up a Doctoral Training Centre in MS (Multiple Sclerosis) Symptom Management, the first of its kind in Scotland, backed by £430k from **MS Society**. Others involved in the five-year project include **NHS Ayrshire & Arran**, **Scottish Ballet** and **PAL Technologies**. The Centre will take on nine new PhD fellows.

Dundee & Angus College is working with:

- **NNEdPro Global Institute for Food, Nutrition & Health** to provide hospitality and professional cookery students with hands-on and industry experience. The organisations have co-created academic programmes, courses and training modules. Students will also receive membership of **International Academy of Nutrition Educators**.
- **Corsair for Business** tech company, to provide students with gaming and esports equipment and career opportunities.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (**National Centre for Gaelic Language & Culture**) signed a new MoU with **National Library of Scotland**. Areas of collaboration will include research, teaching, skills development, knowledge exchange and public engagement in Scotland's cultural heritage.

UWS announced a strengthened collaboration with **King's Foundation**, including joint research projects and professional development opportunities for students and staff of both organisations, and closer ties with Dumfries House estate for experiential, hands-on learning.

COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

Dundee & Angus College opened a new Barber Salon at its Arbroath campus, to give students an 'immersive' learning environment while providing a service to local customers.

OU in Scotland published its *Annual Review 2023*. In 2023 the university had over 19,500 students.

- 73% were in full- or part-time work; 5% were sponsored by their employers; 745 had transferred credit from HNC/D to OU studies.
- New undergraduates: average age is 28; 75% earn less than £25k; 17% have an HNC/D; 23% joined without standard university entrance qualifications; 28% have a disability; 43% live in Scotland's 40% most disadvantaged areas.

University of Strathclyde launched the Strathclyde Institute for Sustainable Communities, a centre of research excellence that will examine the role communities could play in sustainability. It is believed to be the first of its kind in the UK.

UHI Perth is to run a new one-year full-time NQ Coaching and Leading Adventure Sports course at SCQF level 6 from September 2024. The course is aimed at school leavers with level 5 qualifications and those with outdoor experience looking for a change of career.

UHI published its second *Islands Strategy 2024–2029*, reaffirming its commitment to island communities. Key objectives include supporting the creation and retention of a highly skilled workforce across the islands; and increasing postgraduate and research provision.

Community & Adult Learning

PEOPLE

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Scottish Book Trust published *The value and impact of Scotland's libraries: Preliminary findings from public librarian surveys*, completed by 315 public library workers, Oct 2023 to Jan 2024. 30% of respondents were qualified librarians.

- 33% said their whole service is at risk of reduction or losses.
- 82% reported a restriction on their funding and resources; 33% a loss of dedicated librarians and other library staff.
- There is a widespread lack of understanding from local authorities about the social, long-term impact of the library service.
- The most popular activities: Bookbug (97%) & craft sessions (89%), reading challenges (84%), Book Week Scotland (79%), book clubs/cafés (73%) and author visits (67%).
- 26% work with partners or local authority to provide further community learning resources.
- 53% agree libraries provide access to learning resources and training often/a lot.
- 40% who commented on the importance of the library in providing further learning said staff shortages, service cuts and/or funding was unavailable to support it.
- 49% said they provide ad-hoc digital support in their day-to-day role.
- 96% said their library offers wifi access, 99% computers with internet, 71% ebooks/ eReaders, 40% to courses in digital skills.
- 64% said their library service provides digital/ICT skills and devices; 34% employability resources.
- It concludes: libraries are 'vital for every person in Scotland, and they are endangered'.

Further findings, including from school librarians and library users will be reported in late 2024.

SLIC awarded £100k of Scottish Government's Public Library Improvement Fund to five initiatives supporting creativity and sustainability. The five projects include: Stay Connected digital inclusion project, **South Ayrshire**; Sustainable Communities hub project, **Perth & Kinross**; Library Natter Corner, **Midlothian**; and Study Sp@ces, **North Ayrshire.**

COMMUNITY & ADULT LEARNING

UHI North, West & Hebrides signed an agreement with **EDP Renewables** to offer subsidised courses to local business employees and residents on Skye. Courses include Renewable energy systems awareness, Health & safety training, Paediatric first aid and Food hygiene.

OU's OpenLearn platform launched its first free course in Scottish Gaelic. The ten-hour course, on Introduction to making political and social change, was previously only available in English and Welsh.

Community & Adult Learning

YOUNG PEOPLE

Duke of Edinburgh's Award (**DofE**) published its Annual Statistics for young people across the UK in 2023/24.

- 545,910 are currently doing DofE (+1.5% from 2022/23); 155,502 awards were achieved (+7%).
- 330,984 started their award; 30% of 14 year-olds started a Bronze DofE (+1ppt).
- 26.7% of starts are minority ethnic; 15.2% are experiencing poverty; 7.8% have ASN.

DofE's aim is to reach 1m young people by 2026.

Awards Network published *Acting on Achievement*, highlighting the role of youth awards in making learning 'more flexible, meaningful, experiential and relevant'. Youth awards offer accredited experiences, develop meta-skills, connect young people with adult role models, and enable recognition of achievements and skills beyond the classroom.

Glasgow Clyde College is working with **Dumbarton FC** to offer summer soccer camps in July to boys and girls aged 7–11 and 12–15 at Anniesland Campus. The sessions will be led by Dumbarton FC professional footballers.

National Citizen Service Trust and **DofE** published *Education & Enrichment: Final report*, on how partnerships between education and youth sectors can 'improve the accessibility, quality and impact' of activities. Research by **Centre for Education & Youth** and **UK Youth** found:

- New partnerships between education and youth sector bodies often face coordination challenges; use of intermediaries helps.
- Agreeing impact measures can increase trust.
- Recommendations include: a new 'enrichment premium' to support marginalised young people, and the introduction of a national professional qualification.

*11 partnership case studies include one involving **HMYOI Polmont**, **Barnardo's** and **Fife College**.*

National Lottery Community Fund awarded £1.8m Young Start funding to 22 projects to help 8–24 year-olds gain skills & confidence, including:

- **Oi Musica** for free music lessons, **City of Edinburgh**
- **Scottish Crannog Centre Trust**, to pilot placements for young people with ASN, **Perth & Kinross**
- **Greenock Morton Community Trust**, for STEM workshops and a **STEM Ambassadors** programme, **Inverclyde**.

Government & Wider Society

PEOPLE

PROF ANGELA O'HAGAN
Equality & Public Policy, GCU, is new Chair, **Scottish Human Rights Commission**.

PETER DUTHIE
Chief Executive, **Scottish Event Campus** (**SEC**), is stepping down after ten years in the role.

PAUL LAWRENCE
Executive Director of Place, **City of Edinburgh Council**, will be new Chief Executive from June 2024.

TOM ILBUE
entrepreneur and educational philanthropist, will be new Chair, **Prince's Trust**, from August 2024.

MAIRI KIDD
Head of Literature, Languages & Publishing, Creative Scotland, is new Director, **Saltire Society**.

MOIRA SINCLAIR
Chief Executive, **Paul Hamlyn Foundation**, is to step down in February 2025 after ten years in post.

NATIONAL OUTCOMES & STRATEGIES

Scottish Government published *A changing nation: How Scotland will thrive in a digital world: Progress report 2021–2024* with **COSLA**, on the version of Scotland's digital strategy published in March 2021 (*see* Informed 89). The strategy included digital education and skills actions.
A renewed strategy is planned for the year ahead.

University of Glasgow published *Policy and practice recommendations for augmented [AR] & mixed reality [MR]*, funded by **Royal Society of Edinburgh**. Recommendations include that policymakers should integrate education about AR/MR and their benefits and risks into 'critical thinking curricula in schools' and 'more urgently, into a campaign of digital literacy for adults'.

Scottish Parliament Finance & Public Administration Committee launched a call for views on Scottish Government's proposed 13 new and revised National Outcomes. Views are sought from the public sector, business, voluntary sector and communities.
The deadline for submissions is 28 June 2024.

*The **General Election, 4 July 2024** pre-election 'period of sensitivity' ('purdah') began on 25 May for the UK; guidance was published for civil servants and devolved bodies in Scotland. Organisations are creating manifestos aimed at politicians and voters; a usual short* **Informed Scotland UK General Election Extra** *will be published later in June.*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUDGETS & ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Audit Scotland published *Local government budgets 2024/25* by **Accounts Commission**, stating that 'ever tougher decisions must be made to ensure councils are financially sustainable'.

- Councils have a £585m funding gap, estimated to increase to £780m by 2026/27.
- Almost all increases in Scottish Government funding have been ring-fenced for policies and to cover the costs of pay increases in 2023/24.
- Planning and delivering on transformational change are vital for financial sustainability.

Diffley Partnership and **Charlotte Street Partners** published *Understanding Scotland: Economy May 2024*, a survey of 2,200 adults.

- 66% think general economic conditions are worse than a year ago (-4ppt from February 2024), 45% say their own financial circumstances are worse (-4ppt).
- Only 15% rate education/schools as a top three issue facing Scotland (+1ppt); 52% rate healthcare & the **NHS** as top three (+3ppt).

Government & Wider Society

EARLY LEARNING & CHILDCARE

Bòrd na Gàidhlig opened applications to voluntary and third-sector groups for its 2024/25 Gaelic Early Years scheme. Up to £5k is available for weekly groups to support the delivery of Gaelic sessions, £15k to those that meet more regularly. *Applications close on 27 June 2024.*

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Young Scot published findings of its BIG Survey of over 2k 11–25 year-olds across Scotland from September 2023 to January 2024.

- Their current main concerns are education (60%), climate change (42%) and lack of affordable housing (39%).
- Their main future concerns are climate change (60%) and lack of affordable housing (60%).
- 48% said they already use AI; 54% of these have concerns about their personal information and privacy when using it.