

**Minister for Higher and Further Education; and  
Minister for Veterans**  
Ministear airson Foghlam Àrd-ìre is Adhartach; agus  
Ministear airson Seann Ghaisgich  
**Graeme Dey MSP/BPA**



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Our Reference: 202300376388  
Your Reference: (Case Ref: WR4688)

6 October 2023

Dear Willie,

Thank you for your correspondence of 12 September 2023 regarding hair and beauty apprenticeships.

As you'll be aware, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) have operational responsibility for Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) and contribute towards the cost of training and assessing MAs. SDS previously offered a framework in beauty therapy but found that people preferred to do their training as part of a college course and therefore this was eventually removed from the apprenticeship offering due to a lack of uptake.

It is worth highlighting that not all occupations necessarily lend themselves to apprenticeships and in Scotland the college sector offers a range of well used and flexible courses across the levels and different specialisms covering both beauty and aesthetics, with these courses providing a flexible option for learning. SDS are also supporting funding for the review of the following SVQs during 2023/24 which will further support the industry:

- SVQ in Beauty Therapy at SCQF Level 5
- SVQ in Beauty Therapy at SCQF Level 6
- SVQ in Nail Services at SCQF Level 5
- SVQ in Nail Services at SCQF Level 6
- SVQ in Hairdressing and Barbering at SCQF Level 4

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Apprenticeships in Scotland are demand-led, and our apprenticeship system aims to be as responsive to industry demand as it can be. Any new Modern Apprenticeship (MA) frameworks created would be as a result of sufficient demand from employers for a new MA and a clear indication that an MA is the right training route. SDS work with industry to assess the level of demand and can support the development of new apprenticeship frameworks where required.

Regarding a decline in apprenticeship starts in the hairdressing sector, it is worth noting that 2020 is understandably low considering the impacts of COVID, and the knock-on effects in subsequent years for the sector. SDS has frequent engagement with the sector throughout their standard contract management processes. They have also advised that they received feedback from some hairdressing employers that the college route also works for them, with some preferring it. Through SDS' engagement with training providers they encourage them to make their initial assessment of learners processes more robust. Official statistics published by SDS show that in 2022/23, while starts on the Hairdressing and Barbering framework were slightly lower than the previous year, the achievement rate actually increased to 70% up from 62% in 2021/22.

In terms of employer incentives, I'd like to highlight the Employer Recruitment Incentive framework which was developed by the Scottish Government to provide a minimum national offer across Scotland from 1 April 2021. This framework provides Local Authorities and their Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs) the flexibility to respond to differing local needs and demand.

Further information on this framework can be accessed at [Local Authorities | Employability in Scotland](#) and includes the key Employability Partnerships Lead Contacts for each Local Authority who can be contacted directly by employers, including in the hair and beauty sector, to discuss what additional support and employer recruitment incentives may be available.

In addition to this, all business support details are published on the Scottish Government website and on the [Find Business Support website](#) as soon as they are available.

With regards to promoting apprenticeships, it is worth highlighting Scottish Apprenticeship Week which I am sure you'll be aware is an annual celebration of the success of Scotland's Apprenticeship system which includes Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships co-ordinated by SDS to raise awareness and promote Scotland's Apprenticeships to people of all ages, highlighting the benefits of Apprenticeships to individuals, employers and the economy.

SDS also offer a range of support services for careers information, advice and guidance, such as identifying pathways into chosen sectors or positions. They have professional Careers Information, Advice and Guidance Advisers in all local authority areas, who are available to discuss options, build skills and help individuals obtain paid employment. The SDS website My World of Work hosts a range of tools and training opportunities including advice on careers in the beauty industry. More information can be found [here](#).

I trust you find this response helpful.

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Yours sincerely



**GRAEME DEY**

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