

Scottish School Leavers Survey

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Scottish School Leavers Survey

Outline

- What was the SSLS and what has happened to it
- Why this happened
- Lessons that can be learnt
- Current Scottish Government evidence base

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Context

- SSLS was suspended indefinitely in 2008 due to high drop out rates. No plans to re-instate.
- Evidence base in the mid 1970s
- Need for evidence
- Perceptions of school, reasons for staying on at or leaving school, job satisfaction, socio-economic and family background, demand for higher education etc
- Longitudinal Surveys
- Initial Partnership Scottish Office and Economic Social Research Council : Last SSLS ScotCen sponsored by Scottish Executive
- 16 year olds through to 24 year olds

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Products and Publications

- Analysis by academics
 - Interest (Science Education, Gender and Low achievement, Higher Education and Social Class, Destinations of Leavers, NEET group, Inequality...)
- Analysis of the individual sweeps
 - General summary analysis of each cohort
 - Main activity, domestic circumstances, qualifications, attitudes towards the future etc...

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What Happened ?

- Assessment of use
 - Limited by Government
 - Limited by academia
- Cost / Benefit
- Other evidence (last 10 years)
 - Management / administrative information
 - Data Sharing developments
 - Other longitudinal and cohort surveys
- Policy needs
 - Immediate answers (or at least quicker)
 - Representativeness
 - Disadvantaged Groups – less about Jo Average
- Sample
 - Non response
 - Drop between sweeps

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What can we learn ?

- **Benefit needs to be significant**
 - Cost / Benefit
 - More than “because it is interesting”
 - Meets users needs (as they actually are – not what we wish them to be)
- **Understand the wider evidence base**
 - What will this product deliver
 - Duplication not possible
- **Understand the methodological constraints**
 - Work to resolve them (more than footnoting conclusions in reports)
- **Consider other sources of finance**
 - not always for Government to fund
- **Cost is not always small**
 - £ 400 k per year clearly small to a Government
 - Context against research budget for education
 - Cost of other products

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What can we learn ?

- Be proactive
 - Don't rely on others to establish the need
 - Long term needs not likely to be identified by those working on short and medium term issues
 - Know your audience and meet its needs (might need to get a new audience)
- What evidence do we now have? Lots?
 - Management Information – schools and LAs
 - Cohort surveys (GUS)
 - Household Surveys (SHS)
 - Leaver Destinations data (Skills Development Scotland)
 - Qualifications data
 - Assessment data
- Data Linkage and Data Sharing –
 - the way forward or 'A way forward'

Overview of School Statistics

- We collect a variety of statistics on schools, pupils and teachers including:
 - School, teacher, pupil numbers and characteristics
 - Attainment and SQA qualifications
 - Leaver destinations (after 3 and 9 months)
- We quality assure the data and often link to the pupil census using SCN numbers to provide additional information.
- Publications and datasets (at school or local authority level) are available on our website. Requests for additional data can also be made.

Scottish School leavers Survey – what do we do instead?

- We are focusing instead on linking datasets to optimise usage of existing data
- Strong focus on leaver destinations – National Indicator and key outcome / outputs measure
- We currently link data on initial school leavers destination (roughly 3 months after leaving) to attainment and pupil census data.
- Pupil census, attendance and absence and SQA attainment data will also be added to the Scottish Longitudinal Study in the near future.

Qualifications and leavers destinations

- The school leavers destination follow up survey is a national indicator which is used to track progress on National Outcomes as part of Scotland Performs.
- Destination information is linked to information on qualifications and pupil characteristics.
- Focus by policy on destinations of pupils with few or no qualifications, those from deprived backgrounds and those with ASN
- Used by local authorities to monitor progress in single outcome agreements

Data linking and adding value

- Most school data is at an individual level with a unique Scottish Candidate number
- Information from several data sets can be linked together using SCN and/or other information on dob, gender, school etc.
- Linking improves the range of data available without increasing the burden on schools and local authorities
- Linking and comparing data from different sources also enables us to check the quality and completeness of specific variables

Data accessibility

- Excel data sets at school and local authority level are available on our website at: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/Datasets
- Selected data at data zone and other geographical levels are available on the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics Website www.sns.gov.uk
- Data requests either aggregated or at an individual level can also be made.
- Data access forms and access conditions are also available on our website