

Scotland's Economic Performance

Scottish Youth Parliament

Scottish Youth Parliament National Sitting

Consultation Workshop: Scotland's Economic Performance – How does the economy impact your everyday life?

27 October 2017

Background

As part of the Scottish Youth Parliament's 64th National Sitting, members of the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee asked Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) for their views on the Committee's inquiry into the Performance of the Scottish Economy.

Remit

Workshop participants were given the following remit to focus discussion:

Would you like to help MSPs understand what the performance of the economy means to you people? The Scottish Parliament's Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee has launched an inquiry into Scotland's Economic Performance and will be taking evidence in the coming months. We want to identify challenges and opportunities for the future and to understand what action is needed to make the economy more inclusive, innovative and international. We need MSYPs to tell us how the Scottish economy is really performing for young people in Scotland. Join the discussion and make recommendations on what changes you'd like to see in the future.

Survey

In advance of the workshop, MSYPs asked their constituents to answer a series of survey questions in order to feed their views into the session. 76 people participated, aged 12-26 from a wide range of urban and rural geographical areas. Responses highlighted in the survey are listed under the below questions, also asked at the workshops.

Workshop

The MSYPs discussed the following questions in relation to the inquiry and highlighted a variety of points:

What are the most important things you would want in a job?*Workshop*

- Job security
- Good wage
- Progression and a way to 'move up'
- Stability in a fluctuating market – jobs often lack security
- There is a lack of flexibility. This is particularly important for people like young carers
- Need more variety in entry-level jobs available for young people. Generally limited to opportunities in retail and hospitality
- The minimum wage for young people should be increased
- Happiness in a job is important

Survey

- Fair pay, security and increased minimum wage for under 18s (to the living wage) were the most popular answers
- Increased minimum wage for under 18s (to the living wage)
- Safety at work
- Good colleagues and inclusive employer
- No zero hour contracts
- Job satisfaction and 'making a difference'
- Opportunities for development and progression
- "if I'm not suitable-offer to train me! I can't get experience without a job and I can't get a job without experience."
- Progressive work values and consideration of the environment
- Good management
- To enjoy it!

What are your future plans/ intentions?*Workshop*

- Varied answers, some with fixed plan others were unsure
- Many hoped to continue into higher education
- Nobody in the groups wanted to do a modern apprenticeship – they reflected that this probably related to the stigma of participation in modern apprenticeships as they are seen as a less academic choice
- There was some frustration that jobs that are done by young people don't have any long term prospects and are unrelated to the careers that they wish to pursue

Survey

- The majority of respondents wanted to go to University and enter careers such as law, teaching, optometry, veterinary medicine and accountancy
- Some people wanted to do a modern apprentice
- Find a job

Would you like to start your own business? If so, what?

Workshop

- Many felt starting your own business lacked security
- Many hadn't considered freelance work as self-employment

Survey

- The majority of respondents did not want to start a business with some stating that it would be too insecure
- Others said there was a lack of knowledge and support for young people who wanted to start a business
- Tax returns are too time-consuming for people trying to run a small business
- One person wanted to start a non-profit organisation
- Another person plans to set-up a PR company

What things cause inequality in Scotland?

Workshop

- Inconsistency in broadband service – difficult for people in rural areas and those who do wish to start their own business
- Public transport causes inequality, poor and expensive services can make it difficult to travel to work or make money
- Social mobility- some parents have less disposable income to fund their children to do work experience
- Disability
- Self-perpetuating cycle of economic inequality
- Distribution of wealth
- Discrimination in the workplace
- Precarious work and zero hour contracts

Survey

- Attainment gap between schools
- Unequal pay for gender/ages
- Socio-economic background and relationships

- Taxes (some said too high some said too low)
- Poverty. Access to healthcare and education
- Drugs, diet, parental influence
- Zero hour contracts
- Gender
- Brexit uncertainty
- Wealth gap
- Greed, racism, prejudice
- Need job creation in areas of high wage growth
- Pay gap and discrimination of part-time work

How can decision-makers address economic inequality in Scotland?

Workshop

- Support a programme of social mobility
- Reduce the stigma associated with modern apprenticeships
- Universal basic income
- Improve minimum wage for under 18s
- Create entry-level jobs in more fields (not just retails and hospitality)
- Paid internships
- Planning for the future and understanding the impact and opportunities in sectors like technology and IT
- Equality of opportunity in education – currently different levels of funding
- Equal jobs for equal wage – young or old