Scotland's Economic Performance
The Prince’s Trust Scotland

THE PRINCE’S TRUST

The Prince’s Trust is the UK’s leading youth charity, supporting young people to transform their lives. We help disadvantaged young people aged 11 to 30, to build their confidence, increase their motivation and improve their employability and enterprise skills.

“By the end of the week he was holding his head up high, smiling, looking at people directly in the eye. I just knew that he would go far. Six months down the line he has a job at House of Fraser. I saw him grow up so quickly and become so confident”, said Katie Mackay from The Prince’s Trust Scotland, after Hugh McGarvie’s school referred him to The Prince’s Trust following the pressures of being a young carer saw him developing debilitating levels of OCD.

We've been working for 40 years in Scotland, and in that time, we've supported over 80,000 of the most excluded young people who are the furthest from the labour market, overcome their personal barriers and develop life and social skills. Three in four young people supported by The Prince’s Trust move into work, education and training or business.

We’ve helped 10,000 vulnerable young people last year and aim to help a similar number in 2017 and beyond. This year we launched our new campaign – Youth Can Do It – to unite the nation to get behind young people. We also leverage direct support from many of Scotland’s leading businesses, working with them to identify skills gaps and ensure that young people are job ready.

INTRODUCTION

The Prince’s Trust Scotland welcomes this consultation on the economy, inequality and labour market issues as it provides us with an opportunity to ensure disadvantaged young people are included in the economic outlook plans for Scotland.

The graphic displayed to the right shows the difference The Prince’s Trust Scotland has made to young people and the challenges we face in helping empower people.

GDP GROWTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

We believe that productivity in Scotland is being hampered by a lack of investment in young people. All young people deserve the opportunity to be able to make a positive contribution to society, but we find that far too often, they are unable to progress as they aren’t equipped with the right skills to be able to succeed in school, or to be able to secure long-term employment once they finish their education.

A key part of this is equipping young people with the soft skills to
progress – whether that’s developing their confidence, motivation or self-esteem. Mental health should not be a barrier to young people having the chance to succeed and it should be given the same importance as physical health. Our most recent Youth Index Report found that more than a quarter of young people do not feel in control of their lives and that a crisis in confidence in their own abilities and prospects is preventing them from realising their true potential. More focus is needed on developing the personal skills of young people and addressing any mental health issues, which will help increase productivity and GDP by helping young people succeed in the workplace. Getting a good job is good for your mental health and the economy.

Our Prince’s Trust Fairbridge programme helps address the issues disadvantaged young people face – developing the skills and confidence they need to move forward. They are given the opportunity to attend a free five-day access course to take part of lots of different activities. The aim is to boost young people’s confidence and gain access to new skills.

Hugh McGarvie’s school referred him to The Prince’s Trust Fairbridge programme, after the pressures of being a young carer saw him develop debilitating levels of anxiety and OCD. The Prince’s Trust helped him discover hidden talents and he now works in retail and hopes to become a youth worker.

“I developed such severe anxiety that sometimes I couldn’t even walk, and I had such bad Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, I’d scrub my hands until they were raw. I hated myself for it, and lost friends because they thought I was weird.

“Fairbridge ignited this excitement in me. On our residential trip, I was the first to volunteer for rock climbing, abseiling…everything! It was exhilarating. I started making eye contact and travelling independently…and then my Fairbridge exec said I was ready to go on Team.”

Team is a different Prince’s Trust programme that builds the confidence and employability skills of unemployed young people.

“It was at Team that I learned how to manage my stress and anxiety. The icing on the cake was when I got offered a job three days into a work placement.”
“The Prince’s Trust programmes gave me the strength to face my fears and the opportunities to find my hidden talents. I couldn’t even look at myself in the mirror before, let alone speak to people. Now I work in retail and talk with new customers every day. I like myself and where my future’s going.”

Hugh continues to work in retail and is planning to study social sciences at college before pursuing a career in youth work.

It is also concerning that so many young people finish education and are not aware of the job opportunities available to them. Schools have an important role to play here and should encourage all, not just the high flyers to think about their long-term career prospects. When we talk about GDP, this often leads us to focus exclusively on the high achievers, but young people need to be motivated and given the skills to succeed if we’re to boost productivity in Scotland.

The most effective thing we can do is to empower young people to help them develop the skills and coping mechanisms they need to move into work, education and training. This will undoubtedly have a positive impact on Scotland’s economy.

**INEQUALITY AND LABOUR MARKET ISSUES**

Across Scotland there is a stark inequality amongst young people when it comes to their skills and aspirations. Young people are not operating on a level playing field from the get go, whether that's a lack of knowledge about the job market, or a lack of financial resilience through their family network. These differences come to the fore from a young age for those from disadvantaged backgrounds and by the time they come to the end of their education these differences are often ingrained and difficult to turn around.

These differences were clear in our most recent Youth Index Report which found that over a third of young people do not feel in control of their job prospects and that a fifth of young people do not believe they have the ability to change their circumstances, even if they wanted to. This deep-set inequality can prevent young people from accessing a better quality of life for themselves and their family, often compounded by a lack of qualifications from school.

We also shouldn’t be masking the fact that there is still a very high unemployment rate for young people in Scotland, with pockets in areas such as Glasgow and Falkirk. We need to address this issue head on. Far too many young people remain excluded from the labour market, which could be further exacerbated by economic uncertainty in the years to come. Young people are core to the future economic prosperity of Scotland so we need to give them the tools to succeed.

When it comes to overcoming this inequality, there is not a one size fits all approach and we’ve found that being flexible can help put disadvantaged people on a more level footing. For instance, many disadvantaged young people we work with have fallen so far out of the system a conventional route to employment often isn’t an option for them, but that with help and business advice they can be given the tools to self-employment and in setting up their own business.

Owning a business can give young people a unique window of opportunity, especially to young offenders and those from care backgrounds who often struggle to find long term secure employment opportunities.

Our Enterprise programme aims to help young people aged 18-30 years old turn their big ideas into a business reality. From training and mentoring support young people are empowered.

The Enterprise programme has helped Jack Smyth, 21 (below) from West Dunbartonshire learn about running and setting up his own business. He takes old car parts and turns them into sculptures.
“My skills have developed significantly due to the training I have received from The Prince's Trust. From financial planning to pitching my idea in front of a panel. Throughout this process I have grown as an individual due to The Trust's support that will allow me grow and expand my business confidently and effectively.”

Through The Prince’s Trust partnership with Arnold Clarke, Jack has been commissioned to create some car part sculptures and will be supplied with old car parts, to help him launch his business properly. He hopes to receive a grant to help assist with other set up costs.

Speaking about the Enterprise programme, James Graham, Manager Enterprise Programmes, Sustainable Banking, at the Royal Bank of Scotland said: “We’ve been involved with The Prince’s Trust and the Enterprise programme for many years now, but we never stop being impressed by the calibre of businesses created by the young people that come through the programme. Having seen the transformative effect the programme can have, we’re excited to be able to help even more young people by now offering access via Prince’s Trust Online, as one of the site’s founding patrons.”

**INCLUSIVE GROWTH – BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER. OUR FINAL THOUGHTS**

In the ten years since the Scottish Government introduced its National Performance Framework to measure the Scottish Government's economic priorities the economy in many respects has come on leaps and bounds, but not for all. We must ensure young disadvantaged people in Scotland are not forgotten and that we provide them with the skills and knowledge to transform their situation.

With Brexit, young people and the organisations they work with need to be reassured that they will still have access to the levels of funding and support that they deserve. Replacing ESF investment is critical for these organisations to raise private and public match and continue to tackle the underlying and structural issues holding many disadvantaged young people back so they can to realise their potential and contribute to country’s growth.

Key is to be able to support young people by empowering them to improve their employability and enterprise skills. Getting this foundation right will have a positive impact on Scotland’s economy for generations to come.

Prince’s Trust Scotland