

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

THE SENIOR PHASE OF SCHOOL: HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE PURSUE THE RIGHT PATHWAY FOR THEM

THE SCOTTISH YOUTH PARLIAMENT

Introduction

The Scottish Youth Parliament represents Scotland's young people. Our vision for Scotland is of a nation that actively listens to and values the meaningful participation of its children and young people. Our goal is to make this vision a reality, in order to ensure Scotland is the best place in the world to grow up.

Our democratically elected members listen to and recognise the issues that are most important to young people, ensuring that their voices are heard by decision-makers. We exist to provide a national platform for young people to discuss the issues that are important to them, and campaign to effect the change they wish to see.

SYP's Values are:

Democracy – We are youth-led and accountable to young people aged 12 to 25. Our democratic structure, and the scale of our engagement across Scotland, gives us a mandate that sets us apart from other organisations.

Rights – We are a fundamentally rights-based organisation. We are passionate about making young people aware of their rights, and ensuring that local and national government deliver policies that allow those rights to be upheld.

Inclusion – We are committed to being truly inclusive and work tirelessly to ensure the voices of every young person from every community and background in Scotland are heard.

Political Impartiality – We are independent from all political parties. By working with all stakeholders, groups, and individuals who share our values, we can deliver the policies that are most important to young people.

Our Approach

SYP welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Committee's inquiry on the progress made against the Developing the Young Workforce recommendations.

Our response will be framed around [recommendations 1 and 2](#), as outlined by the Committee, and will focus on the extent to which the *Getting to the right role for you – what support have you received?* survey findings resonate with SYP.

Unfortunately, given the timescales of this inquiry and SYP's capacity, it was not possible to consult the membership fully, especially on the issue of progress made against these recommendations. However, the response is based on SYP's [Youth](#)

[Manifesto *Lead the Way* \(2016-2021\)](#) and official [SYP Policy](#) which comes from the collective voice of Scotland's young people.

Senior Phase Vocational Pathways

SYP strongly supports recommendation 1 which focusses on vocational training and alternative pathways.

For example, 78% of the 72,744 responses to our *Lead the Way* Manifesto consultation agreeing that:

Youth unemployment should be tackled through job creation and access to training programmes, modern apprenticeships, vocational training, work placements, quality work experience, and paid internships.

(Lead the Way Manifesto Commitment passed on 12th March 2016)

Our membership, in consultation with their constituents, have also indicated their desire for specific vocational training programmes to help young people access career paths out with the traditional university route. Whilst rather specific, the following policy is a good example of this:

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes national agencies should establish a dedicated programme to help young people into the creative and journalistic sector.

(Policy Statement passed on 16th October 2016 with 97% agreement, Members' Motion by Thomas McEachan former MSYP).

Whilst we have not had the chance to consult our membership on their specific views or experiences on vocational programmes, we are facilitating a Consultation Workshop with representatives from the University of Edinburgh and [ENLIVEN: Encouraging Lifelong Learning for an Inclusive & Vibrant Europe](#) at our 66th National Sitting on 9th – 10th June in Stranraer, Dumfries and Galloway (entitled '#NoWrongPath'). This consultation has been co-designed with Mark Stewart MSYP for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth, the Convener of SYP's Education and Lifelong Learning Committee.

Up to 25 MSYPs will consider what young people think of post-school programmes aimed at young adults who leave school with few, if any, qualifications. Whilst this is considering post-school rather than school level, young people will be asked about what such programs should look like, what the attitudes to such programs are and what barriers they see to the labour market for young people. It should also be noted that the wider focus of the ENLIVEN project does consider alternative routes to university, combined with work place skills and non-traditional learning.

Furthermore, SYP is capturing the views of a wider cross-section of young people for this workshop and ensuring MSYPs attending are representing the views of their constituents aged 12-25 across Scotland, including from groups of young people who are traditionally harder to reach, as well as their own, through our Pre-Sitting #WhatsYourTake Survey. SYP is happy to share the final report of this full consultation following the Sitting at the Committee's request, if considering further work on vocational education.

Preparing Young People For The World Of Work

SYP also fully supports recommendation 2, given our wealth of policy demonstrating that Scotland's young people want to have a more rounded personal and social education which fully prepares them for their post-school lives:

“All pupils should have access to up-to-date and effective PSHE from a primary age, which addresses lifestyle, health, relationships, equality, social justice, and citizenship.”

(Lead the Way Manifesto Commitment passed on 12th March 2016 with 79% agreement).

“The Scottish Youth Parliament believes Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) should have a minimum national standard to ensure that all young people are equipped with real life skills preparing them to become successful citizens. The Curriculum for Excellence should include mandatory guidelines on subjects and areas related to PSHE.”

(Policy Statement passed on 5th July 2014 with 97% agreement, Members' Motion by Struan King former MSYP, Robbie Nicol former MSYP and Eilidh Collins former MSYP).

“The Scottish Youth Parliament believes young people should be involved in the design of PSHE course content, which must be kept up-to-date and relevant to our rapidly changing world.”

Policy Statement, 93% agreement, October 2017, Members' Motion by Jack Campbell MSYP and Danyaal Raja MSYP

The Scottish Youth Parliament supports the work of the Social Mobility Foundation which provides academic opportunities to young people from low-income backgrounds.

(Policy Statement, 93% agreement, October 2017, Members' Motion by Jack Campbell MSYP and Danyaal Raja MSYP)

As all of SYP's work is based in Article 12 of the UNCRC, we stress the importance of young people being involved in co-design of course content relating to life skills and employment.

Conclusion

SYP's response to this inquiry shows that both the *Getting to the right role for you – what support have you received?* survey results and the Developing the Young

Workforce recommendations highly resonate with our members, who see employment skills and vocational training as an ongoing issue for Scotland's young people. This implies that further work is needed to ensure young people's views on these issues are heard and they experience the change they want to see.

We would also like to invite the Committee to continue our positive joint-working, and to contact us should they wish to see the results of our #NoWrongPath consultation work with ENLIVEN and the University of Edinburgh.

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