



Dear Convener,

Thank you for providing Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP)'s Jobs, Economy, and Fair Work (JEFW) Committee with the opportunity to contribute your Committee's legacy report. We have collated the following information covering key issues relating to JEFW and meaningful participation.

The [Scottish Youth Parliament](#) is the democratic voice of Scotland's young people. Our vision for Scotland is of a nation that values and practices the meaningful participation of its young people who realise their full potential. Our mission is to represent the voice of Scotland's young people on issues affecting them, and to empower young people to champion and defend their rights.

We are grateful to the Committee for considering the issues most important to young people in Scotland. In September 2025, we launched our 2026-2031 manifesto, *Dear Scotland's Future*, which reflects the views of nearly 5,000 young people across all of Scotland's local authority areas. The manifesto sets out five key themes: Education, Community, Society, Justice, and Rights. This manifesto outlines what young people would like to see from the next Parliament and Scottish Government.

Key Issues

- ***Financial Education***

90% of young people agreed with the policy: "In order to support young people to have their views heard on matters relating to personal finance, tax, and the economy, financial education should be available to all young people in Scotland." This is currently a priority area for our Committee, especially during the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Supporting financial education ensures young people have the practical skills needed - such as income management, understanding of financial risks, resilience against economic shocks, protection for future opportunities, support of smarter choices and reduction in financial stress - to respond to increasing costs of living and to protect their long-term financial wellbeing. As a Committee, we believe that financial education is essential for young people and that learning about financial education should begin at a young age. Young people have told us they deserve better financial education that prepares them for real life and supports them to understand the importance and benefits of financial literacy. Young people shared that they are often left behind in national decisions about the economy, setting the budget, and



tax-related issues, despite having a right to be consulted on all issues that affect them.

- ***Barriers to Accessing Further and Higher Education***

91% of young people agreed that: “Finances, housing, or a lack of support services should not be barriers to young people accessing further or higher education, and decision-makers should work together to break down those barriers.” Young people told us that ensuring equal access to further and higher education should be treated with the same respect and dedication as equal access to primary and secondary education. Serious reform of financial support and how it is offered is needed. The burden should not be placed on young people to overcome barriers, but instead on the Scottish Government, further and higher education institutions to work together to improve their support frameworks. The Scottish Government must invest more in social mobility schemes to ensure every young person’s talent, ambitions, and dreams are supported and achieved, regardless of their background or where they live.

- ***Fast and Reliable Internet***

83% of young people agree: “Every young person in Scotland should have access to fast and reliable internet and devices to access the digital world, regardless of their geographical location or financial situation.” Young people said that they need high-quality, fast, and reliable internet to learn, socialise, share, and engage with their lives. Access to the internet and devices improves many young people’s lives, especially those from rural areas and areas of deprivation. Young people have also told us about the challenges of digital exclusion and digital poverty. They also recognise that there are many negative effects of social media and emerging technology that need to be explored with young people.

- ***Meaningful Participation***

The right for young people to have their views heard on matters that affect them and for those views to be taken seriously is one of the general principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). For many young people in Scotland, there is work to be done to ensure this right is fully realised. The process through which this right is respected, protected, and fulfilled in policy decision making is called meaningful participation. In relation to your Committee, young people want to have a say in how public services are reformed, the national budget and the National Performance Framework.



SYP has produced resources for decision-makers to support meaningful participation. These resources are available on [TheRightWay.scot](https://www.therightway.scot).

We appreciate the Committee's commitment to hearing directly from young people and would welcome any opportunity to support your work further. We urge the Committee to ensure that the above priorities identified by young people are reflected in the Committee's work. We look forward to continued collaboration to advance the rights and voices of young people across Scotland.

Yours sincerely

Jamail Umar

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Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament for Dundee City East