

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

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

THE PRINCE'S TRUST SCOTLAND

About The Prince's Trust Scotland

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.

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 education and the labour market. This year we will help over 10,000 young people 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.

Developing Young Workforce (DYW) recommendations

Senior Phase Vocational Pathways

Recommendation 1: *Pathways should start in the senior phase which leads to the delivery of industry recognised vocational qualifications alongside academic qualifications. These pathways should be developed and delivered in partnership with colleges and, where necessary, other training providers. Their delivery should be explicitly measured and published alongside other school performance indicators.*

The Prince's Trust Scotland response: At the Prince's Trust Scotland, we believe that collaboration should be at the heart of education. Education providers should be encouraged to work closely with other colleges, schools and their students and local authorities should work in partnership. Most importantly, headteachers should be given the tools and confidence to work together to provide these opportunities.

Collaboration is already something we are doing through our *Achieve* programme, which is designed to help young people who are struggling to develop important character skills through informal learning. It primarily supports 11-19 year olds who are at risk of underachieving, whether that's through challenges with attendance, attainment or motivation, and who may be at risk of exclusion or not attaining the grades they are capable of. We are also offering qualifications to those who complete our courses, in addition to the softer life skills they develop.

"My attendance at school was below 80% and I got removed from most of my lessons. I went to Achieve for six weeks and was completely out of my comfort zone, but it made me confident about doing things independently, and it let me help others, which I really like doing."

“I changed my whole lifestyle because of Achieve. I moved away from bad friendships, I went back to school and I’ve been accepted on an access course. Achieve made me believe in myself and I’d never been able to do that before” says one of our young education achievers.

Access to courses like the Prince’s Trust Scotland’s *Achieve* programme provides a different set of learning experiences:

- Skills for School
- Personal, Social Development
- Life Skills
- Active Citizenship
- Enterprise Projects
- Preparation for Work

This helps young people in a number of ways:

- Manage the transition from primary to secondary education
- Improve attainment in education
- Improve attendance at their school or centre
- Improve behaviour, attitude and engagement in learning
- Develop personal and social skills
- Work toward the Personal Development and Employability qualification, recognised by SQA
- Benefit from an informal approach to learning outside the traditional classroom setting

Developing this foundation is an important first step for some young people if they are to move on to senior phase vocational pathways, develop their academic potential in school and move into further and higher education and the pathway into long-term and fulfilling employment. We also believe it is fundamental that young people can develop softer skills, with the Prince’s Trust *Team* programme equipping young people with the confidence to meet new people and gain new skills, such as being able to continue their training or education.

Finally, we also think that students in their senior phases at school should also be given a wide range of careers advice, encompassing a range of realistic options. Schools should be giving options to students based on their interests, academic abilities and future goals and this should include everything from University education, further education colleges, through to apprenticeships and work-based training schemes.

Preparing Young People For The World Of Work

Recommendation 2: *A focus on preparing all young people for employment should form a core element of the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence with appropriate resource dedicated to achieve this. In particular local authorities, Skills*

Development Scotland and employer representative organisations should work together to develop a more comprehensive standard for careers guidance which would reflect the involvement of employers and their role and input.

The Prince's Trust Scotland response: The Prince's Trust Scotland believes it imperative for life, personal and social development skills to be embedded in the curriculum to equip young people with the coping mechanisms they need to succeed in education and to go on to find fulfilling employment. These skills also help build the confidence and increase the motivation of young people, while bridging the gap between education and employment.

The 2018 Prince's Trust Macquarie Youth Index revealed **just under half** (45%) of young people did not believe in themselves when they were at school, so collaboration should be at the heart of ensuring education providers offer the best service possible to their local community. It should be facilitated for schools to work closely with other schools and with pupils, for local authorities to work in partnership and for headteachers to work with other headteachers.

This is already being partially addressed by the Prince's Trust Scotland, through our *Get Into* programmes, which provides young people aged 16-30 with the experience and sector specific training needed to move into a job is crucial. Last year, we helped 600 young people secure jobs through our 'Get into' courses.

"I had been struggling with unemployment since I left school. I wanted to pursue an apprenticeship as an electrician, however, getting an apprenticeship in this field is easier said than done, and the process of applying and getting no results really impacted my confidence.

"I was recommended The Prince's Trust by the Job Centre, and immediately felt welcome by the members. I knew that this organisation really cared about getting me employed in the field that I desired", says one our young people on our 'Get into Electrical Engineering' course.

Our 2017 Education Report revealed that nearly three quarters (72%) of employees felt they didn't have the soft skills to do well when they first started working, thus through employability and local organisation support, this figure will start to reduce.

By connecting young people with the world of work, it equips them with the transferrable skills and knowledge they need to succeed, focusing particularly on literacy, language and numeracy and STEM subjects. By engaging young people with education in a more informal way, it helps to unlock their potential at such a crucial phase of their development.

It is imperative for schools and colleges to be able to build closer links to employers early so young people have a realistic idea of a workplace and can be confident in their own abilities to enter the world of work. Access to third party opportunities such as the Prince's Trust Scotland's *Achieve* programme, which provides young people with the experience and sector specific training needed to move into a job is crucial.