

Finance Committee

Prevention

Submission from The Prince's Trust Scotland

1. Introduction

The Prince's Trust Scotland agreed fully with the findings of the Christie Commission on the need to invest more now to save later, and the need to innovate in the creation of services that support the most disadvantaged in society.

We are pleased to take this opportunity to update the Finance Committee on work the Trust has been undertaking to ensure that a preventative approach underpins the programmes that it delivers to get young people from deprived backgrounds into education, training and employment.

2. The cost of underachievement

Educational underachievement and low aspiration among young people, particularly in the most deprived communities, remains a long term problem. In fact, over half of Scotland's young people do not achieve 5 Standard Grades at Credit Level (5 National Fives) and those from disadvantaged backgrounds consistently do less well than their peers.

Underachievement needs to be tackled early, with a preventative approach. Its knock-on consequence is that employers are often dissatisfied with the personal, social and employability skills of school leavers and there is a particular need for those at risk of underachievement to access support in order to reach their potential.

3. A preventative regional approach

The Prince's Trust tackles educational underachievement by giving young people targeted support in ways that allow them to fulfil their potential and move on to opportunities in volunteering, education, training and employment. Each year we support around 9,000 young people to reach positive destinations by working in partnership with the Scottish Government, its agencies, local authorities, colleges and leading businesses to tailor our offering to local and regional employability pathways. This is done on a significant scale with the Trust planning to provide roughly 2500 work experience placements and 1000 jobs to disadvantaged people next year.

In recent years we have radically changed the ways in which our programmes are delivered in order to ensure those partnerships work, while also doing more to remove the barriers that young people face when accessing support. This is done working particularly closely with employers and young people to ensure that they always have a voice in shaping our activity. Our new regional delivery model has

been crucial, ensuring that the Trust's curriculum and portfolio of courses is mapped to wider further education provision in each of the 13 new college regions. At the same time, we have developed new programmes that respond to the evolving needs of young people in deprived communities. We are able to offer support without local and geographical borders which helps local authorities across the Scottish landscape.

Example of Good Practice: Our work in Education

The Princes Trust has been supporting young people of school age, who are at risk of educational underachievement since 1998.

In Autumn 2015, we introduced a new flexible programme that brings together the best of our existing delivery for young people of school age. This represents an improved offer for young people at risk of underachievement.

Our work in education seeks to have a positive impact on four challenges that young people may be facing in Education: Attainment – Attendance – Engagement – Personal & Social Skills. It follows a flexible approach, using experiential learning to support achievement in a range of personal and employability skills.

This includes an embedded qualification which can be delivered at SCQF Level 3, 4 or 5 and is recognised on educational online benchmarking tool 'Insight', therefore as young people achieve, school's/centres gain tariff points.

We also deliver an innovative 'Preparation for Work' pilot in four local authorities, supported by the Wood Foundation & Scottish Government that enables participants to access a range of Industry days, work placements and mentoring.

Our programmes ensure that – in line with the recommendations of 'Developing Scotland's Young Workforce' – training pathways for young people offer a wider, more flexible range of personal, vocational and academic development opportunities, so that each young person understands their options from the earliest possible stage. Indeed, there is now increased understanding among our public sector partners that a 'one size fits all' approach to youth unemployment doesn't work.

There is an opportunity for government and public agencies to learn from the successes the Trust and its partners have had in reaching out to more young people in deprived areas.

4. The need for sustained investment

There has been enormous recent national progress tackling youth unemployment, and this has been down to sustained, targeted, evidence-driven assessment. That investment must continue because the future cost of reducing this support would be considerable. The latest



ONS unemployment figures show that year on year, employment among 16-24 year olds has grown by 15,000, but that unemployment is also up by 6,000.¹ (See fig, right).

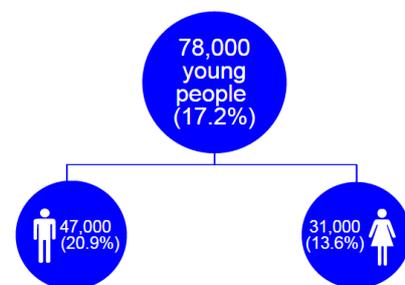
That means there is still much work to be done, especially to support NEETs in disadvantaged communities. That group is starting to benefit, but the real rewards will come in the future, when those young people go on to successful careers and set an example as role models within their communities.

One clear example of strong positive investment has been the Trust's new Youth Employment and Enterprise Hub in Glasgow which is the largest employment and enterprise centre in Scotland. Design-led and purpose built by and for young people, it is perceived as an inspiring place to learn and progress. It provides one stop, multi agency support for youth unemployment that is actively tailored to cater to the needs of individuals. ONS figures show that 17.2 per cent of 16-24 year olds are currently unemployed. Underlying that figure is a huge variety of causes, and some young people benefit from the kinds of support we offer more than others. Our task is to identify and understand pockets of need and ensure that it is delivered in a proactive, timely way.

We do this by working closely with key partners as a coordinated team. For example, young people coming to the centre for advice from the Trust find that they can access support from key agencies like Skills Development Scotland and Jobcentre Plus, which are co-located in the same building, which is a pleasant, welcoming environment.

We also work closely with the business sector and other charities to ensure that the support we give to young people dovetails with their priorities and needs. By collaborating closely with others, we're ensuring that young people have access to the widest possible range of choices, meaning that they become more likely to succeed on programmes.

The Prince's Trust Wolfson Centre also helps us more successfully align our offering in a way that reaches into the most disadvantaged communities, and we are actively looking at investing in further facilities like this in key regions like Edinburgh and Dundee where we can most readily add value to the work being done by public services.



Unemployment among 16 - 24 year olds

5. What's the secret to our success?

Relationships are the key. The committee has noted, like the Christie Commission, that successful preventative interventions work best when those tasked with delivering work together, to a common purpose. In the wake of the 2008 economic downturn, the Scottish Government acted decisively to create the new cabinet post responsible for youth employment. That helped set a tone across the policy field,

with the public and private sectors clear that they were working on something positive, with a common purpose.

It was also important that the fruits of the labour that followed were clear and obvious, as youth employment figures improved over time.

The clear lesson of this experience is that a Preventative approach works when better partnerships are willingly formed. Coordination is the key, and agencies must be prepared to work together in ways that cross barriers for the common good. A good example of this is that we have recently entered a Consortium Agreement with Barnardo's and Action for Children as Scotland's leading Children and Youth focussed charities using our combined national reach and strong track record of delivering employability and skills outcomes to reach more disadvantaged young people across Scotland.

At the same time though, partnership working must be practicable. The Trust has worked constructively under a regional model, but we and our partners have had to develop new ways of working. We believe that we could work with CPPs to capture local imaginations and maximise opportunities for young people and would suggest that coordinating CPPs at a regional level would create the opportunity for us to do so.

The Prince's Trust brand as a vibrant organisation offering real opportunities is attractive to young people. Our Values define our beliefs and behaviours and are fundamental to how we work every day with young people, colleagues, volunteers, supporters and partners. They describe our approach, how we conduct ourselves and the experience people can expect when they come into contact with The Trust:

- Approachable – We are open minded and value diversity
- Non-Judgmental – we focus on the potential, not the past
- Inspiring – we lead by example
- Empowering – we enable positive change
- Passionate – we are absolutely committed to supporting young people

If you would like to learn more about the Prince's Trust in Scotland please contact Daniel Jardine, Head of National Partnerships at Daniel.Jardine@princes-trust.org.uk or call 0141 3759 469.

ⁱ ONS Regional Labour Market Statistics June 2015 - August 2015, published 14 October 2015