

DEVELOPING THE YOUNG WORKFORCE – 2023-2024

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to summarise for members work and progress across Argyll and Bute Council relating to Developing the Young Workforce (DYW).

1.2 The report covers all aspects of DYW work and activities across the local authority:

- Progress relating to the four Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as required by the Scottish Government;
- Data relating to school-employer partnerships and work placements;
- The work of the DYW School Co-ordinators;
- DYW across the secondary curriculum;
- The financial position relating to Scottish Government DYW funding and how it is being directed in Argyll and Bute;
- Key DYW-aligned events, including the Argyll and Bute DYW/Employability Conference.
- Self-evaluation processes to drive further improvement in the areas of DYW and work-based vocational learning

1.3 In addition, case studies of DYW events, activities and programmes are appended for members' information.

1.4 The Community Services Committee is asked to::

1. Consider the scope and variety of DYW initiatives and activities across Argyll and Bute;
2. Acknowledge the importance of the Scottish Government's continued policy commitment to DYW, and associated funding for regional DYW Groups;
3. Note the contribution of the DYW team and its work towards securing and sustaining Argyll and Bute a position in the leading 10 Scottish Local Authorities with regards to the Annual Participation Measure, in which we place 9th out of 32 in the period April 2022 to March 2023.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 *Developing the Young Workforce - Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy* was published by the Scottish Government in December 2014, and set out the plans to implement the 39 recommendations as set out by the report *Education for All*.

[Home \(dyw.scot\)](https://www.dyw.scot)

[Developing the Young Workforce \(DYW\) | Policy drivers | Policy for Scottish education | Scottish education system | Education Scotland](#)

2.2 Nationally, DYW seeks to ensure young people develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the world of work, through connecting young people and their schools with employers.

2.3 DYW across Scotland is co-ordinated by the work of 20 employer-led Regional DYW Groups, of which Argyll and Bute is one. Membership of the Argyll and Bute DYW Board includes a range of key employers in the area, Skills Development Scotland and Third Sector representatives.

2.4 In 2021, Scottish Government funding was made available to Regional DYW Groups to appoint DYW Co-ordinators to schools, to be led and line-managed by the existing DYW Regional Lead. Argyll and Bute Regional Group appointed four DYW School Co-ordinators, each with responsibility for two or three secondary schools.

2.5 DYW Co-ordinators have several principal areas of responsibility: to develop close, dynamic, mutually rewarding links between employers – particularly local employers – and schools in order to facilitate high-quality, individually-tailored work placements for young people; to support schools in developing the DYW/Employability curriculum through employer engagement resulting from such partnerships; and to support employers to engage with the Young Persons' Guarantee. [Home | Young Persons guarantee](#)

- 2.6 The Scottish Government has made a policy commitment to fund Regional DYW groups through to 2025 as part of the Future Skills Action Plan.
- 2.7 At present, the DYW team consists of The DYW Regional Lead, three DYW School Co-ordinators and an Administrative and Financial Assistant. There is one vacancy for a School Coordinator, covering the Bute and Cowal area. Plans are underway to add two additional posts to the team, one DYW Primary School Coordinator and one Programme Executive, to help with the coordination of DYW resources and activities for young people at Primary School level, and to assist with Project Management in relation to DYW School Coordinator activity respectively.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Community Services Committee is asked to:

1. Consider the scope, variety and impact of DYW initiatives and activities across Argyll and Bute;
2. Acknowledge the importance of the Scottish Government's continued policy commitment to DYW, and associated funding for Regional DYW Groups.
3. Note the contribution of the DYW team and its work towards securing and sustaining Argyll and Bute a position in the leading 10 Scottish Local Authorities with regards to the Annual Participation Measure, in which we place 9th out of 32 in the period April 2022 to March 2023.

4.0 DETAIL

Developing the Young Workforce Key Performance indicators

- 4.1 Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) reports against a set of four Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), listed below, set by the Scottish Government. Data on all KPIs is reported monthly through the RUBI Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, with the exception of the qualitative reports which are submitted quarterly.
- **KPI 1 – Employer Engagement and Local Partnerships**
DYW to increase employer engagement opportunities, and the number of employers actively engaged in supporting and preparing young people for the world of work.
 - **KPI 2 – Support Employers with Young Person's Guarantee Framework**
Support employers and partners with the completion of the Young Person's Guarantee "5 Asks" Employers proforma.

- **KPI 3 – Apprenticeships and other Government Initiatives**
In collaboration with partners, increase the number of employers offering job and apprenticeship opportunities to young people.
- **KPI 4 – Equalities and Supporting young people who need it most.**
By working collaboratively with specialist partners, increase the work-based learning and employer engagement opportunities for those who would benefit most.

KPI 1 - Employer Engagement and Local Partnerships:

- 4.2 Since the introduction of School DYW Co-ordinators in August 2021, the School Co-ordinators have been focused on creating productive, mutually beneficial school-employer partnerships and encouraging employers to support and prepare young people for the world of work. As a result of the implementation of a DYW strategic action plan for 2023-24 (see Appendix 1) and continued proactivity and dedication of the DYW School Coordinators, DYW Argyll & Bute have increased engagement with employers by nearly 70%, young people by 411% and implemented an additional 250 DYW-related activities across the Authority in the year 23-24.

All DYW Engagements with Young People 2023-2024		
No. of activities	No. of young people	No. of employers
438	4700	245

All DYW engagements with young people 2022-2023		
No. of activities	No. of young people	No. of employers
179	919	145

KPI 2 – Supporting Employers with Young Person’s Guarantee Framework

- 4.3 The Young Person’s Guarantee (YPG) Framework is designed to encourage employers to pledge their support to Scotland’s young people through various opportunities such as volunteering, work experience, offering apprenticeships/training and a commitment to Fair Work principles. DYW has been liaising with employers on these topics, throughout the year, and as a result of increased promotion and engagement with employers across the board, 12 employer have pledged their support to the Young Person’s Guarantee, an increase of nine employers on last year.

KPI 3 – Apprenticeships and other Government Initiatives

- 4.4 DYW works in partnership with UHI Argyll and Skills Development Scotland to provide information and support to employers on recruitment of young people into the Apprenticeship Family; Foundation, Modern and Graduate.
- 4.5 In 2023-24, the DYW Regional Lead has given advice to nine employers across Argyll & Bute on setting up Modern Apprenticeships within the region, resulting in an additional nine opportunities for young people to gain meaningful employment within the area.

KPI 4 – Equalities and Supporting young people who need it most.

- 4.6 DYW has been working closely with schools to identify and support young people with the greatest barriers to entering the world of work by participating in school 16+ meetings and liaising closely with school Pastoral Care staff and Skills Development Scotland. Through this, DYW have jointly-supported a total of 153 disengaged or otherwise vulnerable young people both to secure a positive destination and build the skills and confidence they need to succeed in the world of work. This constitutes an increase of over 90 young people from the previous year.
- 4.7 By working in partnership with schools, the DYW team adopts a tailored approach that is best-suited to young people's needs. Through the work of the DYW School Co-ordinators, trust is built up with those pupils who are most at risk of not achieving a positive destination. With employer-led interventions, young people's aspirations are directed towards gaining employment, securing a place in further or higher education, or volunteering within the community post-school.
- 4.8 Beyond the work of the School Co-ordinators, DYW has also been able to contribute to other projects that support young people into positive destinations. The Drive2Work project, implemented through partnership between DYW Argyll & Bute and Mid Argyll Youth Development Services (MAYDS), and supported by DYW funding, supports young people (and employers) across Argyll & Bute, in the arrangement of driving lessons and driving tests, with the aim of increasing employability for young people facing additional barriers to the world of work.

In 2023-24, a total of 15 young people have taken part in the programme, with seven participants having passed both their theory and practical driving tests. Six of those participants have gone on to employment within Argyll & Bute, while the remainder are still progressing through the course and receiving support to achieve this.

Furthermore, DYW has been working in partnership with the Scottish Qualifications Agency, Dunoon Grammar School and Rothesay Academy to implement the SQA Barista Skills qualification. As such, DYW funding has enabled both schools to purchase all relevant equipment, ingredients and training to provide the course for young people seeking to develop their skills

for work in the hospitality sector. This aligns well with the employment opportunities available to young people in Argyll and Bute.

Ensuring excellence in fulfilling young people's entitlement to high quality work placement to develop Skills for Life and Work

- 4.9 The aim of the work of the DYW Co-ordinators in developing close working partnerships between schools and employers is that young people have a greater choice of high-quality work placements, and that, through support from schools and employers, young people become better equipped with the skills, knowledge and experience they will need to flourish in the world of work.
- 4.10 The effective planning, implementation and evaluation of work placements for young people, and the expectations relating to all parties – young people, parents/carers, employers and schools/local authorities – is set out in Education Scotland's *Work Placement Standard*.

[Work Placements Standard - September 2015 \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/Work-Placements-Standard-September-2015)

- 4.11 In addition to the *Work Placements Standard*, schools are supported in their provision of work placements to young people by the Argyll and Bute Council Work-Based Vocational Learning Guidance for Argyll and Bute. This guidance was substantially revised and streamlined in 2022-2023 to ensure it is as accessible and relevant as possible for those in schools who organise and co-ordinate work placements for pupils. The revision was a result of consultation with staff and young people in schools, and observation of best practice in other local authorities. The revised guidance can be accessed via the following link:
..\..\DYW\WBVL_Guidance\WBVL_Guidance - Argyll and Bute Council - Updated Feb 23.doc
- 4.12 Our secondary schools work with young people and their parents/carers to identify work placements which match young people's situations and aspirations. The partnerships with employers which have been developed by schools and DYW School Co-ordinators are central to achieving such bespoke work placements.
- 4.13 A database of all work placements undertaken across Argyll and Bute's secondary schools has been established. This allows the tracking of both the number and types of work placements in which young people are engaging, and allows identification of which schools require further support in offering work placements for all pupils who would benefit from them.
- 4.14 A consistent system for the evaluation of work placements in schools has also been created. Schools evaluate the success and impact of the work placements they offer against the criteria set out by Education Scotland's Work Placement

Standard (link above). This self-evaluation exercise feeds in to whole-school improvement planning across secondary schools.

Developing Skills for Life and Work in the curriculum

- 4.15 Skills for Life and Work are integral to learning activities across all areas of the school curriculum. Senior Leaders in schools are working with staff to ensure such skills are made explicit, articulated and developed in day-to-day learning experiences across 2-18 education.
- 4.16 School-employer partnerships also serve to enhance and broaden the employability curriculum in schools. As well as the work placements detailed above, employers engage with children and young people through a range of activities and events. Such events – detailed elsewhere in this report – include careers fairs, skills-development sessions and events with a focus on a particular area of employment or industry, often relating to the local employment landscape and local industry contexts. As a result, young people are able to identify career opportunities within Argyll and Bute and the risk of a population and skills drain from Argyll and Bute is reduced.

Bespoke curriculum approaches – Flexible Learning Plans

- 4.17 For a number of young people across Argyll and Bute's secondary schools, engagement with full-time education is a challenge, and the attendance in school of such pupils can fall to levels not conducive to the fulfilling of potential in attainment and achievement. A range and combination of factors in young people's lives contribute to such a situation developing, and levels of disengagement and vulnerability have been exacerbated by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath.
- 4.18 Our schools work with young people, their families and other agencies to find individualised solutions to such problems with engagement. A strategy which has been developed effectively by almost all secondary schools in Argyll and Bute is that of the Flexible Learning Plan.
- 4.19 A Flexible Learning Plan (FLP) creates a bespoke curricular experience for each young person experiencing problems with school engagement. Normally an FLP involves a young person spending part of each week on placement with a partner employer in a profession or trade which matches the young person's aspirations and interests. For the other part of the week, the young person is in school focusing on a specific and targeted group of qualifications and accreditations, including literacy and numeracy and subjects which, again, align with the young person's wider interests and aspirations.
- 4.20 In 2022-23 and 2023-24, there has been an increased focus on the carefully planned use and effective evaluation of FLPs across secondary schools in Argyll and Bute. A consistent approach to and template for evaluating the

impact of FLPs in young people’s lives has been introduced and adopted by all schools. This has resulted in a greater understanding of how young people can gain the most from an FLP, and what employers can offer that enhance the experience. FLPs have led to full-time employment for a number of vulnerable young people otherwise at risk of not securing a positive destination, and have been successful in re-engaging other pupils with the school-based aspect of education, as well as developing confidence, resilience and skills for life and work in participants.

- 4.21 For session 2023-24, the planning template for FLPs was revised to better recognise and integrate into planning key characteristics of young people, specifically Additional Support Needs and Care-Experienced Young Person status. The form now also allows the clear recording and demonstration of the quality assurance process between Education Manager and school in advance of the sign-off of any FLP.
- 4.22 The number of young people engaging with FLPs across the local authority in school session 2023-24 is as follows:

Area	Number of FLPs	Total FLPs for Argyll and Bute
MAKI	14	37
OLI	3	
B&C	3	
H&L	17	

As can be seen, schools in some areas have utilised FLPs to a greater extent than those in other areas. This is a result of a number of factors, including the existing mechanisms for supporting young people who are finding engagement with school a challenge, the numbers of young people for whom engagement is an issue and the number and type of employers willing to support young people in this way. The development of FLPs as an effective potential intervention for identified young people continues across all secondary schools, and is being informed by rigorous evaluation of the impact of FLPs for young people.

Supporting Young People into sustained positive destinations post-school

- 4.23 DYW staff work closely with colleagues from Education, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and other relevant agencies to support young people into the positive destinations of their choice on leaving school, and to support them in sustaining such positive destinations.

- 4.24 Such multi-agency meetings occur every four to six weeks in each school and are termed 16+ Meetings. An agreed and consistent format, agenda and recording system for 16+ Meetings is in place in all secondary schools.
- 4.25 16+ meetings operate around a risk matrix, in which the young people in school most at risk of not entering employment, training or further/higher education are identified. School, DYW and SDS staff define what support each young person requires, what actions require to be taken and what agencies need to be involved to ensure a positive destination.
- 4.26 The destinations of young people who have left school in the previous 12-18 months are also tracked through the 16+ meetings. Any young people for whom a positive destination has not been sustained, and are therefore no longer classed as “participating”, are identified and contacted in order that support can be offered to enter an ongoing positive destination.
- 4.27 The term “participating” relates to the SDS Annual Participation Measure, published each August. Any young person between 16 and 19 who is in education, training or employment is classed as participating.
- 4.28 A report is submitted to Community Services Committee each December, detailing the outcome of the Annual Participation Measure (link below). In 2023, participation in Argyll and Bute for 16-19 year-olds was 95.6%, an increase of 1.7% on 2022, and placing Argyll and Bute 9th of the 32 local authorities in Scotland for participation.

[Annual Participation Measure - Skills Development Scotland](#)

Argyll and Bute DYW Conference

- 4.29 The second annual Argyll and Bute DYW Conference is planned for 29th May, in the Corran Halls, Oban. The purpose of the conference is to promote and celebrate the range of agencies and partnerships participating in preparing young people for the world of work, and the scope of activities and initiatives involved in doing so. This year’s conference has a particular focus on meeting the needs of and providing opportunities for the young people who need them most, as outlined in KPI 4 above.
- 4.30 The conference will involve delegates from Education and other council services, Community Learning and Development, Skills Development Scotland, employers, Third Sector partners and other agencies and organisations contributing to the DYW agenda. Key elements of the conference are keynote speakers, including the Minister for Higher and Further Education, interactive workshops for delegates and contributions from young people who have particular needs in terms of their accessing of the job market and employability education.

DYW Funding and Budget

- 4.31 In 2023-24, the total funding allocated to DYW Argyll and Bute by the Scottish Government was £387,236.
- 4.32 The same funding of £387,236 has been allocated by the Scottish Government to DYW Argyll and Bute for the financial year 2024-25.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Developing the Young Workforce in Argyll and Bute is dedicated to supporting young people into employment and developing their skills to ensure they will be successful and flourish in the world of work. The work of DYW covers a range of key areas: school-employer partnerships; work placements; the employability curriculum in schools; employability events in individual schools and across schools; meeting the needs of vulnerable young people; supporting young people into – and tracking their progress in – positive destinations; progressing the Young Person’s Guarantee; and supporting employers to make the right offers for our young people.
- 5.2 The work of DYW in Argyll and Bute has evolved in last three years, following the appointment of the four DYW School Coordinators. Each school’s own work to establish partnerships with employers has been supplemented by the dedicated focus of the Co-ordinators. As a result, school-employer partnerships are more numerous and more dynamic than previously, with employers able to engage with and contribute to the curriculum, as well as providing work placements for young people.
- 5.3 The Scottish Government has a policy commitment to support DYW through funding until 2025. Planning for DYW staffing and activities is therefore progressing in this context.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy - This report links directly to Outcome 3 in the Argyll and Bute Single Outcome Agreement (Education Skills and Training Maximises Opportunities for All).
- 6.2 Financial – DYW is funded by means of a grant from the Scottish Government, the payment of which relies on fulfilment of the terms set out in the relevant Grant Offer Letter.
- 6.3 Legal – None
- 6.4 HR – None
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:

- 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – All work relating to Developing the Young Workforce seeks to address inequalities in employment, training and education.
- 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – the work of DYW actively seeks to develop skills for life and work in young people to create a fulfilled and appropriately skilled workforce to contribute to the society and economy of Argyll and Bute and the wider nation.
- 6.5.3 Islands - none
- 6.6. Climate Change – none
- 6.7 Risk - Failure to support young people into positive destinations will impact on the life chances of young people across the Local Authority area and may result in outward migration of young people. A reduction in the number of young people securing positive destinations post-school risks reputational damage to the local authority, and detracts from its appeal as a place to live and work.
- 6.8 Customer Service - none
- 6.9 The Rights of the Child (UNCRC) - Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full

Douglas Hendry - Executive Director with responsibility for Education

Councillor Audrey Forrest - Policy Lead for Education

For further information contact:

Simon Easton, Education Manager

Telephone: 01436 657681

Email: simon.easton@argyll-bute.gov.uk

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