

EDUCATION IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

Morag Redford

University of the Highlands and Islands

PREAMBLE

This paper follows on from the previous bulletin (Redford 2018), which covered the education remit of the Parliament's Education and Skills Committee between August 2017 to January 2018. The following bulletin covers the Education remit of the Education and Skills Committee from February to July 2018.

AUGUST 2017 TO JANUARY 2018

The Education and Skills Committee had the following members during this period:

James Dornan (Convener), Johann Lamont (Deputy Convener), George Adam, Mary Fee, Ross Greer, Richard Lochhead, Ruth Maguire (to 23.05.18), Gordon MacDonald (from 06.06.18), Gillian Martin, Oliver Mundell, Tavish Scott (from 07.02.18) and Liz Smith. Full records of the Committee meetings, including minutes, official papers and transcripts of proceedings can be found on the Scottish Parliament website at: <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/99746.aspx> [accessed 16.10.18]

The committee began this period of work with a meeting with the Commissioner for Fair Access. They took evidence about employability and training, the progress of Independent Care Review and reviewed the report of the Auditor General on Early Learning and Childcare. Their major work in this period was an inquiry into the attainment and achievement of school-aged children experiencing poverty. They held 'Ask the Minister' sessions with each of the Ministers reporting to the committee and concluded with a short review of young people's pathways in the senior phase of the school curriculum. The committee heard evidence and approved subordinate and negative orders during this period. They reviewed their work programme, in private, at their meetings on the 7 and 21 February, and 21 March when they agreed the structure of their inquiry on the attainment of school children experiencing poverty. They returned to their work programme on 25 April and 2 May 2018 when they agreed to hold an inquiry into senior phase vocational pathways.

EDUCATION REFORMS

The committee considered its response to the consultation in private at their meeting on the 7 February 2018. The papers for the meeting included an Education Reforms submissions pack (ES/S5/18/5/1). This pack provided notes of a series of informal meetings held in Peterhead Academy on the 29 January 2018.

COMMISSIONER FOR FAIR ACCESS

The committee took evidence from Peter Scott, the Commissioner for Fair Access at their meeting on the 21 February 2018. The committee were provided with a SPICe briefing paper on the role of the Commissioner for Fair Access (ES/S5/18/6/1) and a written statement from the Commissioner (ES/S5/18/6/2). They heard evidence on widening access from Shirley-Anne Somerville, Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science, as part of their 'Ask the Minister' sessions, at their meeting on 7 March 2018. The meeting was supported by an updated SPICe report (ES/S5/18/8/1) and a paper summarising submissions and questions to the committee about the widening access agenda (ES/S5/18/8/2). The committee returned to this topic at their meeting on 16 May 2018 when they heard evidence from University Principals and Universities Scotland. That meeting was supported by a SPICe briefing paper (ES/S5/18/15/1), a submissions paper (ES/S5/18/15/2) and a private paper from the Clerk (ES/S5/18/15/3 (P)).

Date of Committee	Witnesses
21 February 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sir Professor Peter Scott, <i>Commissioner for Fair Access</i> • Lynn MacMillan, <i>Scottish Government</i>
7 March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shirley-Anne Somerville, Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science, <i>Scottish Government</i> • Paul Smart Young Workforce and SFC Sponsorship Division, <i>Scottish Government</i> • Roddy Macdonald, Higher Education and Science Division, <i>Scottish Government</i>
16 May 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Sir Ian Diamond, <i>University of Aberdeen</i> • Professor Craig Mahoney, <i>University of the West of Scotland</i> • Professor Jeffrey Sharkey, <i>Royal Conservatoire of Scotland</i> • Alastair Sim, <i>Universities Scotland</i> • Susan Stewart, <i>The Open University in Scotland</i>

In his opening statement Peter Scott commented on the success of Scottish Universities and Colleges in improving access to higher education, with a national participation rate of 56%. He noted that it was important that all institutions, 'make a substantial commitment to the fair access agenda' (Scott, 21.02.18, Col 4). Johann Lamont opened the questions by asking about the recommendations in the

report and who had responsibility for their implementation. In reply Peter Scott said although there were 23 recommendations, many built on previous recommendations, whilst others introduced new issues he felt required consideration. He then told the committee that all the recommendations would be considered at the next meeting of the Fair Access Delivery Group, and he expected a ministerial response shortly after that meeting. He highlighted two areas of articulation where he felt change was needed: students completing higher national diplomas (HND) and transferring into a degree, and the interface between S6 in secondary school and first year University programmes. Liz Smith asked about the data used to identify support for entry through access programmes and Tavish Scott about differences between institutions in selecting students. In reply Peter Scott said:

Universities have always had to balance the formal criteria—the attainment level of an individual pupil—against the wider surrounding factors. The task that universities are being asked to undertake is not new—it is just that it involves hinterland information other than what they have traditionally taken (Scott, 21.02.18, Col 10).

Ruth Maguire asked about retention rates of students admitted through widening access. Peter Scot replied that there were retention and outcome challenges at every stage for these students. 'It is not enough just to get people admitted and to leave it there' (Scott, 21.02.18 Col 13). Mary Fee followed this with a question about the proposal to establish core deprivation indicators for use by all universities. In response Peter Scott said that Universities Scotland was leading that work. The session concluded with a discussion about the need for universities and colleges to work together to support students to move from HNC into year 3 of a degree programme.

In their meeting with the Minister the committee raised a number of questions submitted by members of the public. These covered topics such as access to student services by students who lived at home, success at University and support for disabled students. The committee questions began with one from Liz Smith, who asked if the Government intended to raise the number of funded places for Scottish and EU students as the percentage of those admitted through the widening access agenda rose. In reply the Minister said that she was working towards all Universities changing their admissions systems to provide fair access to University. Gillian Martin then asked why only five Universities supported articulation from HND into a degree programme. Shirley-Anne Somerville supported the work being done to ease the transfer from HND into degree programmes and noted that more work was required to support that articulation. The meeting then discussed the limitations of Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data to support the widening access agenda. Tavish Scott asked about the possible introduction of the 'learner journey' and a unique learner number. In reply the Minister said that this was a sensitive issue and the Government was exploring the challenges of introducing such a system. George Adam asked about greater support for Universities who did recruit and retain students through the widening access agenda. Shirley-Anne Somerville replied that the Government would be speaking to every University about the work that they have done in this area.

Further questions from the committee explored support for University admissions in schools, research relating to the use of student loans and an update to the STEM strategy.

The evidence session on the 16 May 2018 opened with a statement from Alastair Sim where he outlined the commitment of all higher education institutions in Scotland to a wider access to higher education. He then described the work undertaken in each institution to review their contextualised admissions policies and the support available to students moving from college to University. He concluded that the achievement of the national ambition in widening access, 'will require joined-up action across the Government and multiple levels of education' (Sim 16.05.18, Col 4). Liz Smith and Johann Lamont then asked a series of questions about the provision of advanced highers, and their use in University admissions. Alastair Sim responded that research by the Government as part of the learner journey review found that only 5% of pupils took a group of advanced highers. He then reminded the committee that Universities now recognised a range of highers taken over a number of years in their entry requirements. This meeting then discussed the deprivation data used by Universities as part of their contextualised admissions. Ian Diamond spoke of the position of the University of Aberdeen where, 'We give contextualised admissions to anyone whom we believe as the capability, regardless of their geographical location' (Diamond 16.05.18, Col 8). Alastair Sim added that the Universities Scotland admissions group was considering the use of free school meals and education maintenance allowance as deprivation indicators. Ross Greer then asked about application support for candidates considered through contextualised admissions process. Ian Diamond and Jeffrey Sharkey described the way their own institution linked with schools to support applicants. Richard Lochhead asked about support for rural applicants and in response Ian Diamond spoke about the work he undertook in Wales and the recommendation and implementation of a means-tested grant for those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. The meeting then considered the support offered to students whilst in University before discussing the articulation between college and University programmes.

EMPLOYABILITY AND TRAINING

The committee held an evidence session with Jamie Hepburn, the Minister for Employability and Training at their meeting on 14 March 2018. The committee were provided with a SPICe briefing paper (ES/S5/18/9/1) for the meeting and an additional set of questions for the Minister was tabled with the papers for the meeting.

Date of Committee	Witnesses
14 March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jamie Hepburn, Minister for Employability and Training, <i>Scottish Government</i> • Victoria Beattie, Fair Work, Employability and Skills, <i>Scottish Government</i> • Paul Smart, Advanced Learning and Science, <i>Scottish Government</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Cross, <i>Scottish Funding Council</i> • Euan Duncan, <i>Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association</i> • Jackie Galbraith, <i>Ayrshire College representing, Colleges Scotland</i> • Alison Henderson, <i>Angus Chamber of Commerce representing, Scottish Chambers of Commerce Network</i> • Terry Lanagan, <i>Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES)</i> • Dr Gill Stewart, <i>Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)</i>

The Convener opened the questions by asking what work local authorities had been asked to do to support the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) agenda in schools. In reply Jamie Hepburn said the Government and local authorities were taking forward the DYW agenda together. In response to further questions about support for apprenticeships in school he said:

This year, we have had about 1,200 young people start a foundation apprenticeship over 10 frameworks, and, in the coming year, we will be offering in the region of 2,600 foundation apprenticeship opportunities across all 32 local authority areas and—I think—about 70 per cent of Scotland's schools (Hepburn 14.03.18, Col 4).

The meeting then spent some time discussing the targets set with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) for Foundation Apprenticeships before moving to support for young people with disabilities as they moved into work. Gillian Martin made a number of points about the support available through apprenticeships in the Aberdeen area and Mary Fee asked detailed questions about the completion rate of foundation and modern apprenticeships. Richard Lochhead asked about support for apprenticeships in rural areas, to which the Minister replied that the DYW programme was designed on a regional basis and should reflect the economy and requirements of each region. Johann Lamont asked about the provision of sheltered workplaces for young people with disabilities and Jamie Hepburn replied that the Government was working with SDS, 'to better support those with a disability into modern apprenticeships' (Hepburn 14.03.18, Col 24).

INDEPENDENT CARE REVIEW

The committee held a briefing session with the members of the Independent Care Review at their meeting on 14 March 2018. The Review board provided a written submission prior to the meeting (ES/S5/18/9/2). They followed this with an ‘Ask the Minister’ session with the Minister for Childcare and Early Years at their meeting on 21 March 2018.

Date of Committee	Witnesses
14 March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fiona Duncan, Rosie Moore and Kevin Browne, <i>Independent Care Review</i>
21 March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Childcare and Early Years, <i>Scottish Government</i>• Joe Griffin, Creating Positive Futures Division, <i>Scottish Government</i>• Donald Henderson, Care, Protection and Justice, <i>Scottish Government</i>

The session began with an opening statement from Fiona Duncan, the Chair of the Independent Care Review. In this she welcomed the opportunity to provide an update to the committee of the review activities and the wide range of children and young people that are directly involved in the review structure. She then invited Rosie Moore to describe the way in which she and Kevin Browne, as care-experienced members, directly influenced the design of the consultation. Kevin Browne added that through the consultation:

Scotland has engaged in a national conversation about how to engage with the care population locally. It has gone beyond numbers and it is starting to reach into communities; the discussion is being taken forward there (Browne 14.03.18, Col. 31).

The discussion with the committee focused on the efforts of the review to consult harder to reach groups of young people. There was particular concern about the average age of leaving care was 17, although legislation allowed young people to remain in care to 26. The meeting concluded with an explanation from the panel about the ways in which the review was mapping the care journey and exploring the tensions points between the young people and the support available.

The questions to the Minister at the session on 21 March 2018 began with submitted to the committee by Who Cares? Scotland and Nurture Scotland before discussing the Care Review. The Minister outlined her support for the review and her willingness to engage directly with individual committee members in relation to queries from their constituents about the processes of the care system.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE

The committee took evidence from the Auditor General for Scotland, about her report on Early Learning and Childcare (ES/S5/18/10/1), at their meeting on 21 March 2018. They followed this with an ‘Ask the Minister’ session with the Minister for Childcare and Early Years. This meeting was supported by a SPICe briefing

paper (ES/S5/18/10/2) and a summary pack of submissions made to the committee (ES/S5/18/10/3).

Date of Committee	Witnesses
21 March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caroline Gardner, <i>Auditor General for Scotland</i> • Antony Clark, Tricia Meldrum, and Rebecca Smallwood, <i>Audit Scotland</i>
21 March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Childcare and Early Years, <i>Scottish Government</i> • Joe Griffin, Creating Positive Futures Division, <i>Scottish Government</i> • Donald Henderson, Care, Protection and Justice, <i>Scottish Government</i>

The meeting opened with a statement from the Auditor General who explained that her report examined the expansion of free childcare to 600 hours in 2014 and the plans to further extend that to 1,140 hours by 2020. She reported that the Government and local authorities had worked well together to implement the first expansion, with parents reporting a range of benefits for their children. The expansion of provision had not enabled parents to take up or increase working hours, due to the timing of the sessions their children attended. In light of this conflict between the outcomes for children and those for parents the new expansion was focused on improving outcomes for children. Caroline Gardner concluded her statement by noting that the expansion of provision to 1,140 hours will, ‘require a significant increase in staffing and infrastructure over the next two and half years, and it is difficult to see how that can be achieved on time’ (Gardner, 21.03.18, Col 4). Tavish Scott then asked the Auditor General about differences between Government and local authority predictions for staffing requirements. In reply Rebecca Smallwood explained that two different modelling systems were used, where local authorities had scaled up requirements from existing staff and the Government had worked from the number of additional hours and staffing required. In response to a further question about flexibility for rural areas, Caroline Gardner added that the Government had not differentiated between rural and urban areas in the model. Gillian Martin then asked about the number of places required and Rebecca Smallwood answered that local authorities did not know who in their areas were eligible. Antony Clark added that local authorities were dependent on partner providers sharing information about the take up of funded places. The meeting then discussed the uptake of funded places and the need for local authorities to work a range of services to ensure that families were aware of their eligibility for funded places.

The second session of evidence opened with a question from the Convener about the actions the Government was taking in response to the Early Learning and Childcare Report. In reply Maree Todd said that the Government was making good progress and meeting with the Scottish Convention of Local Authorities (COSLA) shortly to take forward discussions about funding. Oliver Mundell then asked about funding for private providers, which the Minister declined to discuss

in public. Johann Lamont asked about the difficulties parents faced in accessing existing provision. In reply Maree Todd said that the expansion of provision, 'will naturally increase flexibility' (Todd, 21.03.18, Col 25). Ruth Maguire asked about childminders, who felt threatened by the expansion of funded provision. In reply the Minister said that she supported the right of families to use childminders although she recognised funding difficulties experienced by child minders who had children placed with them from different local authority areas. Liz Smith then made a number of points about the apparent lack of analysis of the expansion to 600 hours and asked if that had informed plans for the expansion of provision to 1,140 hours. The Minister did not reply directly to this point and moved on to describe the ways the Government was working to improve the data collected about eligibility and uptake of funded places.

THE ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT OF SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN EXPERIENCING POVERTY

The committee began this inquiry at their meeting on 18 April 2018 and structured session to include a private discussion of the evidence heard during the same meeting. The first meeting of the inquiry was supported by a SPICe briefing (ES/S5/18/11/1), written submissions from the panel (ES/S5/18/11/2) and a paper summarising the issues raised in additional submissions to inquiry (ES/S5/18/11/3). They were provided with an updated SPICe briefing paper (ES/S5/18/12/1) for their meeting on 25 April, and two sets of submission papers (ES/S5/18/12/2 and 3). There papers for the meeting on 2 May 2018 were an updated SPICe briefing (ES/S5/18/13/1) and written submissions from the witnesses (ES/S5/18/13/2). The SPICe briefing paper was updated again for the evidence session on the 9 May 2018 (ES/S5/18/14/1) and supported by a paper presenting written submissions and notes from focus group meetings (ES/S5/18/14/2). The committee reviewed the evidence from all sessions, in private, at their meeting on 16 May 2018. They took evidence from Education Scotland and the Cabinet Secretary for Education at the following meeting on the 23 May 2018. This meeting was supported by a SPICe briefing (ES/S5/18/16/1) and written submissions from both panels of witnesses (ES/S5/18/16/2). The committee considered, in private, a draft report, at their meeting on 20 June 2018 and an agreed a final report at their meeting on 27 June 2018.

The Convener welcomed the members of the first panel to the inquiry and asked them to reflect on why there seemed to be a rise in the impact of poverty on school attainment levels. In reply John Dickie said that the only way to address the achievement gap linked to poverty was, 'to tackle the underlying poverty that drives it' (Dickie 18.04.18, Col 4). Richard Lochhead asked which factors outside school impacted on attainment. In reply John Dickie said that many families on low incomes were now below the poverty line because of cuts in benefits, tax credits and no rise in wages. Jim McCormick added that an increase in poverty created stress in families and there was less money for 'equipment, opportunities and trips' (McCormick 18.04.18, Col 6). The meeting then discussed the use of data from SIMD and qualitative data from schools to inform pedagogical change to improve outcomes.

Date of Committee	Witnesses
18 April 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Dickie, <i>Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland</i> • Kevin Lowden, <i>Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change</i> • Danielle Mason, <i>Education Endowment Foundation</i> • Dr Jim McCormick, <i>Joseph Rowntree Foundation</i>
25 April 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrea Bradley, <i>Educational Institute of Scotland</i> • Stella Gibson, <i>The Spark</i> • Finlay Laverty, <i>Prince's Trust Scotland</i> • John Loughton, <i>Dare2Lead</i> • Eileen Prior, <i>Connect</i>
2 May 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nancy Clunie, <i>Dalmarnock Primary School</i> • Kirsten Hogg, <i>Barnardo's Scotland</i> • Satwat Rehman, <i>One Parent Families Scotland</i> • Brian Scott, <i>Poverty Truth Commission</i> • Chelsea Stinson, <i>Children's Parliament</i>
9 May 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin Canavan, <i>Aberlour Child Care Trust</i> • Shelagh Young, <i>Home-Start UK</i> • Jackie Howie, <i>Learning Link Scotland</i> • Graeme Young, <i>Scouts Scotland</i> • Susan Hunter, <i>Youthlink Scotland</i>
9 May 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linda Lees, <i>City of Edinburgh Council</i> • John Butcher, <i>North Ayrshire Council</i> • Dr James Foley, <i>North Lanarkshire Council</i>
23 May 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gayle Gorman, Elizabeth Morrison, Louise Turnbull and Gail Copland, <i>Education Scotland</i>
23 May 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, <i>Scottish Government</i> • Fiona Robertson and Graeme Logan, <i>Scottish Government</i>

Tavish Scott asked if the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) 'is the right way to go in tackling child poverty, or is it linked and related to child poverty, but not directly?' (Scott, 18.04.18, Col 12). In reply Jim McCormick said that PEF was better than funding to schools and local authorities through SIMD data but that other factors need to be considered. He suggested that the National Improvement Framework could be used to consider how best to measure and support children and young people. The meeting then discussed the additional charges made in school for ingredients or materials in subjects such as Home Economics, Technical Studies and Art and Design. John Dickie said that there was evidence that subject choices were influenced by cost but that in some schools charges had been dropped, 'and

teachers report increased participation in those subjects, with increased enthusiasm and motivation' (Dickie, 18.04.18, Col 20). Ruth Maguire asked if there was a need to ensure that national policy required free access to all aspects of school education. In reply Kevin Lowden said that the current education policy documents were connected, the challenge was, 'operationalising it at school and local authority level' (Lowden 18.04.18, Col 22). John Dickie recommended that actions to remove financial barriers to learning should be part of the school inspection process. The meeting then moved on to discuss parental engagement and the challenges of poverty in rural areas.

The second session of evidence on 25 April began with a discussion about the cost of curricular and extra-curricular activities, before moving to consider how to measure the impact of extra-curricular activities. Ruth Maguire returned to the cost of the school day and asked the witnesses what policy should include to ensure the provision of free education. In reply Eileen Prior said that uniforms and travel were a huge cost for families before they considered funding for school trips. Andrea Bradley talked about the costs of broadband and technology and the limitations that placed on some children and young people completing homework tasks. Richard Bradley followed this with a series of questions about the evidence of poverty in the EIS survey of members. The meeting then discussed the education maintenance allowance and free school meals before considering the provision of alternative education programmes. This led to a discussion about the procurement process required by some local authorities for services that were funded through PEF money.

The third session of evidence on 2 May 2018 began with a question from the Convener about how to remove the stigma attached to receiving benefits. The two points supported by all members of the panel, was the importance of building positive relationships between school and home, and the need to establish trust in the supporting systems. Mary Fee then asked a series of questions about clothing grants before the panel explored the gap between the provision of free school meals to all children and the need for parents / carers to apply for free school meals in P.4, or P.5 in the future. The meeting concluded with a discussion about barriers to learning caused by poverty and the ways in which schools were addressing those barriers with additional funds through PEF.

Two further evidence sessions were held at the committee meeting on 9 May 2018. In this first of these the committee met with officers from a range of organisations that worked directly with young people. This session began with a question from George Adam about 'community inclusive' headteachers. In reply Shelagh Young gave an example of the ways in which Home-Start volunteers supported families with schools. Martin Canavan, Graeme Young and Jackie Howie all supported the principle of partnership working to support families. The meeting then discussed the change to the funding of joint work with third party organisations caused by the introduction of PEF in schools. Susan Hunter and Shelagh Young talked about the difficulties of working with schools through short-term commissioning and identified the need for third sector and youth organisations to be involved from at the planning stage of the proposed provision. In response to a question from Ross Greer, Shelagh Young described the impact of PEF as, 'a kind of fragmentation or atomisation of effort' (Young 09.05.18, Col 10). Martin Canavan then added that in some schools:

. . . where community relationships are already in place and where there are good relationships with schools, whose headteachers are quite proactive and understand the issues that are arising before and beyond the school gates, PEF is a really good model. However, where there is a need to support teachers and schools more to recognise what is happening, PEF does not necessarily provide the best model, because it could result in money being spent on things that do not work and that are evidenced not to work (Canavan 09.05.18, Col 11).

The meeting then considered the role of youth workers in schools and the outdoor experiences provided through Scouting. The session ended with a discussion about the needs of children and young people in care. The meeting was suspended before resuming with the second panel of witnesses, who represented various local authority roles. The discussion with this panel focused on food poverty and the impact of hunger on the ability of children and young people to learn. Ruth Maguire asked for information about the professional learning academy introduced for teachers in North Ayrshire. In reply John Butcher described the way that the academy provided training and follow up support for teachers through coaching and mentoring. He then listed the achievements made through this targeted approach:

We have closed the gap in primary school literacy by 5.3 per cent, in secondary school literacy by 16.2 per cent, and by 14.1 per cent between SIMD 1 and 2 and those in SIMD 3 and 4. Numeracy has improved by 2 per cent, in respect of closing the gap between SIMD 1 and SIMD 3 and 4 (Butcher 09.05.18, Col 32).

Tavish Scott then what measures could be used to record achievement rather than attainment. In reply James Foley said that North Lanarkshire had added a qualitative analysis to the benchmarking tools. Linda Lees suggested that the question should perhaps be what achievements were valued and therefore should be measured. Ross Greer returned to the issue of the cost of the school day and asked how local authorities influenced or directed policy related to those costs. In reply Linda Lees described an initiative in Edinburgh that raised awareness amongst school staff of child poverty. John Butcher said that poverty was part of everyday life in North Ayrshire communities. Gillian Martin then asked about the ways that North Ayrshire and North Lanarkshire had tackled period poverty in schools. The concluded with a discussion about the use of PEF in schools and the new experience for headteachers of working with local authority procurement systems.

The first evidence session on the 23 May 2018 opened with a statement from Gayle Gorman about the commitment of Education Scotland to improve attainment across Scotland. The committee raised questions about the most successful interventions to target poverty and the trends seen in school inspections before Ruth Maguire asked about professional learning programmes for teachers. In reply Elizabeth Morrison talked of a move to work directly with teachers in classrooms and the role of an attainment advisor in supporting that. The meeting discussed the accountability of PEF, the use of the funding to raise attainment and the role of Education Scotland in supporting that nationally. The committee asked a series of questions about the use of inspection to record and reflect on the use of PEF to address the attainment challenge.

The Cabinet Secretary for Education made an opening statement at the start of the final evidence session for this inquiry. In his statement he reaffirmed the commitment of the Government to improving education, ‘and closing the poverty-related attainment gap’ (Swinney, 23.05.18, Col 30). Richard Lochhead asked about the Government understanding of the increase in poverty in Scotland. In reply John Swinney gave examples of the work carried out through the measures introduced in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, and work the Government was undertaking under devolved social security legislation. Oliver Mundell asked about support for small rural primary schools that did not get any PEF money. The Cabinet Secretary replied that the Government used free school meals as a mechanism to deliver PEF, but that they would consider any other mechanism that provided a comprehensive way to address the rural issues. Liz Smith asked a series of questions about the administration and responsibility for PEF. In reply John Swinney said:

The lines of accountability are very clear. The decision-making power rests with the headteacher in the school community. They might choose to collaborate with other schools, with the local authority or with the regional collaborative on certain things—it is entirely within their discretion to do so—but responsibility for meeting the public finance accountability requirements rests with the local authority (Swinney 23.05.18, Col 37).

Johann Lamont then raised the issue of a statement from Dundee City Council that ended their provision of swimming lessons and said that Headteachers had been advised to explore how they could be delivered through the Pupil Equity Fund. John Swinney replied that this was not an acceptable use of the fund and that his officials had been in discussion with Dundee City Council, who accepted that it was not appropriate to recommend PEF to replace a service that was previously provided. This led to a series of questions from Tavish Scott about the short-term planning required by the annual allocation of PEF. In response the Cabinet Secretary said that the funds were decided annually according to the Free School Meal data. Mary Fee followed this with questions about the guidance given to schools and local authorities about PEF, to which John Swinney replied, ‘The guidance that is available for the implementation of pupil equity funding is jointly agreed between the Scottish Government, COSLA, ADES and Education Scotland’ (Swinney, 23.05.18, Col 46). The meeting ended with a question from Ross Greer who asked if the Cabinet Secretary would expect inspection reports to record a lack of support in schools, ‘that is clearly due to understaffing or underresourcing, would you expect that to be clearly stated in the inspection report?’ (Greer 23.05.18, Col 52). The Cabinet Secretary answered, ‘Yes, I would expect that to be reported’ (Swinney 23.05.18, Col 52).

YOUNG PEOPLE’S PATHWAYS

The committee began to this short inquiry at their meeting on 6 June 2018. The inquiry followed a survey of 900 young people about their options for the senior phase of school. The papers for this meeting included a SPICe briefing (ES/S5/18/17/1), written submissions from the witnesses (ES/S5/8/17/20 and the results of the survey carried out with young people aged 15 - 24 (ES/S5/18/17/3). The committee continued with this inquiry on the 20 June, when they met with Sir

Ian Wood. This meeting was supported by a SPICe briefing paper (ES/S5/18/18/1), following on from their first evidence session, and a paper collating additional written submissions (ES/S5/18/18/2).

Date of Committee	Witnesses
6 June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Cross, <i>Scottish Funding Council</i> • Euan Duncan, <i>Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association</i> • Jackie Galbraith, <i>Ayrshire College representing, Colleges Scotland</i> • Alison Henderson, <i>Angus Chamber of Commerce representing, Scottish Chambers of Commerce Network</i> • Terry Lanagan, <i>Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES)</i> • Dr Gill Stewart, <i>Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)</i>
13 June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sir Ian Wood • Jennifer Crow, <i>Opportunity North East</i>

The meeting began with an explanation from each of the panel of their organisations' role in delivery of DYW. The Deputy Convener then opened the questions by asking about the lack of progress in relation to equalities and positive destinations. In response Jackie Galbraith gave examples of work from Ayrshire College and said that not all changes would be reflected in the reports as they were only halfway through the programme. Terry Lanagan added that it was important to remember that there was a very low starting point because, 'employers in Scotland had got out of the habit of recruiting directly from schools' (Lanagan 06.06.18, Col 9). The meeting then considered the challenges of raising awareness of apprenticeships amongst a wider group of businesses. Ross Greer followed this with a series of questions about the offer and uptake of vocational pathways for young people. This led to a debate about the challenges of matching school and college timetabling to provide support for the pathways. The meeting then moved on to discuss the introduction of foundation apprenticeships and Gill Stewart asked the committee to remember that this was a new award:

Best practice from across Europe tells us that a combination of vocational skills and a significant work placement with an employer provides the best vocational experiences for young people and helps to make them successful, although they are not easy or quick to set up. In Scotland, we have probably underestimated the time that some placements take to set up, as well as the communication and engagement (Stewart 06.06.18, Col 24).

The session concluded with a discussion about careers advice and the ways in which schools worked with employers.

The meeting on the 13 June began with a question from the Convener about the challenges of co-ordinating a programme that worked with such a large range of stakeholders. In response Ian Wood talked of the developing relationships

between schools and colleges but recognised that there was less success, ‘probably a 60 per cent pass mark’ (Wood 13.06.18, Col 5) in establishing a relationship between schools and businesses. Gillian Martin then asked about changing parental views of vocational pathways, and Ian Wood said:

We need everyone to have a change in mindset and to understand that the vocational occupations are essential, worth while and the equal of the other things that we do in society (Wood 13.06.18, Col 6).

The meeting then considered support for career choices made in school and options available for young people to remain at school and attend a college course as part of their timetable. This led to a discussion about the challenges of timetabling work experience in schools.

EU REPORTER

The committee noted a report (ES/S5/18/7/3) from, Gillian Martin, in her role as the EU Reporter for the Education and Skills Committee, at their meeting on the 28 February 2018.

SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

The Committee took evidence at their meeting on 28 February 2018, on the Continuing Care (Scotland) Amendment Order 2018 [draft] from Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Childcare and Early Years, Scottish Government, following which the committee agreed the draft order:

- S5M-10206 —Continuing Care (Scotland) Amendment Order 2018

The committee considered and made no recommendations in relation to the following instruments during this period:

1. The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 (Prescribed Services) (Protected Adults) Amendment Regulations 2018 (SSI 2018/28)
2. The Edinburgh Napier University Amendment Order of Council 2018 (SSI 2018/170)
3. The Education (Fees and Student Support) (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Scotland) Regulations 2018 (SSI 2018/171)

REFERENCES

Redford, M. (2018) Education in the Scottish Parliament, *Scottish Educational Review*, 50 (1)