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MAPPING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SCOTLAND

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1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this report is to describe the educational system in Scotland with a focus on those young people who fail to make the transition to work, education or training. It examines the policies, structures and strategies, and seeks to identify what may work in engaging disengaged young people.

The research methods used to undertake this part of the research included a review of relevant policy documents and academic literature relating to the education system in Scotland and interviews held with appropriate local, regional and national stakeholders.   The interviews sought to gather detailed information on the educational system in Scotland and in particular to examine the links between the education and employment systems in Scotland; the role of partnership working in the implementation of educational policy in Scotland; the role of local organisations; and finally the degree to which young people are involved in the formation and implementation of education policy in Scotland.

The remainder of this document is structured as follows: section two outlines the different aspects of the education system in Scotland; section three focuses in more detail on youth unemployment and disengagement; and a final section draws together the findings of this stage of the research.

2. THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN SCOTLAND

Scotland has a long history of universal public education and its education system is distinctly different from other parts of the United Kingdom. In the UK the education system is devolved to England, Wales and Northern Ireland (where the systems are all similar) and to Scotland. Traditionally, the Scottish system has emphasised breadth across a range of subjects, while the English, Welsh and Northern Irish systems have emphasised greater depth of education over a smaller range of subjects at secondary school level; university degrees typically take four years to complete whereas they take three years to complete in the rest of the UK.

Education and training in Scotland is a devolved issue alongside, health, local government, social work and justice. The Scottish Parliament has full legislative competence on this matter. Education is at the core of the Scottish Government's strategic objectives designed to help Scotland flourish which aims to create a country that is wealthier and fairer; healthier; safer and stronger; greener; smarter[1]. Education policy is not seen in isolation but is seen as being part of the wider national policy context and as contributing to national outcomes.

Political responsibility for education at all levels is vested in the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government's Education and Lifelong Learning Department. The First Minister for Scotland has overall responsibility for the education system with day to day responsibility delegated to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning who is supported by the Minister for Children and Young People and the Minister for Schools and Skills. Ministers are advised by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) and Learning and Teaching Scotland (responsible for the development of the curriculum) and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). Appendix one outlines the key stakeholders in Scottish education ranging from those responsible in national government and non-departmental public bodies to those who manage the day to day running of individual schools.

At the institutional level, Local Authorities (LAs) and schools themselves hold much of the executive powers for school education. For example, the school curriculum is not prescribed in statute and head teachers are responsible for the day to day management of their schools. Similarly further and higher education institutions are responsible in the main for their own administration.

Inspections and audits of educational standards are conducted by three bodies: the Care Commission inspects care standards in pre-school provision; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education for pre-school, primary, education, further and community education; with the Scottish office of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA Scotland) responsible for higher education.

Funding

Gross revenue expenditure on school education increased by 5.9% between 2006/07 and 2008/09 and figures for 2010/11 show education budgets have risen again from £4.6 billion in 2008-09 to £4.9 billion in 2010-11 - a real terms increase of 1.7 per cent[2]. State schools are funded by the 32 local authorities in Scotland which are responsible for primary and secondary education delivery.

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[1] Scottish Government – Strategic Objectives - http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Strategic-Objectives
[2] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Facts#a5

The Scottish Government pays an annual grant to local authorities, which then decide how much of the grant will be given to education. Money is then delegated to schools to spend. Control of the budget is at the school level and decisions are largely made by the head teacher in consultation with staff and the school board.

The 20 Scottish higher education institutions and 43 publicly-funded colleges are funded by the Scottish Government via the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), a non-departmental public body of the Scottish Government, drawing on funds provided by the Scottish Government. Although they receive public funds from the SFC, further and higher education institutions are nearly autonomous. They also generate some of their own income. The 2010-11 Scottish Budget provided universities with an extra £42.9 million for learning, teaching and research compared with 2009-10. This represented a record £1.076 billion for universities. Colleges, meanwhile, received a total cash increase of £44.8 million in 2010-11 compared with last. However, the £1.3 billion cut by Westminster from the next year's Scottish Budget represents the toughest settlement since devolution[3].

Qualifications

Qualifications at the secondary school and post-secondary (further education) level are provided by the Scottish Qualifications Authority, which is the national awarding and accrediting body in Scotland, and delivered through various schools, colleges and other learning centres. Scotland has slightly higher levels of qualifications that the rest of the UK with relatively few people with their highest qualification below SCQF level 5 or below[4].

Scotland has its own qualification framework that is separate from that in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (see appendix two). There are three groups of qualifications provided by the SQA: National Qualifications, Higher National Qualifications and Scottish Vocational Qualifications

1. National Qualifications[5]

- Standard Grades are taken in the third and fourth year of secondary school (these are equivalent to GCSEs taken in England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

- National Units: Most Units are designed to take 40 hours of teaching and can be taken at schools, colleges, and in other training centres. National Units can be built up into National Courses, National Progression Awards (NPAs) and National Certificates (NCs)

- National Courses include Access 1, 2 and 3 are designed for students with support needs. Intermediate 1 and 2 are for students with Standard Grades. Highers (minimum for university entrance) and Advanced Highers (equivalent to the A levels taken in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) are the stepping stones to degree courses and HNCs and HNDs. Skills for Work Courses offer practical experiences and students will spend time at a college or local training provider

- National Progression Awards are mainly short programmes undertaken by colleges in specialist vocational areas

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[3] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Facts#a5
[4] UKCES, Ambition 2020: World Class Skills and Jobs for the UK, 2010, p. 39
[5] It should be noted that the qualifications system is due to change in Scotland coming into effect in 2013

- o National Certificates (NCs) are for 16-18 year olds usually at college are linked to occupational areas and aimed to help students enter employment or further study

2. Higher National Qualifications

- HNCs and HNDs provide skills for employment and HNDs can allow entry to degree courses. They are offered by colleges, some universities and training centres.

3. Scottish Vocational Qualifications

- SVQs are group awards that are primarily delivered in the workplace to give them the skills for their occupation

These three types of qualifications, as well as those academic qualifications given by higher education institutions, can be further categorised using the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) which describes the level of each qualification (see Table 3). SCQF Level 1 is the lowest level of qualification and includes Access 1 qualifications. SCQF Level 12 includes doctoral degrees awarded by higher education institutions.

The Structure of Education in Scotland

This section examines the structure of the education system in Scotland, describing school education, college education, university education, non-vocational learning and life long learning.

School Education

Scotland has a comprehensive education system and in Scotland all children aged between 4 and 16 receive compulsory education. Pupils attend primary school between the ages of 4 and 11 (classes Primary 1-7). Children are usually admitted to primary school in mid-August, after their fourth or fifth birthday and there are no entrance exams. Children must attend secondary school between the ages of 12-16 years (classes S1-4). Schools are open for 190 days per year and the school year usually runs from mid August to June. There are 2,722 schools in Scotland and 681,573 pupils.

The majority of pupils attend publicly funded schools. However, there are 150 independent schools which receive no public funding and are independent of the LAs. In the first 3 years of primary school class sizes are limited to 30 pupils. At primary school pupils are usually taught in mixed ability classes and at secondary school there is a mix of mixed ability and ability defined classes. At primary level pupils' progress is assessed through e.g. teacher observation, discussing their work with them and setting tests. In secondary school, pupils are subject to continuous assessment and from S3, pupils begin to study for National Qualifications (NQ) from the SQA .

Education authorities define catchment areas for schools although parents can express a school preference, dependent on the availability of places.

Local authorities are responsible for:

- Providing adequate education for the area and ensuring schools are fully accessible

- Implementing educational policy

- Assessing the special educational needs of children and providing help where necessary

- Providing adequate facilities for physical education and training and other recreational activities

- Monitoring, assessing and reviewing the standard of education provided in schools

In 2009 data on teachers in Scotland shows that:

o There were 23,255 primary school teachers, a pupil teacher ratio of 15.8. 92% of primary school teachers were female.

o There were 25,371 secondary school teachers, a pupil teacher ratio of 11.9. 61% of secondary school teachers were female.

o The mean age of primary, secondary and special school teachers was 43.0.

o There was an increase in the proportion of teachers aged under 40 years (up to 39% in 2009, from 38% in 2008) and those aged 55 years and over (up to 21% in 2009, from 20% in 2008)

o Where data is available, it was found that 2.5% of teachers and from non-UK, white backgrounds and 1.5% from other minority ethnic groups.

To qualify as a primary school teacher individuals either need to have a four year Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree in Primary Education or a one-year Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) if they already have a degree. To be eligible to become a secondary school teacher individuals must either undertake a four year four year Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree or the a one-year Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) (full time, part time or by distance learning) if they already have a degree. Teachers must register with the General Teaching Council for Scotland before they can teach.

In terms of parental involvement, Parent Councils were introduced in the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Bill and are intended to replace school boards. The council, or board, has a special responsibility to represent and communicate with parents through the new parents' forum, and has a number of powers, including:

- Input on the appointment of senior staff, such as the head teacher

- Ability to spend money raised or donated to benefit the school

- Power to raise anything of interest to parents, such as homework, bullying or school uniform, with the head teacher or local authority

- Option to take unresolved matters to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education

The curriculum in Scotland is non statutory and the government only provides a framework for learning and teaching and LAs and schools decide what is taught. Schools and LAs can also decide on what and how to teach for post compulsory education courses. Colleges are entirely free to decide on curricular content. One of the biggest changes in the education system is that the Scottish Government is currently rolling out the new framework for the 3 to 18 curriculum – the *Curriculum for Excellence.* The *Curriculum for Excellence* has been developed through engagement with

teachers and practitioners, and has also drawn upon international research. It is implemented by LTS, SQA, HMIE and the Scottish Government.

 The *Curriculum for Excellence* sits in a broader framework of strategies designed to help children and young people in Scotland flourish and seeks to instil ambition among school children[6].

Three frameworks (*Early Years Framework, Equally Well* and *Achieving our Potential)* have been developed to provide a strategy to help the most vulnerable in society, in order to ensure that children and young people fulfil their potential.   Alongside these, *Skills for Scotland: a Lifelong Skills Strategy,* promotes lifelong learning in order to meet the needs of employers and the economy and to develop employment opportunities.

The new *Curriculum for Excellence* aims to provide a flexible curriculum for 3 to 18 year olds, it aims to 'achieve a transformation in education in Scotland by providing a coherent more flexible and enriched curriculum from 3 to 18'[7]. It focuses on promoting reflection on learning and gives pupils 'the knowledge, attributes and skills to flourish in life'. The curriculum outlines the experiences planned for children centred round the curriculum areas and subjects; interdisciplinary learning beyond subject boundaries; a positive school ethos; and opportunities for achievement within and beyond the classroom. The curriculum also acknowledges the value of learning experiences outside the classroom e.g. within the home and the community. It is centred around the development of four capacities, organised in 8 curriculum areas (expressive arts; health and wellbeing; languages; mathematics; religious and moral education; sciences; social studies; and technologies):

1. Successful learners

2. Confident individuals

3. Responsible citizens

4. Effective contributors.

The *Curriculum for Excellence* has 5 learning levels:

Table 1: Curriculum Levels (Source: Scottish Government)

Level	Stage
Early	The pre-school years and P1, or later for some.
First	To the end of P4, but earlier or later for some.
Second	To the end of P7, but earlier or later for some.
Third and Fourth	S1 to S3, but earlier for some. The fourth level broadly equates to SCQF level 4.
Senior phase	S4 to S6, and college or other means of study.

[6] 'Curriculum for Excellence' is the reform of national qualifications for young people, which includes the development of SCQF qualifications at levels 4 and 5 etc. More information can be found at: http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/37916.2088.html
[7] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum

There is also guidance for early year's workers, social care and health practitioners working with children in the age range birth to three in the document *Birth to three: supporting our youngest children*. It highlights the central role of relationships, responsiveness and respect. The *Curriculum for Excellence* builds on the foundations built at this stage. Revised guidance is set to be distributed in winter 2010.

It is difficult to fully evaluate the impact of the CfE as it is still in the process of being implemented. The responses from stakeholders on the CfE were largely very positive and it was seen as a positive step forward for Scottish education, particularly for learners. One of the key themes in relation to the CfE that came out of the interviews was that it represented a move away from seeing education and learning as something that is only experienced at school. This can be seen to have links to the capability approach where wider experiences and a range of options are valued. The CfE is about recognising the importance of what a young person does outside school of that and giving it value. As one stakeholder notes:

> *"it is moving away from the concept that all learning takes place in schools and is delivered by teachers, it is acknowledging that learning can take place in a variety of different contexts...Schools should see themselves as being part of the community and having more of an outward focus to their community"*

For example the CfE looks at the potential of non SQA qualifications, as being part of the curriculum such as Duke of Edinburgh Awards[8]   Furthermore, it has been demonstrated elsewhere that the experience of learning outside of school, with a different learning style and in a new environment can help to tackle disengagement[9].

Although the CfE was seen as a positive development it was recognised by the stakeholders we interviewed that it represented a major culture change in the way education is taught in schools and colleges and that it may take some time to change the attitudes of both students and teachers to the learning process.

College Education
Scotland has over 40 Colleges offering both further and higher education courses, 22% of activity offered is higher education and 78% of activity offered is further education. Post compulsory education falls into 2 categories: secondary education for 16-18 years (classes S5-S6) in schools; and colleges which provide vocational, upper secondary education, post-secondary non-tertiary and higher education for those aged 16 years and over. In these Colleges learners can undertake Further Education courses, not taught in schools, which covers levels 1-6 on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) e.g. academic courses up to Higher level and basic skills courses. School pupils can undertake short or medium length practical or vocational courses within a local college as part of their school curriculum under the School College Partnerships agreements. All 32 LAs have partnership places in at least one college in their area.

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[8] http://www.dofe.org/
[9] Council of Europe (2010) Breaking the cycle of disadvantage-the role of education in combatting poverty, inequality and social exclusion.

The sector is funded by the Scottish Funding Council, acting on behalf of the Scottish Ministers. This includes funding for the School College Partnerships agreements[10]. Strategic direction for the college sector is provided by the Lifelong Learning Directorate of the Scottish Government. They provide annual guidance to the funding council and liaise with stakeholders such as the SQA and UK government departments.

There were 483,472 student enrolments in 2008/09 with full-time study accounting for 62% of all student activity (the highest numbers since AY2004-05). 29% of teaching is for students from Scotland's most deprived postcode areas. Employers funded 39% of the working age enrolments enabling them to enhance or gain new work-related or job-specific skills.

There are a range of vocational training opportunities, often delivered in colleges but also in the work place. For example, Modern Apprenticeships offer paid employment and a chance to for young people aged 16-19 to train for a job. They offer vocational training in a range of sectors and participants can obtain a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) or NVQ, depending on what is most appropriate for that sector. The costs are met by the employer and SDS. The Scottish Government has introduced Modern Apprenticeships at SVQ level 2. This replaces the training programme Skillseekers run by Skills Development Scotland to help young people aged 16-19 not in further or higher education to develop skills for work. *Get Ready for Work* is open to 16-19 year olds and helps them to improve vocational and core skills. Following training young people are given temporary work experience placements and they are supported by a *Get Ready for Work* training provider.

Colleges are also heavily involved in the implementation of the CfE and have for some time been implementing the principles of the new curriculum. For example interviews with stakeholders in the college sector highlighted that colleges already have a good track record in recognising wider achievement and helping students recognise the wider skills that they have.

Research carried out by Scottish Funding Council (2010)[11] on what attracts disengaged young people to college showed that young people were positive about their experience at college and common reasons why the college was seen as more attractive that school were: that is was a more relaxed adult environment; lectures were more engaging and supportive that teachers; and there was more choice in what to study, rather than being forced to take particular subjects.

University Education

There are 20 autonomous higher education institutions in Scotland: 14 campus based universities, one distance-learning university, an educational partnership institution based in the Highlands and Islands, two art schools, a conservatoire and an agricultural college. Scottish domiciled students and EU students undertaking full-time non-advanced degree courses do not have to pay tuition fees. Part time students, those on low incomes and those from asylum seeker families may be able to get waivers or be exempt from paying fees. Applications to university are made through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). UCAS is a UK-wide service which enables pupils to apply to up to five universities from a choice of every single higher education institution in the UK.

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[10] The refreshed Skills for Scotland is committed to strengthen the partnership approach to skills through: "improving the linkages between colleges and local businesses" and "supporting the role of Community Planning Partnerships in planning and delivering local employment and skills support services" (p. 51)
[11] SFC (2010) Findings of the MCMC peer research project

In the UK (including Scotland), academic qualifications at this level are not national awards, but are granted by individual institutions. The institutions must have degree awarding powers recognised by the UK authorities. Institutions that do not have these powers can provide courses that lead to a degree in a recognised institution. Universities have an important role to play in enabling the transition from school to university and encouraging the participation of those from disadvantaged backgrounds and facilitating non traditional routes into university.

For example universities can play a direct role in developing, and in some cases, delivering the school curriculum and in providing complementary support for pupils while they are studying; universities host many activities to encourage pupils to think differently about some of what they are hearing in the classroom or to stimulate interest in subjects they may not yet know or enjoy; and universities visit schools to engage and enthuse pupils.

For those that need more support, or did not consider university while at school, there are a number of alternative routes

• Summer schools leading to entry. Universities run summer schools and evening classes for those who just missed their grades or who decided late that they want to pursue an academic career. Many universities offer guaranteed entry for those who complete summer schools successfully.

• Articulation with colleges. Universities and colleges work together to develop progression routes so a student studying further education qualifications can progress straight to university, often with advanced entry into the second or third year.

• Support, guidance and careers services. Universities offer support and guidance services for pupils well before the point at which they enrol in the university. Pupils can contact a university to discuss any aspect of admissions and university careers services are also happy to advise on which careers are open to them if they succeed in getting onto a course.

• Consortia approaches. In many cases it is not just the university which works to help give access to pupils who might otherwise lose out. Consortia projects such as LEAPS and ASPIRENorth all involve primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities and LAs in a series of initiatives aimed at getting pupils from low participation schools into university. Engagement can start as early as primary school, and in many cases pupils who complete the programme successfully are guaranteed a place at university.

Universities are also active in helping students make the transition to university. For example, there are:

• Preparation classes and top-up programmes. Long before pupils leave school, universities are already helping them to get ready for university. They run classes in schools to help pupils develop their study skills and offer intensive catch-up classes (such as in maths) if students need or want extra preparation to ensure a successful start to university.

• Information and guidance materials. Universities produce a wide range of resources to help pupils and students get more information about any of the questions they have about studying at university and which provide tips and advice to help them prepare.

- Induction and orientation. Universities have detailed programmes of induction and orientation to help school pupils adapt to university life.

- Mentoring and 'buddying'. The mentoring process which begins at school continues into the start of university. New students often have access to existing students who can help them find their feet. This can be one-to-one 'buddying' schemes or it might well involve the same mentors who came to visit them in their school.

- Care-leavers support. Young people who leave the care system often have a very particular set of needs when they move out on their own and into university. Many universities have put in place dedicated support for new students who have come from the care system.

Non-Vocational Learning

The Scottish Government defines non-vocational learning as "*as participation in <u>any</u> learning which was not job related.*"

The National Adult Learning Survey (NALS) in 2005 found that participation non-vocational learning (28%) is significantly lower than participation in vocational learning (74%). Participation in non-vocational learning in Scotland was 3 points higher compared to the rest of the UK (England and Wales). The proportion of people planning ('very' or 'fairly' likely) to do non-job-related learning in the next 2 or 3 years (53%) was considerably higher than the proportion who had taken part in this type of learning in the previous three years (28%).

The majority of community learning and development activities and programmes are non-certificated. However, the modular courses validated and certificated by the SQA provide an incentive to those adults involved in vocational training.

Life Long Learning

One of the objectives behind the Scottish Government's lifelong learning strategy (Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy, 2007) is "*to ensure that learning is open to everyone at any age".* Initiatives and programmes have been set up to develop and enhance skills, support adult literacy and numeracy and provide opportunities for those with special needs.

There are three main areas on lifelong learning highlighted by the Scottish Government:

1- Adult literacy and Numeracy (ALN)

The 2008/09 'Progress in Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland' report, describes the difference that literacies learning has made in a number spheres, one of them being to working lives[12].

2- Community Learning and Development (CLD)

In 1999 the Scottish Executive approved a radical re-focusing of community education following publication of the 1998 report: *Communities: Change through Learning* (The Osler Report), which emphasised that through learning people can build confidence and the capacity to tackle wider

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[12] Scottish Government 'Progress in Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland 2008/09'
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/09/02153858/0

social issues, such as health or community safety, but also acquire essential skills, such as literacy, without which social exclusion is more likely.

In 2000 the Scottish Executive established the Community Education Training Review which produced a report in 2002 and after a consultation exercise the Scottish Executive issued a policy response '*Empowered to Practice - the future of community learning and development training in Scotland'.*

The Scottish Government National Dossier (2005) defined community education as "*a way of working which encompasses a variety of formal and informal learning opportunities and is involved in the development of core skills, including adult literacy, numeracy and use of information and communications technology (ICT); engagement with young people to help them experience positive development - whether they are of school age or beyond; educational support to individuals, families, people with disabilities, interest groups and communities; and the promotion of lifelong learning and healthier, more positive lifestyles within the context of community and voluntary activities.*

Those active in the provision of community education include the LAs, the voluntary sector, local adult guidance networks, other education providers and fields such as health and community safety

The Scottish Government is investing in a programme (Upskilling of the Community Learning and Development Workforce in Scotland) which aims at developing the CLD workforce across Scotland. Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) is the managing agent for the 2009-11 Programme, which administers the grants to local CLD partnerships and supports them to deliver on agreed outcomes.

It is a characteristic of many courses offered through adult education that they have no formal entry requirements

There are a number of initiatives to help with funding of lifelong learning:

1- Professional and Career Development Loans

These are an option for funding work-related learning. Vocational courses do not necessarily have to lead to a qualification to be funded and courses at colleges or learning providers can be funded. The learning provider has to be registered with the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) and Career Development Loan programme.

2- Individual Learning Accounts (ILA)

Only courses offered by approved ILA Scotland learning provider (including learning centres, local colleges, universities and private training companies) will be funded.

Many firms (especially large firms), according to the Scottish Government, are providing in-house training and re-training courses, organised by their own training officers and certificated by the firms themselves. Increasingly, validation and certification of such courses is carried out by the SQA.

Businesses are now also closely involved in helping to implement the Government's New Deal programme for the long-term unemployed by offering new jobs with training possibilities.

3. YOUTH TRANSITIONS, YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND DISENGAGED YOUNG PEOPLE

This section focuses on the transitions young people make from school to education, training or work. The emphasis here will be on those young people who have difficulties in making this transition and who enter negative destinations, either before leaving school, or after leaving school. It begins by considering youth unemployment and employment and then sets out the broad context for skills and employment policies in Scotland.

Destinations of young people leaving school in Scotland

The key source of information on young people leaving secondary school in Scotland comes from the Scottish School Leavers Destination survey[13]. The latest figures from the Scottish School Leavers Destination survey for 2008/9 show that:

- the proportion of school leavers entering positive destinations in 2008/09 was 85.7 per cent, down from 86.4 per cent in 2007/08;
- girls (87.2 per cent) are more likely than boys (84.3 per cent) to enter positive destinations upon leaving school;
- The proportion of school leavers entering full-time employment was 18.4 per cent in 2008/09, down nearly 7 percentage points compared to the 2007/08 figure of 25.3 per cent.
- The proportion of school leavers entering training has remained at around 5 per cent since 2004/05;
- proportions entering higher or further education have increased by 3.8 and 2.2 percentage points since 2007/08, to reach 34.9 and 27.0 per cent respectively;
- the unemployed and seeking employment and training category has increased by just over half a percentage point to 11.5 per cent, the highest rate since 2003/04 when it was 13.3 per cent The unemployed and not seeking employment or training category (which included those entering voluntary work prior to 2006/07) has risen by about a tenth of a percentage point to 1.6 per cent in 2008/09;
- girls are more likely to enter further or higher education than boys after leaving school, while boys are more likely to enter the categories of training, employment or unemployed and seeking;
- staying-on in school past the minimum leaving age is a good indicator that the young person will enter a positive destination upon leaving school. Over 93 per cent of school leavers who left at the end of S6 entered a positive destination, compared with around 75 per cent of those who left at the end of S4. Staying on rates increased significantly between the 2008/09 school year and the start of the 2009/10 school year, after a number of years with little change. The provisional S4 to S5 staying on rate increased by around 3 percentage points, while the provisional S4 to S6 staying on rate increased by around 5 percentage points;

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[13] Scottish Government (2009) Destinations of Leavers from Scottish Schools 2008/09

- Those school leavers who live in large urban areas are less likely to enter a positive destination than those from more rural areas, although this may be linked to deprivation since many deprived areas are in urban locations;
- Around 75 per cent of school leavers from the ten per cent most deprived areas entered a positive destination compared with just over 93 per cent of those from the ten per cent least deprived areas. Similarly, around 14 per cent of those from the most deprived areas entered higher education, compared with over 61 per cent of those from the least deprived areas;
- Leavers with Additional Support Needs (ASN) are less likely to enter a positive destination than those without. Around 86 per cent of school leavers with no recorded ASN entered a positive destination compared with around 78 per cent of those with a Record of Needs (RoN) or a Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP) and just under 70 per cent of those with an Individualised Educational Programme, but no RoN or CSP. Leavers with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties were the least likely to enter positive destinations at 55 per cent;
- Leavers identified as being looked after at the time of the pupil census in their leaving year were less likely to enter positive destinations (55 per cent) as were those who were identified as registered for free school meals in the census (71 per cent);
- Leavers who have been assessed or declared as having a disability are less likely to enter positive destinations (81 per cent) than the average;
- Attainment of qualifications also has an impact on positive destinations. Of the unemployed and seeking group, around 85 per cent have no qualifications at Higher or better, compared to around 53 per cent of all leavers.

The figures show that the vast majority of young people enter positive destinations. For example in their study of youth transitions in the west of Scotland Furlong et al (2003)[14] found that although initial transitions to work can be difficult to accomplish, the majority of young people quickly learn how to cope in the world of work and develop career management skills. However, it is clear that a significant number are not making this successful transition and it is this group of young people that we wish to focus on here. Indeed, although Scotland has, for instance, one of the highest rates of employment for 15-19 year olds in the OECD, it has been recognised that there are still too many young people who are not in education, employment or training. This group of young people have widely been referred to, in the UK and Scotland, as NEET-Not in Education Employment or Training.

> *"The NEET group is a heterogeneous one. An individual classed as 'NEET' might be a young parent whose parental responsibilities are their key barrier to work; a young person with physical disabilities or behavioural difficulties; a young person who is the main carer for a family member; a young person on a gap year before entering university; or one who has dropped out of a college course but has yet to decide on next steps"[15]*

The most recent data indicates that the number of 16-19 year olds Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) was approximately 36,000 in 2009 which equates to 13.8% of the 16-19 year old population. Over the past year (2009) the size of the NEET group has increased significantly, by 5,000 (2 percentage points). Over the previous four years, there had been a significant reduction in the size of the NEET group, down 6,000 (2.4 percentage points) between 2005 and 2008. Males generally

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[14] Furlong et al (2003) Youth transitions: patterns of vulnerability and processes of social inclusion, Scottish Executive
[15] Scottish Executive. (2006). *More Choices, more chances: A strategy to reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training in Scotland*. (Edinburgh: Scottish Executive).

have a higher proportion of 16 to 19 year olds NEET compared to females. Although it is estimated that 36,000 are in the NEET category this does not take account of the number who are in this category for a very short time or are taking a 'gap year' before starting university.

Whittaker (2008)[16] argues that NEET label is very negative by defining young people by what they are not and further states that by defining young people in terms of their employment status we may overlook other issues which they need support and help with such as homelessness, abuse and criminal behaviour. Indeed, the Scottish government no longer refers to this group as NEET because of the negative connotations of the term, but instead as the 'More Choices, More Chances' group.

A particular group of young people in Scotland are those with generally poor experiences of school, and who leave school early (before the legal leaving age) and transfer to a local adult college - termed 'exceptional entry winter leavers'. Exceptional entry allows students to enter college in the term before their statutory school leaving date – such young people attend college while formally remaining the responsibility of their school. Such arrangements represent an innovative model of supporting transitions to further education among a specific, potentially vulnerable client group, while also offering lessons for the development of school-college collaboration in other areas. Based on an analysis of official data, new survey research with schools and colleges and in-depth case studies, this Canduela et al (2010)[17] identified how schools and colleges work in partnership to support these early school leavers. We find that schools and colleges have developed a range of innovative approaches to engaging with winter leavers, and that the majority complete their programmes or achieve other positive end-of-year outcomes. However, they found that the most disadvantaged young people remain least likely to progress. They also identified lessons for good practice in school-college partnership-working and considering implications for policies to prevent young people from finding themselves not in education, training or employment.

Youth Unemployment

One of the major impacts of the economic downturn in Scotland, and the rest of the UK, has been the increase in youth unemployment. At the UK level, in the period 2008 to 2009 younger workers have seen a fall in their employment rate of 3.9 percentage points and a rise in the ILO unemployment rate of 4.2 percentage points, which is more than double that of the population as a whole (DWP, 2009)[18]. Furthermore, recent research from IPPR (2010)[19] indicates that overall youth unemployment currently stands at 18% of 16-24 year olds, the highest level in 15 years. One of the main reasons that young people have been so affected by the current economic downturn is that recruitment freezes by employers mean that that fewer young people are able to enter the job market (Oxford Economics, 2010)[20] resulting in rising unemployment for younger age groups. In addition, young people are less likely to have the skills and work experience employers are looking

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[16] Whittaker, L. (2008) "Scotland's Shame": A Dialogical Analysis of the Identity of Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training, *Psychology & Society*, 2008, Vol. 1 (1), 54 - 64

[17] Canduela, J., Elliott, I., Lindsay, C., Macpherson, S., McQuaid, R.W. and Raeside, R. (2010) 'Partnerships to support early school leavers: school-college transitions and winter leavers in Scotland', *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol. 23, No. 4, pp. 339-362.

[18] DWP (2009) Monitoring the impacts of the recession on various demographic groups, Sheffield: Department of Work and Pensions

[19] http://www.ippr.org.uk/pressreleases/?id=3846.

[20] Oxford Economics (2010) Why has unemployment not risen more in the recession, Economic Outlook, 34, pp 5-12

for. The declining opportunities for younger people may also partly explain the sharp rise in applications and admissions to universities and colleges[21].

Unemployment can have a long lasting impact on a young person's future career prospects and earnings potential (Furlong et al, 2003, Scottish Executive, 2007). Bell and Blanchflower (2009[22], 2010[23]) considered the impact of long term unemployment on adults and found that people who had been unemployed in their youth had lower average life satisfaction 40 and lower wages, so suffering a long term 'scar' compared to other unemployed adults.

Figure One shows the changes in claimant count for the 18-24 age group from 2004 to the latest available data in Nov 2010 and clearly illustrates the increase in the numbers claiming JSA in this age group. The increase is particularly apparent for males which increased from 15,870 in 2004 to 25,375 in 2010, reaching a high of 27,050 in 2007. Similar figures of disproportionately large increases in youth unemployment occur in the other parts of the UK, such as Northern Ireland[24].

Figure One Claimant Count for 18-24 age group in Scotland 2004-2010
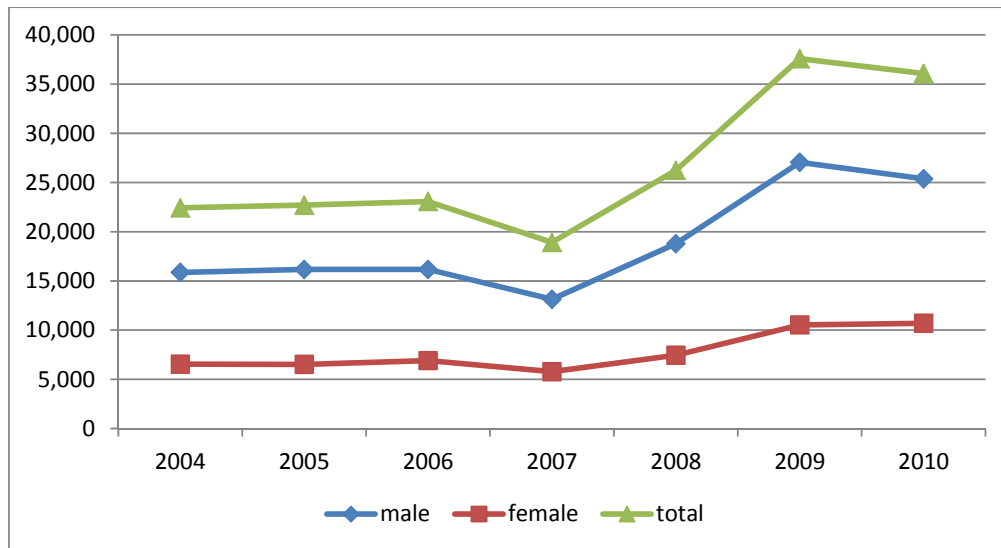
Source: Nomis Claimant Count

There were similar changes in employment for this age group, employment rates declined from 69.1% in 2004 to 62.1% in 2009, correspondingly the percentage unemployed increased from 8.0% to 11.6% and those continuing in full-time education increased from 27.9% to 32.9%.

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[21] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/1362951.stm

[22] Bell, D., Blanchflower, D. (2009) Youth unemployment: déjà vu? Dartmouth College, USA, Working Paper

[23] Bell, D., Blanchflower, D. (2010) Young people and recession. A lost generation? Dartmouth College, USA, Working Paper http://www.dartmouth.edu/~blnchflr/papers/Economic%20Policy%20Article%20v3_2 4.pdf

[24] McQuaid, R., Hollywood, E. and J. Canduela (2010) *Employment Inequalities in an Economic Downturn* – report for the Equality Commission Northern Ireland, 28 September 2010 http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/EconDownturnFinalFullReport260910.pdf

Figure Two Changes in activity for 18-24 year olds Scotland 2004-2009
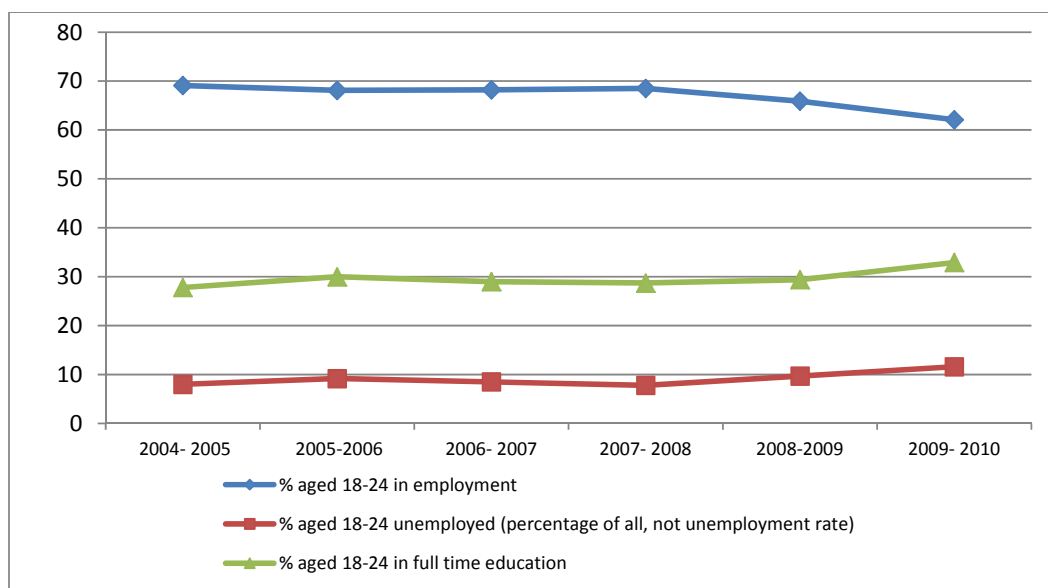
Source: Annual Population Survey, NOMIS

Addressing the issue of vulnerable youth and youth unemployment

Background of Skills and Employment policies in Scotland

The Scottish Government provides a framework for considering skills and employment in terms of the Government's Economic Strategy[25], the Recovery Programme[26], the National Performance Framework[27] and Single Outcome Agreements, Workforce Plus,[28] and the 2007 Skills Strategy[29], which was refreshed in 2010[30]. These, together with local Community Planning Partnerships, stress the importance of partnership and the integration of support for individuals and employers. In 2011 there is also an on-going review of post 16 training being carried out for the Scottish Government by William Roe (a board member of UKCES and Skills Development Scotland).

The relationship between the Scottish and UK governments is important on employment issues. There are close working relationships between the UK government (Jobcentre Plus – the UK Public Employment Service), the Scottish government (particularly the government department of Skills Development Scotland) and local bodies, especially operationally[31]. Jobcentre Plus had a number of policies aimed at helping young people make the transition to work and other groups who are

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[25] The Scottish Government (November 2007), The Government Economic Strategy (GES)
[26] Scottish Government (January 2009) Scottish Economic Recovery Programme www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Economy/economic-situation
[27] Scotland Performs www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms
[28] Scottish Executive (June 2006), Workforce Plus: An Employability Framework for Scotland
[29] The Scottish Government (September 2007), Skills for Scotland: A lifelong skills strategy
[30] The Scottish Government (October 2010), Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the recovery and increasing sustainable economic growth
[31] The refreshed Skills for Scotland (2010) states that Skills Development Scotland is currently engaged in a wide range of partnerships, operational and strategic, at a local, regional and national level, including the new Service Delivery Agreements being developed with local authorities in recognition of their crucial role in skills development, as well as their role as the lead body for CPPs (refreshed Skills for Scotland, p. 53)

disadvantaged. The Scottish government has also had a number of policies to help disadvantaged young people and parents. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills, along with the Scottish government and regional and local agencies also promotes greater integration between the employment and skills systems.

The Skills for Scotland strategy aimed to "encourage the integration of employment and skills services to facilitate the journey individuals make from long-term unemployment to sustained employment and in-work progression" (p.46). The aim is to develop an integrated career guidance and employment vacancy service for unemployed adults which would eventually come to embrace all the services, at both a national and local level, that were able to help individuals into sustained and rewarding employment (including Skills Development Scotland and Jobcentre Plus services). This has partly been done through the Integrated Employment and Skills service (IES) that covered the whole of Scotland by August 2010.

Policy approaches
At a general level for all age groups, the UK policy on unemployment and employability since 1997 has been driven by the view that work remains the best route out of poverty for most people. The focus of the previous Labour administration was on dealing with poverty through work, in particular, by promoting supply side measures through skills development with focus on a 'work first' approach to activation policy. In relation to this a number of reviews were undertaken such as the Leitch Review of Skills and the Freud Review of Welfare to Work Programmes. In addition, large amounts of policy have been directed at increasing employment and dealing with worklessness through measures such as the New Deal, Minimum Wage and Tax Credits.

Even with the economic downturn and the change in UK government there has not been a major shift in policy. There is however, greater emphasis on the benefits systems as being a key cause of worklessness. Indeed, employment remains the key policy goal, rather than any other form of activity such as caring or voluntary work.

The provision of employment services is currently reserved to the UK Government, and delivered in Scotland by Jobcentre Plus, an agency of the Department for Work and Pensions. While employment services are reserved, training for employment is a shared responsibility between the UK and Scottish Governments. Employment is also impacted by a broad range of devolved policy areas, including education, skills, health, regeneration, and childcare.

The Scottish policy context in this area is also informed by the following:

Workforce Plus Workforce Plus is the Scottish Government Employability Framework and sets out a framework to support partnership working at a local level to tackle long term unemployment and in particular hard to reach groups. This strategy acknowledges that that a key factor in moving people out of poverty is through work:

More Choices More Chances A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland (further details on this strategy are provided below).

The Scottish Government's Economic Strategy Sets out the short and long term targets in relation to economic growth.

Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth The Scottish Government has refreshed the Skills for Scotland Strategy. This refreshed Strategy makes clear the Scottish Government's commitment to training and skills and sets out a flexible, responsive, partnership approach to meeting Scotland's skills needs at a crucial point in our economic recovery.

Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy . This Strategy is a framework to show how all of the constituent parts of the education and learning systems can contribute to giving Scotland a skills base that is world class.

Concordat between the Scottish Government and local government. This concordat sets out the terms of a new relationship between the Scottish Government and local government, based on mutual respect and partnership.

New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work. Part of the UK Government's on-going programme of welfare reform and focuses on reducing dependency on benefits and supporting more people into employment

Achieving Our Potential: A Framework to tackle poverty and income inequality in Scotland. This Framework sets out further priorities for action and investment to deliver improvement in: reducing income inequalities; introducing longer-term; measures to tackle poverty and the drivers of low income; supporting those experiencing poverty or at risk of falling into poverty; making the tax credits and benefits system work better for Scotland.

The Scottish Government has developed a range of strategies to help prevent young people entering the NEET category. In particular, the Scottish Government NEET strategy, *More Choices, More Chances* aims to target local areas where levels of young people NEET is a problem. The strategy has been published alongside Workforce Plus the Scottish Executive's Employability Framework for Scotland, although much of the MCMC emphasis is on prevention in the pre-16 stages. The strategy identifies the sub-groups known to be, or become, NEET: care leavers; carers; young offenders; young parents; low attainers; persistent truants; young people with physical/mental disabilities; young people misusing drugs or alcohol.

The priority in this strategy is given to progressing young people who are NEET into education and training, rather than into jobs without training. Indeed, evidence from the stakeholder interviews suggests that further training, rather than minimum wage employment, was seen as a preferable option for young people as it would improve their long term job prospects and would contribute to improving the skills base of the Scottish workforce. Further, it was felt that in the current economic climate of high youth unemployment there were very few opportunities for young people in the labour market anyway. The MCMC strategy intentionally prioritises education and training over employment as desired outcomes for the NEET group and it argues that ensuring the long term employability of young people is more likely to be secured through furthering their education and training, whether through formal or informal learning.

An important part of the *Curriculum for Excellence* is the strategy on 16+ learning choices and the transitions made by this age group. It will be universal from December 2010 and will mean that all young people will be offered a post in post-16 learning before they leave school. A range of partners

are implicated in the delivery of the strategy e.g. schools, LAs, Skills Development Scotland and colleges.

It should also be noted, and it is an issue that came up in the stakeholder interviews, that the group that is most difficult to reach is those past 19 who are at most risk of becoming long term unemployed. It was highlighted that 'older younger people' were often harder to address because of the lack of programmes for this group and the gap between children and adult services.

Inter-agency working

It has been widely indicated that inter-agency working across a number of policy areas is the most effective way of addressing disadvantage[32]. Throughout the policy literature and the evidence from the stakeholder interviews it was clear that one of key elements in approaching vulnerable youth was the importance of inter agency working. For example in policy terms although there are separate policies for education, such as the Curriculum for Excellence, such policies are seen as being linked into the wider policy environment with links to policies on employability, health and social care, for example. Even within education itself, under the CfE, school education is not seen in isolation but there are clear links to the early years framework through to college and university learning and life long learning. As one Stakeholder notes:

> *"You can't really underestimate the value of partnership working; it is about working with the community and beyond that and having parity of esteem"*

Examples of partnerships included schools and colleges working together so school students were able to include college courses in their studies which meant a wider range of options were available to them and they could experience the college environment before leaving school. Promoting partnerships between schools and colleges is central in much of the policy on ways in which to engage young people.

Careers Scotland and Skills Development Scotland play a key role in ensuring an integrated approach to supporting young people in order to maintain a focus on employability. Both Additional Support for Learning and forthcoming Getting It Right for Every Child legislation are strengthening existing partnership approaches, clarifying the co-ordination role of 'key workers'.

Although inter-agency working was seen as important a number of issues were raised in relation to its effectiveness. At the local level there is often a lack of awareness of the range of organisations that are there to help and support young people.

Engaging disengaged young people

It was made clear through from the interviews that there was no particular stage that young people were likely to fail and that young people can fall through the net and disengage at any stage. However, research has suggested that particular attention should be given to 'key transition points' such as transition from pre-school to primary school; primary to secondary school; compulsory to post compulsory education; and education or training to the labour market; and that at each of these stages there is a higher risk of disengagement[33].

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[32] Council of Europe (2010) Breaking the cycle of disadvantage-the role of education in combatting poverty, inequality and social exclusion.
[33] [33] Council of Europe (2010) Breaking the cycle of disadvantage-the role of education in combatting poverty, inequality and social exclusion.

"They don't see the relevance of education at all. The relevant factor is missing at that stage in their lives. They're quite happy to be disengaged and disaffected at that time. They don't want to take up opportunities. They've actually made a choice. Not interested".

During the interviews stakeholders were asked about the most effective ways of engaging with those who have become disengaged. A number of factors were mentioned such as early intervention, a number of respondents stated that those most likely to disengage could often be identified at the pre-school stage, highlighting that interventions at age 16 where often far too late. Providing effective and timely guidance was also seen as key. This also fits with the CA where is stated that in order to achieve capabilities individuals must be fully aware of the options and choices available to them.

Currently young people receive formal guidance from S2, it was stated that other sources of information and ways of delivering information should also be included. It was felt that very often young people were not given advice early enough or the right kind of advice. It has been indicated from elsewhere that some young people do not make fully informed choices when choosing college courses[34]. Helping young people make informed choices was seen as important to future career success and stability. However, it may be that some vulnerable young people are not being made fully aware of the choices open to them. This is an issue that may need to be addressed by schools, colleges and other community providers. For example it has been shown that better information on colleges and the practical aspects of what to expect when at college would help more young people apply to college and improve retention rates once in college[35].

Also significant is the finding that that information about college or other destinations, was of particular value to vulnerable young people when it came from someone with whom they had a trusting relationship such as peers, family etc. This highlights that social networks etc. can be very important in shaping whether young people see education as relevant to them.

Evidence from the interviews also suggested that positive relationships between staff and young people are important in addressing disengagement. Indeed research has suggested that teachers and other educational staff who provide learning are key players in the effort to reduce the effects of disadvantage[36].An example was a given of a programme that brought together teachers and youth workers so that they could share the experiences and skills they have in dealing young people with complex needs. In particular it was felt that teachers could learn a lot from youth work approaches.

Supporting Vulnerable Groups
Support for those with additional needs

The 2004 *Additional Support for Learning Act* (amendments were also made in 2009) outlines the provisions that must be made by education authorities for children with additional support needs. LAs must support children and identify and monitor additional support needs by preparing a coordinated support plan, taking in the views of other relevant agencies. LTS provides tools and resources to support children with additional support needs, for example those with Autism

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[34] SFC (2010) Findings of the MCMC peer research project
[35] SFC (2010) Findings of the MCMC peer research project
[36] [36] Council of Europe (2010) Breaking the cycle of disadvantage-the role of education in combatting poverty, inequality and social exclusion.

spectrum disorders; Deaf and hearing impaired; Dyslexia; English as an additional language; Highly able children; Looked after children; and Visual impairment. They also provide tools and resources to promote equality and help education providers address the barriers faced by refugees and asylum seekers, young carers, travelling communities, young people with disabilities etc.

The Scottish Government also promote equal opportunities so that young people can get the most out of their education[37] and, under the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, that children attend mainstream schools, except in exceptional circumstances. They have a duty to make arrangements for children who cannot attend school because of ill health

Support for migrant workers and asylum seekers

The Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland sets out the government strategy for the provision of publicly funded ESOL. It aims to improve collaboration and coordination, raise the quality of teaching and learning and support learning and progression. Most publicly funded ESOL courses are free to learners. Where there is a fee ILA Scotland can provide support depending on eligibility. The website www.esolscotland.com (provided by the Scottish Government) provides resources for practitioners e.g. guidance for classes based on the theme of answering a job advert, a directory of providers etc.

The third sector also provides support and training for migrant workers. The Workers' Educational Association, a voluntary sector provider of adult learning, runs the English at Work programme for migrant workers in the Scottish Highlands enrolled in ESOL courses. A 'Living in the Highlands' Tutor Resources Guide for English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) tutors has been produced. The course runs over 10 weeks and the course covers issues such as opening a bank account, paying bills and National Insurance. The programme is funded by the Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Scottish Government (through Highland Adult Literacy), and the European Social Fund[38]

Looked After Children

The 2007 Scottish Executive report *Looked after children and young people: we can and must do better* seeks to better understand the educational barriers faced by looked after children. It outlines 19 actions (e.g. central government working together with a range of stakeholders, improving training for those working with looked after children, commission guidance and raising awareness in further and higher education) to be delivered under 5 key themes – *"working together; becoming effective lifelong learners; developing into successful and responsible adults; being emotionally, mentally and physically healthy; and, feeling safe and nurtured in a home setting"*.

The website www.lookedafterchildrenscotland.org.uk (provided by the Scottish Government in association with LTS) provides information, advice and practice for professionals working with looked after children – those looked after by LAs at home with their parents and away from home.[39]

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[37] Scottish Government – Equal opportunities - http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/welfare/equal-ops

[38] Scottish Government (2008). *Sharing a Wealth of Experience: Scottish Models of Financial Learning for Adults.* (Edinburgh: Scottish Government)

[39] Looked After Children and Young People - What do we mean by 'looked after'? - http://www.lookedafterchildrenscotland.org.uk/about/what/index.asp

Financial support with higher and further education for care leavers is much the same as that available to other students. However, in the assessment of eligibility for the Young Student Bursary and student loans payments made to care leavers by LAs are disregarded. The Vacation Grant for Care Leavers is means tested and is available to cover accommodation costs during vacations. The charity, the Frank Buttle Trust, has a Grant Scheme for Students and Trainees open to young people who are estranged from their family, orphaned, adopted, cared for by friends or family, care for a single parent or those with full refugee status or indefinite leave to remain

Winter Leavers

Another strategy is that of 'Exceptional Entry'. In Scotland there are 2 statutory school leaving dates. Students' whose birthday falls between the beginning of October and the end of February can leave school in the December closest to their 16th birthday. 'Winter leavers' have been found to be at risk of not being in employment and education, have low educational attainment (more likely not to have achieved Standard Grade) and are more likely to have learning or other disabilities. In order to counter the likelihood that this cohort becomes NEET the system of exceptional entry allows students to begin college in the term before their statutory school leaving date.

Involving young people
One of the key issues that this wider research process is aiming to address is to identify the degree to which the education system gives individuals the freedom to choose a life they have reason to value. In the case of this research we were interested in how young people themselves were involved in decision making and policy formulation in the education system. For the stakeholders this was the one question that was most difficult for them to answer, perhaps reflecting that it is not a process that they are familiar with. Indeed there were only a few examples of the involvement of young people, although the value of their involvement was acknowledged. For example it was highlighted that the principles of the CfE centre on putting young people at the centre of learning. One stakeholder in particular highlights the difficulties in this process:

> *"It is a culture thing in the change of power balance between the adult and the professional and giving that power back to young people"*

It was also raised in the interviews that young people often have difficulty in articulating their own skills and needs. Colleges in Scotland are currently developing a toolkit to help young people address this issue:

> "*Young people need to have the confidence to feel that if they are expressing their views they are going to be taken on board*"

It was widely felt that there was lack of a 'learner's voice' in the education system and that it would take a long time redress this balance.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This sections pulls together some of the issues raised in the previous two sections and will address those issues that have been previously identified in WORKABLE as important in understanding youth transitions and how the CA can be used to understand these transitions. This will focus on the integration of the education and employment systems in Scotland; balance between vocational and academic learning; the role of multi-level policy making (in particular the role of local organisations); effectiveness of policy aimed at young people; the involvement (or voice) given to young people.

Integration of education and employment systems in Scotland

Within the Scottish policy environment it is evident that efforts are being made to make links between different areas of policy such as health, education, social care and employment (e.g. through Community Planning Partnerships or the Integrated Employment and Skills Jobcentre Plus[40]). In particular employability is a thread that can be seen as running through all aspects of education policy and strategy. The situation in Scotland however is complicated by the fact that unlike education, employment is not a devolved issue. This means that although education policy is developed by the Scottish government, employment policy remains with Westminster. This can make the integration of the two systems more problematic. However, this is partly addressed by Scotland having its own employability strategy[41].

The new Curriculum of Excellence aims to address the gap between education and employment by having a strong employability focus and encouraging vocational learning within schools. However, it was highlighted in the interviews that school education still has a very strong focus on academic learning and that there is still a long way to go for many schools in making the links between employment and education. Colleges were much stronger in this area, having more of a tradition in vocational learning. Colleges have been involved in the employability agenda for some time and have much stronger links with employers. Although there is evidence of links with employers it was generally felt that more could be done to build links with employers.

It was clear from the interviews and the policy documents that transitions for young people were framed as being from school to further education or training and to the final destination of employment. Little mention was made of other possible destinations such as caring or voluntary work (although volunteering is an option under MCMC). This indicates a narrowing of possible options for young people, with work still being seen as the ultimate goal. This is in contradiction to the CA which argues that there should be a diversity of options available to people, which might not necessarily be paid work.

Balance between vocational and academic learning

Traditionally the balance in the Scottish education system has been towards academic learning. In particular schools have tended to focus on academic qualifications and progression to higher education, with vocational learning seen as the choice for less able students. Opportunities for vocational learning in schools have tended to be limited and are dependent on individual schools.

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[40] The Scottish Employability Forum brings together key agencies to work together to remove barriers at a national level, and it is supported and informed by the National Delivery Group comprising local employability partnerships and others to provide a more coherent, joined-up framework to deliver employability services

[41] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Business-Industry/Employability

The Curriculum for Excellence may go some way to redress this imbalance. One of the key features of the Curriculum for Excellence is that is emphasises the importance of all types of learning. It may be that the new curriculum may provide more opportunities for vocational learning. As one stakeholder notes:

> "I don't think they are very…it does appear that schools still view their main progression route as being into higher education"

The benefits of vocational learning were highlighted throughout the interviews to both academic and vocational learners. For example it was stated that all students should have the opportunity to undertake some kind of vocational learning. This was seen as being applicable to all stages of learning from schools right through to post graduate study. The widening out of the scope of education would give young people a far greater choice in what they can study. This can be seen as having links to the CA where increasing choice is seen as enabling the ability of individuals to achieve their capabilities.

Multi-level policy making

Multi-level policy making was seen as important in the areas of education and employment, particularly when addressing the issues facing excluded young people. Inter-agency working was seen as key in addressing issues facing many young people as they often require the input of a number of different agencies such as social work, employability services, health care and local projects.

The range of stakeholders involved in strategies aimed as disengaged young people ranged from national organisations such as Jobcentre Plus and the Scottish Government to Local Authorities and community based projects. As education is a devolved issue it is delivered at the Scottish level through the Scottish government with a lot of flexibility in how it is implemented at the local level. For example Local Authorities, Colleges, Universities and Schools have a lot of flexibility over what is taught and how it is delivered at the local level.

Local input and involvement was seen as important in effectively delivering services that were appropriate to the needs of local areas. This was particularly the case for Colleges and community organisations. However, the issue of schools not being fully involved in the local community was raised and identified as a factor that needed to be improved. The improvement of such links would improve the range of choices and information available to young people.

Although the input of local organisations was recognised and valued it was clear that more could be done to improve local involvement. For example it was highlighted that although the CfE valued community based learning, a 'culture shift' was still needed to change the perceptions of community based learning as being as valuable as learning undertaken in more traditional settings.

All the stakeholders interviewed fully recognised the benefits of involving local organisations in the addressing the issues facing disengaged young people and the added value they provided. Nonetheless, it should be noted that this stage of the research did not involve the input from local organisation that may have provided a different viewpoint. Local organisations are intended to be the focus of the next stage of the research.

Effectiveness of Policy

More Choices, More Chances was implemented in 2006 in response to the large number of young people in Scotland who were in the Not-in-Employment-Education-or-Training (NEET) category. There was evidence that some impact was being made on this group with a decline in numbers in the NEET category. However, the economic downturn along with the associated increases in youth unemployment, increasing demand for college and university places, and lack of job openings has led to an increase in the MCMC category. Cuts in public spending may also mean that there will be cutbacks in the services that have helped disengaged young people, not only in the area of education but also employment services, health, social work and social care.

Stakeholders were asked if there was any evidence of the 'creaming of young people', whereby those who are easiest to help are given the most support and opportunities. Stakeholder were keen to point out that Equalities Legislation and legislation to support vulnerable young people were now an integral part of all policies in Scotland and therefore vulnerable young people should not be discriminated against. However, it does remain the case that the most vulnerable young people such as cared for children, those with disabilities, those from deprived areas etc. remain those groups of young people who are most likely to be disengaged. Furthermore, stakeholders indicated that cuts in public spending in other areas such as social work and the voluntary sector are likely to have a negative effect on this group of young people.

The Curriculum for Excellence has been implemented to tackle the issues of disengaged youth by emphasising early interventions, putting young people at the centre of learning, giving value to learning and achievement outside of school. However, as it is still at the very early stages of being implementing it is too early to gauge its effectiveness.

Involvement of young people

One of the areas that we were keen to explore in this research, and a factor that contributes to debates in the CA, was how young people themselves were involved in the formation and implementation of education and employment policy and the initiatives and programmes to support disengaged young people. In particular this can be seen as relating to the idea of empowerment in the CA where individuals should be sufficiently empowered to have autonomy and a voice in the delivery and implementation of the programmes in which they are involved, recognising that in order for individuals to realise their capabilities they need to be empowered to make informed choices that are right for them.

There was some evidence that young people were consulted in relation to policies and strategies that affect them. The Curriculum for Excellence contains a number of elements that is likely to increase the involvement and empowerment of young people. Stakeholders pointed out that traditionally policy implementation has been a top down approach and including the input of young people will require a culture change from all involved, including young people themselves. Indeed it noted that getting young people involved was often a very difficult process, particularly those who have become disengaged.

It was noted that in order to engage young people you need to make learning relevant to them. Especially for those who are doing poorly academically, social networks etc. can be very important in shaping whether young people see education as relevant to them. The more academic

get their reinforcement etc. based upon their results and are less likely to become disengaged unless they do badly (in terms of marks/ lack of course success). In some cases it is important to work in primary schools and early years to help build aspiration and engage with learners. This suggests a link to the CA, especially in terms of young people identifying if things are relevant (and important) to them.

The findings of this stage of the research have shown that in the case of Scotland steps are being made to integrate the education and employment systems, in particular through inter-agency working. Historically the school education system in Scotland has focused on academic achievement and qualifications while vocational study was largely confined to colleges or the workplace. The Curriculum for Excellence seeks to give vocational and community learning greater relevance in schools and give more emphasis on employability throughout the education process. It is also likely to give more choice to young people. As it is in the very early stages of being implemented it is difficult to assess its effectiveness.

Disengagement of certain groups of young people has long been an issue for Scotland. The economic downturn and cuts in public spending may mean that it may become more of an issue in following years. However, a number of strategies are in place which are designed to address the problems facing this group, although the impact of cuts in public spending remains a major concern.

APPENDIX ONE: KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN SCOTTISH EDUCATION

Stakeholder	Responsibility
First Minister for Scotland	Overall responsibility for the education system with day to day responsibility delegated to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning who is supported by the Minister for Children and Young People and the Minister for Schools and Skills
Scottish Government Directorate for Learning supports schools policy and workforce development.	Works closely with LAs and supports Learning and Teaching Scotland and the Scottish Qualifications Authority.
Directorate for Lifelong Learning works for the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning	Responsible for post school learning e.g. looking at employability training, higher education and adult education
Children, Young People and Social Care Directorate	Work across government to help improve outcomes for children and young people
Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)	The national accrediting and awarding body in Scotland. They authorise all vocational qualifications, approve education and training institutions and develops, issues and reviews qualifications
The Scottish Funding Council (SFC)	Provides funding to higher education institutions and publically funded colleges, also ensures teaching quality is enhanced and assessed; monitors the financial situation of colleges and universities; collects data on the sector; and advises the Scottish Government.
HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE)	Executive Agency of the Scottish Ministers which inspects, reviews and evaluates education services as well as the joint inspections of services for children and the education functions of LAs. Inspections are carried out in a variety of institutions including primary schools, secondary schools, independent schools, colleges and teacher education, using principles such as equality and diversity, best value and improvement and capacity building
The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)	Monitors quality of higher education
Scottish Public Services Ombudsman	Deals with complaints made against higher and further education institutions
Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS)	A non-departmental public body, funded by the Scottish Government, and the main Scottish curriculum body. LTS works in 5 areas: curriculum implementation and planning and assessment; support for learners; community learning and development; *"embedding International Education, Education for Citizenship, and Sustainable Development Education within Curriculum for Excellence"*; and providing technologies to support learning. As from 01 July 2011 LTS

	will be merged with HMIE to form the Scottish Education Quality and Improvement Agency.
Skills Development Scotland (SDS)	A non departmental public body. They provide services for employers, e.g. developing skills in the workforce and redundancy support; learning providers; and individuals e.g. advice and training programmes such as *Modern Apprenticeships, Skillseekers*, *Get Ready for Work* and *Training For Work*. Careers Scotland is part of SDS and delivers careers advice and employability services. They work in partnership with a range of local organisations e.g. learning providers, voluntary organisations, Scottish Enterprise and the Job Centre to promote lifelong learning and develop employability and enterprise
Local authorities (each of the 32 LAs has an education authority)	Responsible for publicly funded pre-school and school education. They are responsible for staffing, financing, providing buildings, making provision for those excluded from school, the implementation of Scottish Government policy, accounting for the curriculum following the guidance from the Scottish Government etc. LAs also carry out quality assessments and schools and further education colleges themselves are responsible for carrying out institutional level monitoring.
Head teachers	Responsible manage the day to day running of schools
School Boards	They are made up of parents and school staff to direct the running of schools. They have powers to e.g. make appointment, manage the out-of-hours use of school premises and set occasional holidays.
Parent Councils	Representative statutory bodies for parents which can influence decision making within schools e.g. recruitment, and can help support the work of schools

Appendix 2: The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (Source: SCQF)

SCQF LEVELS	SQA QUALIFICATIONS			QUALIFICATIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	SCOTTISH VOCATIONAL QUALICATIONS
12			Professional Development Award	Doctoral Degree	
11			Professional Development Award	Integrated Masters Degree Masters Degree Post Graduate Diploma Post Graduate Certificate	SVQ5
10			Professional Development Award	Honours Degree Graduate Diploma Graduate Certificate	
9			Professional Development Award	Bachelors / Ordinary Degree Graduate Diploma Graduate Certificate	SVQ4
8		Higher National Diploma	Professional Development Award	Diploma Of Higher Education	SVQ4
7	Advanced Higher	Higher National	Professional Development	Certificate Of Higher Education	SVQ3

		Certificate	Award		
6	Higher	National Certificate	National Progression Award Professional Development Award		SVQ3
5	Intermediate 2 Credit Standard Grade	National Certificate	National Progression Award		SVQ2
4	Intermediate 1 General Standard Grade	National Certificate	National Progression Award		SVQ1
3	Access 3 Foundation Standard Grade	National Certificate	National Progression Award		
2	Access 2	National Certificate	National Progression Award		
1	Access 1				