



# ACCESSIBLE, EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

**Policy 5: Finances, housing, or a lack of support services should not be barriers to young people accessing further or higher education, and decision-makers should work together to break down those barriers.**

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**Endorsed by:**



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## What's this all about?

Young people told us that ensuring equal access to further and higher education should be treated with the same respect and dedication as equal access to primary and secondary education. Serious reform of financial support and how it is offered is needed. The burden should not be placed on young people to overcome barriers, but instead for the Scottish Government, universities and further education institutions to work together to improve their support frameworks.

**"Education is a fundamental right, every young person should have the opportunity to pursue their dreams and their academic and career goals without having to worry about financial hardships or support systems."**

– Young woman aged 14-17, Clackmannanshire

**"I feel that using the Social Mobility Foundation and other support services is what enabled me to be the first in my family to attend university, with my sister closely following. These types of services will give young people positive role models to follow as where I am from, we often do not have a positive adult role model. My main focus is on support services, as I feel these are vital to helping young people break down barriers by teaching them skills they wouldn't learn at home."**

– Young woman aged 22-26, Glasgow

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## What are young people in Scotland calling for?

- Young people want to be involved in reviewing skills and careers agencies.

**"Ongoing [education] reform must consider both the needs of young people and the expectations of industry to ensure young people are prepared to meet the demands of their careers."**

– Young woman aged 18-21, Highland

- Young people call for the Scottish Government to take steps to implement the recommendations of The Hayward Review, 2023, The Withers Review, 2023, and The Still Review, 2024. Decision makers must meaningfully involve young people in the process.

**"Listen to what young people want."**

– Young woman aged 18-21, Clackmannanshire

- The Scottish Government must invest more in social mobility schemes to ensure every young person's talent, ambitions, and dreams are supported and achieved, regardless of their background or where they live.

**"Social mobility is needed for young people, and without the opportunity for people to attend uni, this becomes much harder."**

– Young woman aged 14-17, Moray

- Free tuition should not be undermined by unaffordable living expenses. Providers of Student Accommodation (including universities and private landlords) must be held to high standards and be accountable for the quality and affordability of student accommodation and the wellbeing of students.

**"Getting housing and food in a city like Edinburgh or Glasgow within the [maintenance] loan amount is borderline impossible, never mind the cost of living- making feeding, heating and taking care of yourself extremely difficult."**

– Young woman aged 18-21, Edinburgh

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## Evidence and Support

- [Broke Students, Broken System](#) is a report that outlines the financial hardship faced by further and higher education students in Scotland. It concluded that while some progress has been made in the last 25 years since devolution, that progress seems to have come to a halt with Scotland's education policy settling into a pattern of underfunding and a lack of ambition.
- 29% of international students have considered leaving their studies because of financial difficulties and 12% of students in Scotland have experienced homelessness.
- [Universities Scotland found](#) that 38% of university graduates and 28% said increasing the amount of non-repayable grants and bursaries available to students during studies was important and said there should be diverse routes into university.

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## What has SYP done?

The [SYP Policy Log](#) includes discounted or free transport for groups who struggle to access travel; introduction of Housing First across Scotland; protection of the right to property and improvements to the rented housing sector investment in welfare services in colleges and universities and an increase of wellbeing support and improvement of funding in Scotland's students and apprentices; financial support for students and cost-of-living supports to support young people; an increase in Campus Security.