

Scotland's Rural and Island Young People's Priorities



Following a meeting of rural and island young people at the 2021 Scottish Rural Parliament, we have identified five key areas for progress, and a set of goals for 2025 within them:

Food

- Better education around the benefits of local food production, and how to cook nutritious meals with seasonal wholefoods
- More support for young people to enter a well-paid agriculture or farming industry in their own community.
- More support for farmers to work organically, in a biodiversity friendly and climate neutral way
- Direct links between the farms producing food and the communities
- Large scale animal farming is no longer required as it is smaller, more localised farms that produce the food for nearby areas.
- More affordable local produce for the consumer

Mental Wellbeing

- Shorter waiting lists for mental wellbeing services that are accessible to everyone and meet the needs of the people they support.
- Use the language "mental wellbeing" rather than "mental health" as part of a culture that discusses mental wellbeing in an informed, accepting non-stigmatised way.

Climate Change

- Climate Change is a mandatory part of the curriculum through primary and secondary education, including regular outdoor lessons to teach children and young people practical skills, like growing food, as well as increase their understanding of local biodiversity.

- Single-use plastic is entirely phased out
- More cycle/pedestrian tracks with young people being incentivised to use active travel, e.g., through a point system
- Increased woodland space, more peatlands restored and more wildlife corridors to support biodiversity.
- More efficient and effective public transport options

Housing

- A better range of affordable housing that meets the needs of the local young people, allowing them to stay in their community and promotes other young people moving into the area.
- When housing becomes available, it is offered to local people first, with priority given to young people and families.
- Housing is environmentally friendly, leading to greener communities and lower energy bills for residents.
- A second-home tax.

Jobs

- Young people are supported to develop skills for jobs that will exist in their local area.
- More education and opportunities for young people to find out career options within rural and island communities, including for urban young people.
- Local businesses in communities to be financially supported to offer career development opportunities to their young employees.
- More affordable travel from rural and island areas allowing people to travel for employment opportunities while living in their community.
- Better digital connectiveness and mobile signal for rural and island communities, allowing remote working to be an accessible option.
- More secure, sustainable and well-paid jobs for rural and island young people.