



Title: Programme for Youth Employment - Update

Date: 17 March 2021

Purpose:	For Information
How does this link with our corporate priorities of improving biodiversity or delivering nature-based solutions to climate change	<p>This paper supports the youth employment and skills theme within the Green Recovery action plan. It is set in the context of recent Board and SLT discussions on the scale of ambition and the need for a step change in our investment in youth employment.</p> <p>This investment will support our corporate priorities to improve biodiversity and deliver nature-based solutions to climate change – by increasing the capacity and skills to deliver this work.</p>
Summary:	This paper provides the Board with an update on the development of NatureScot's Youth Employment programme, with specific reference to engagement with young people aged 16-18. It confirms that investment in up to 37 posts is planned for the programme in 2021/22.
Actions	No action required, for information.
Recommendations:	The Board are asked to note the contents of the paper.
Report Author(s):	Alison MacDonald , People and OD Manager, with input from Katrina Marshall , Senior POD Adviser and Young Employee Panel members.
Sponsor:	Jane Macdonald , Director of Business Services and Transformation
Appendices:	<u>Annex 1</u> - Pathways mapped to target age groups. <u>Annex 2</u> – Trend Information.

Purpose

1. This paper provides an update on progress with the development of our Programme for Youth Employment, which will enhance the current offer. It will be launched in April 2021.

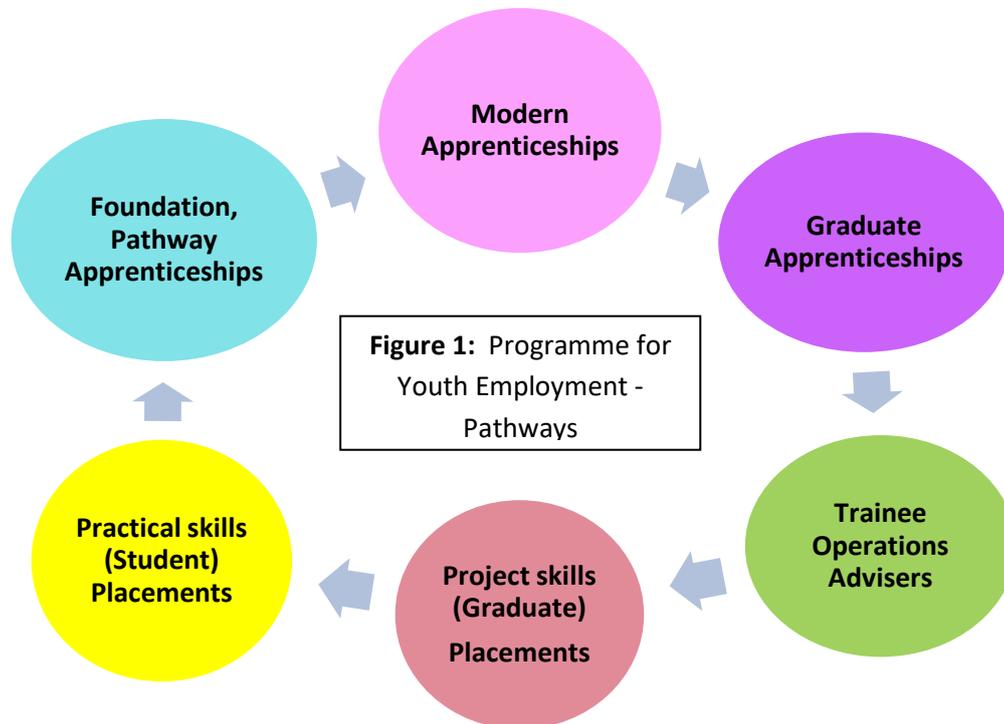
Background

2. Since the introduction of our initial youth employment strategy in 2012, our programme has continued to develop, and the new programme will bring a significant expansion of our ambition to support youth employment. Increased investment has been secured which will increase the number of career pathways into NatureScot, and support the achievement of our Youth Engagement action plan. The overall aim and measure of success for the programme is that we deliver a robust, structured and fit for purpose programme which delivers a skilled and flexible workforce for NatureScot. It will also show that NatureScot has a number of different career options for young people to move into nature-based jobs, through providing a quality product and experience for young people.
3. It also further supports the Scottish Government's target of 5% of employees being under the age of 25. As can be seen in Annex 2, with this planned investment, we estimate we will have met and exceeded the SG target by the end of 2021/22.
4. As part of the programme, we are also developing a NatureScot pledge (currently in draft) in support of the Young Person Guarantee. This aims to give all young people in Scotland the chance to succeed despite the economic impacts of Covid-19. Organisations backing the guarantee make five pledges to help young people at this critical time.
5. The guarantee will ensure that everyone aged 16-24 will have the opportunity of work, education or training. As part of our programme we will support this by offering:
 - Pathway and Foundation Apprenticeships,
 - Further collaboration with Developing the Young Workforce, and
 - Partnership apprenticeships with other nature-based partners.

The guarantee is targeted at young people aged 16-24 years old, but within our programme, pathway and foundation apprenticeships will be targeted directly at 16-18 year olds.

6. From launch, our programme will result in the recruitment of up to 37 new young employees during year 1. This includes: 20 apprenticeships, 3 traineeships within Operations and 11 placements. We already have 2 graduate apprenticeships underway within our Technical & Digital Services team. (For comparison, the 2020/21 programme comprised 17 posts). These posts will be distributed across the organisation and involve a number of role types. The variety of the different pathways provide us with an inclusive approach.
7. The different pathways are targeted at different age ranges and these are mapped in Annex 1.

8. These pathways are summarised below at Figure 1:



9. We are also exploring a number of opportunities that are not direct pathways in our programme, such as an opportunity for NatureScot for up to 3 posts for University of the Highlands & Islands (UHI) Trainee Rangers. We are currently exploring whether Kickstart funding can support these posts.

Next Steps for the Programme

10. We have identified a number of next steps to support the Programme. These include:

11. Continued development and alignment with our nature-based jobs and skills work to influence future roles across our sector to ensure a close fit with identified future skills.

12. As part of our Youth Engagement action plan, we have an action to facilitate a broad, cross-sectoral approach to youth employment and training. This is part of the Green Recovery action plan to deliver the green skills and jobs needed to realise net zero ambitions, inclusive economic growth and wellbeing. This involves developing an influencing plan to engage with strategic stakeholders on our ambitions for youth employment across our sector. We are currently exploring whether we (along with our EELG partners - LLTNPA, CNPA, SEPA, F&LS and RGE) can develop a more collaborative approach to youth employment.

13. Continued influencing work with Skills Development Scotland (we sit on the Steering Group) and Developing the Young Workforce to engage further with schools and young

people before they leave secondary education. This builds on previous work in setting up learning materials for S2 age pupils through Marketplace (this was available to all schools across Scotland) to give emphasis to work within the Scottish public sector. As part of this work we are planning to do more around careers fairs and engaging in career events through increased school engagement. We are also working to expand our work shadowing / work experience opportunities.

14. Through the Green Recovery, we have a previously unequalled opportunity to influence at government level in terms of the future of the world of work for young people. We plan to co-design how this looks within NatureScot through our Young Employee Panel and also through wider external youth engagement networks as part of our Youth Engagement action plan.
15. Alignment with our other equalities work, including exploring the potential for an outreach officer role to engage with a wider section of young people and explore other career paths into nature-based jobs from community involvement, youth workers and partners.
16. It is important that we include additional career paths within the programme, as not every young person has a positive school experience. There is scope to explore other mechanisms for engaging with young people, for example, through community groups, youth workers, the National Parks, John Muir Trust and TCV, who may also have a collaborative role to play.
17. Further integration of our research-based and academic placements into the programme.
18. Further refinement of our resourcing processes and attraction strategy to ensure they are inclusive of young people, removing barriers in terms of applying, interviewing and ensuring role requirements are relevant to the different age groups of prospective applicants.

Constraints

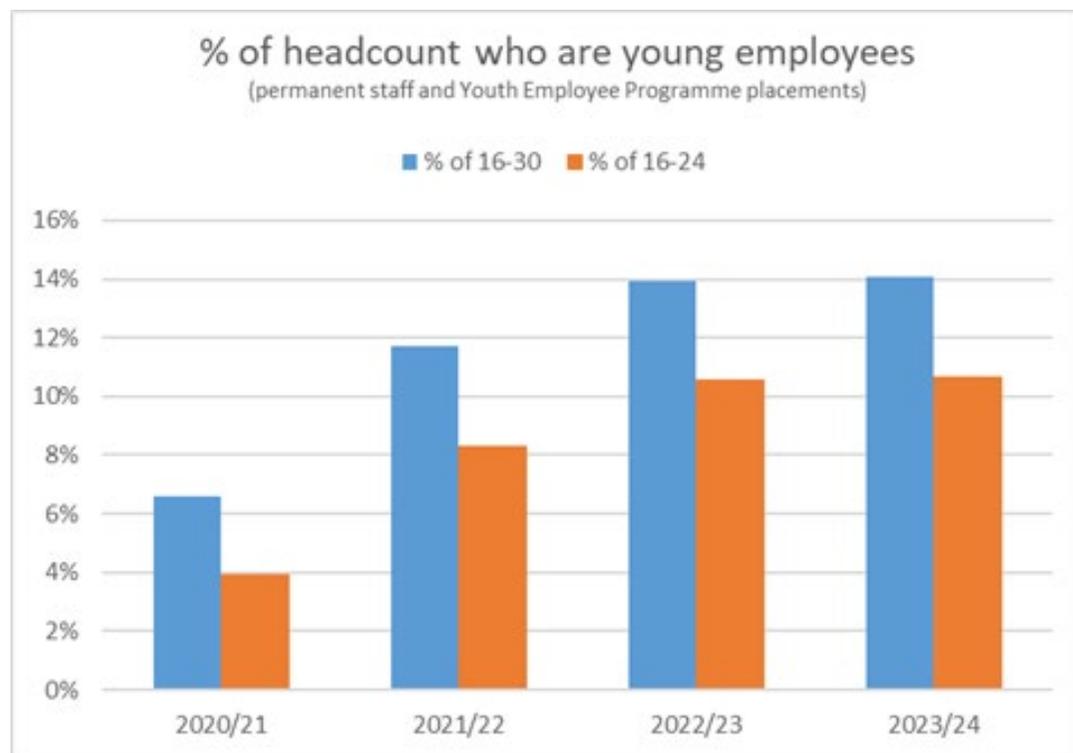
19. There are a number of constraints associated with the ambitions of the programme and we have to remain alive to these whilst continuing to be ambitious in our aims. These constraints include:
 - a. Available capacity in the organisation to support the posts needed to meet our targets.
 - b. Limited funding opportunities.

Recommendations

20. The Board are asked to note the update provided and the direction of travel in terms of programme development and ambition.

Annex 1 – Pathways mapped to target age groups.

	AGE	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
LEVEL OF EDUCATION REQUIRED																	
S4 - Secondary school																	
S5/S6 - Secondary school		Foundation & Pathway apprenticeship															
School leaver upwards		Modern apprenticeship										Funded by NatureScot from 25					
17 years upwards - Highers?			Graduate apprenticeship									Funded by NatureScot from 25					
Recent existing student, or recently completed a relevant diploma or degree				Practical Skills (Student) Placements								Funded by NatureScot from 25					
Graduate - with relevant degree/postgraduate degree								Trainee Operations officers				Funded by NatureScot from 25					
Graduate - with relevant degree/postgraduate degree								Project Skills (Graduate) Placements				Funded by NatureScot from 25					

Annex 2 – Trend Graph for Youth Employment Programme**Notes:**

- Assumes all the placements are assigned to young people.
- Assumes headcount stays the same.
- Assumes permanent employee number stays the same.
- Within NatureScot, young employees are defined as those aged 30 and under, this trend is also included for comparison.