

Activity Agreements National Implementation 2012-13 Summary Report to Local Authorities

**Scottish Government Employability, Skills and Lifelong
Learning Analysis**

This paper provides a summary of reported participation in Activity Agreements during the second year of the national roll-out of the programme (1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013). The paper outlines characteristics and outcomes for young people that have either completed or dropped out of an Activity Agreement during this period.

Summary of Key Findings

Reporting here covers **2,266 young people from across 32 local authorities in Scotland**. The data were gathered directly by local authorities and has been quality assured by the Scottish Government

KEY FINDINGS:

- Activity Agreements appear to be reaching their target group (the young and most vulnerable).
- Almost 3 in 4 participants (73%) are able to sustain their involvement and complete their agreed programme of support.
- Over two-thirds of leavers (69%) completed their agreement in 6 months or under, and 85% within 9 months.
- Around two-thirds of participants (67%) in total progressed on to further learning, training or work. This rises to 88% when looking only at those who completed their Activity Agreement.
- The most common destinations on completion are Further Education (27%) or training (36%).

FINDINGS IN MORE DETAIL:

Engagement:

- 73% of young people in the sample completed their Activity Agreement. The remainder dropped out before completing their agreed programme.
- The majority of young people were referred into an Activity Agreement through Skills Development Scotland (36%). A further 27% of referrals came through schools and 11% came from social work.

Activity Agreement Transition Outcomes:

Data on outcomes show that 67% in total went on to participate in further learning, training or work. This rises to 88% when looking only at those who completed their Activity Agreement (excluding drop-outs), suggesting that completion of the agreed programme has clear benefits for individuals. The most common outcomes on completion were to National Training Programmes (Get Ready for Work, Training for Work, Modern Apprenticeships) (36%), Further Education (27%) and Employment (15%).

Factors that influence outcomes:

- Age: younger leavers (age 15 & 16) are more likely to go on to participate in learning or work.
- Gender: male leavers are slightly more likely to go on to participate in learning or work.
- Qualifications: those with qualifications are more likely to go on to participate in learning or work than those with no qualifications. In general, the higher the level of qualification, the greater the likelihood of a positive outcome.
- Substance misuse and history of offending: these issues appear to be associated with less positive outcomes from an Activity Agreement.
- Caring responsibilities: these have a complex relationship with outcomes; those caring for their own child were *least* likely to go on to participate in learning or work, while those caring for another relative were *most* likely to go on to participate in learning or work. However, the vast majority (90%) had no caring responsibilities, and two-thirds of this group went on to participate in learning or work.

Duration of support:

The data show that the majority of young people (85%) complete their Activity Agreement in under 9 months (69% in 6 months or under and 16% between 6 and 9 months).

Profile of Leavers:

- Most participants are aged 16-17 (80%) and there are slightly more males (55%) than females (45%)
- Levels of EMA receipt are similar to those reported in the pilot evaluation (45%)
- Just over half (51%) of leavers have no/unknown qualifications and a further 44% have low qualifications (between SCQF levels 1 and 4).

Policy Context

Participation in an Activity Agreement is currently included as a positive destination in the School Leaver Destination Return (SLDR), the primary means by which Scottish Government, local authorities and other delivery partners monitor the post-school transitions of young people in Scotland. The current focus on initial and sustained 'destinations' as defined by the SLDR concentrates on activity around the first transition a young person makes on leaving school and is not designed to acknowledge and record less formal learning options and support. The developing policy landscape demands recognition that the learning and training young people are engaged with are stepping stones to facilitate continued progression and not ends in themselves. As such the new measures will focus on activities young people are currently participating in rather than a destination to recognise the need for ongoing support.

Please Note: This report refers to "outcomes" from learning undertaken as part of an Activity Agreement. These outcomes would previously have been described as 'positive or negative destinations' and now reflect either continued participation in, or disengagement from learning, training or work.

What data are included in the analysis?

- 1 To date we have received information on a total of **2,589 participants from 32 local authorities**. This relates to individuals who have completed or dropped out of their Activity Agreement between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012. After the quality assurance process (removing duplicate records and those without sign up or exit dates) **a valid sample of 2,266 remains** broken down as follows:

Completers (excluding those who were not offered, didn't sign up, or dropped out)	1,647 (73%)
Drop-outs (signed up but dropped out part way through the agreed programme)	619 (27%)
Total Valid Sample	2,266 (100%)

- 2 Unless stated otherwise, figures will be given throughout the paper for the total valid sample of 2,266 individuals. Where data are missing for a particular variable, this is presented as a partial sample. Please see Annex 1 (page 5) for more information on the limitations of the data and the quality assurance process.

Characteristics of leavers from Activity Agreements

- 3 The following section provides some narrative on the characteristics of leavers from the second full year of the national programme.
 - **Age:** The majority of young people in the sample (80%) are aged 16-17.
 - **Gender:** Slightly more leavers are male (55%) than female (45%).
 - **Qualifications:** Just over half of leavers (51%) have no qualifications at all. A further 44% of leavers have qualifications between SCQF Levels 1 and 4. Within the adult population (age 25+), those with qualifications at or below SCQF level 4 are identified as being "low skilled".¹ Only 5.6% of the sample have qualifications at intermediate level or above (SCQF 5+).
 - **Additional Support Needs:** Just over two-fifths of leavers have some form of additional support needs (43%) and by far the main issue reported is social, emotional or behavioural difficulties (28% of all leavers).
 - **'Looked After' and Care Leavers:** The data show that 14% of leavers were reported as being care leavers and 14% were looked after/subject to a supervision order. Of these, 4% were in both groups.
 - **History of Offending:** 17% of leavers from this cohort had some reported history of offending.
 - **Drug / Alcohol Problems:** 12% of leavers were reported as having drug or alcohol problems.
 - **Young Carers:** small numbers of young people reported any caring responsibilities, whether as a parent (3%) or in relation to another/relative (4%).

¹ SCQF 4 is equivalent to Intermediate 1; General Standard Grade; SVQ 1; National Progression Awards and National Certificates.

Details on the nature of young people's participation

- 4 **Referral into an Activity Agreement:** The majority of leavers were referred onto an Activity Agreement through Skills Development Scotland (36%); a further 27% were referred by schools and 11% were from social work.
- 5 **Education Maintenance Allowance:** 45% of leavers were reported as having received Education Maintenance Allowance. This is a similar proportion to that identified in the pilot evaluation² (40%).

Duration of Activity Agreements

- 6 With regards to the duration of an Activity Agreement, the data so far suggest that **more than two thirds (69%) of young people complete (or exit) their Activity Agreement within 6 months and a further 16% leave within 9 months.** A more detailed breakdown of the data is provided in table 12.
- 7 **Around two-fifths of young people (41%) were referred and signed-up to their Activity Agreement on the same day** and a further third (35%) were signed-up within a month of referral.

Participation and outcomes after an Activity Agreement

- 8 Analysis of data for this group of leavers (completers and drop-outs) suggests that **two-thirds (67%) go on to a participate in learning or work**; 15% were unemployed (or otherwise disengaged³) and 18% were reported as having an unknown or 'other' (unspecified) outcome⁴ (see table 13)
- 9 Further analysis of the data shows that those who completed their Activity Agreement had markedly better outcomes than those who left the programme early (see tables 13a-c):
 - **Of those who completed their Activity Agreement (n=1,647), 88% went on to other learning, training or work**; 6% became unemployed (or otherwise disengaged) and 6% were reported as having an unknown or 'other' (unspecified) outcome.
 - **Of those who dropped out of their Activity Agreement before completion (n=619), 11% went on to other learning, training or work**; 39% became unemployed (or otherwise disengaged) and 50% were recorded as having an unknown or 'other' (unspecified) outcome.
- 10 This finding is tentative as the numbers of young people dropping out are small in comparison to the completers group. It is also sometimes the case that the reason for drop-out is the destination (eg: a person drops out of an activity agreement in order to start a full-time job or full-time further education). However, it would suggest that there are benefits to young people in completing the agreed programme of support.

Factors that influence outcomes

- 11 Analysis of destinations data by key personal characteristics⁵ and MCMC risk variables⁶ suggests that there are a number of factors which may work in combination or individually to impact on outcomes (see tables 14-18).
- 12 In terms of personal characteristics, basic analysis suggests:

² For reference see: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/10/19141255/0>

³ "Otherwise Disengaged" includes young people who were reported as being in custody or economically inactive – along with being Unemployed, this was previously described as being in a 'Negative Destination'

⁴ "other activities" are reported by co-ordinators where the young person has progressed into an activity that doesn't fit into the pre-determined 'positive/negative' categories. We have no further information at present on these activities, but plan to follow up with co-ordinators where they occur frequently. These are not assumed to be a measure of disengagement (unemployment, inactivity, custody) and are reflected separately in the analysis.

⁵ Personal Characteristics – age, gender, Additional Support Needs (ASNs), qualifications, duration of Activity Agreement

⁶ MCMC Risk Factor variables – Looked After; Care Leaver; Young Carer; History of Offending; Drugs & Alcohol problems.

- **Age:** Some evidence of a pattern of decreasing positive outcomes by age (15- to 18-year-olds)⁷. Higher than average numbers of 15 and 16-year-olds progress to participate in other learning, training or work, whereas this falls below average for 17, 18 and 19-year-olds (see table 14).
 - **Gender:** A slightly lower proportion of young women (66%) than young men (68%) go on to participate in learning, training or work (see table 15).
 - **Qualifications:** Fewer young people with no qualifications go on to participate in learning, training or work when compared with both the overall average and young people with low or intermediate qualifications (see table 16).
 - **Additional support needs:** No evidence that those with additional support needs are at a disadvantage. Young people with some needs appear to be less likely to continue on into learning, training or work than others, but cell sizes are too small to draw any firm conclusions from these data (see table 17).
 - **Duration of Activity Agreement:** Some evidence that those whose Activity Agreements last for longer than 6 months may not be as likely to progress successfully into learning or training or work (see table 18).
- 13 Initial analysis of the influence of 'risk' factors on outcomes suggests:
- Young people who have a **history of offending or who have drugs/alcohol problems** are less likely to have positive outcomes (see tables 19 and 20).
 - **Young people who are caring for their own child** are less likely (than average) to progress into learning, training or work, but they appear to be more likely than other groups to move into 'other' (unspecified) activities, rather than disengaging from learning, training or work. This may signal that they are accessing other forms of support/provision. Conversely, **young people who are caring for another relative** are more likely (than average) to progress into learning, training or work (see table 21).
 - **Care leavers** are less likely (than average) to have a positive outcome, but there are also more participating in 'other' (unspecified) activities than young people who are not care leavers, suggesting that they may be more likely to require further support to keep them engaged with learning or training or to progress into a job. (see table 22).
 - Finally, **being looked after** appears to be associated with a lower chance of a positive progression from an Activity Agreement. Actual numbers of looked after young people were fairly low and the data on outcomes suggest they are more likely (than average) to progress into unknown destinations (see table 23).

For further information please contact:

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⁷ Cell sizes for 19 year olds are very small and preclude making any robust conclusions

ANNEX 1: Data Limitations and Quality Assurance

- **Coverage** – We have received data from all 32 Scottish LAs.
- **Reporting Period** - Data for 2012-13 submitted after 31 May 2013 or where the reporting period is unclear has been excluded from this analysis.
- **Valid sample** – to be included in the final ‘valid sample’ individuals must have signed up and then either completed or dropped out of their Activity Agreement between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013. Individuals who were referred but didn’t sign up or who are currently undertaking an Activity Agreement have been excluded.
- **Quality Assurance** - These data are not 100% clean. We have excluded invalid data, missing cases and duplicates, but the data were submitted manually by external delivery partners and are therefore subject to errors which cannot be identified.
- **Duplicate Cases** – where duplicate cases were identified through the quality assurance process, these have been excluded from the analysis.
- **Missing Data** – there is a very small number of data missing on destinations (10 of the 2,266 records - 0.4%). Destinations data are presented here as a percentage of the total sample, with the blank records included with the records where destinations were recorded as “unknown”.

Construction of Valid Sample for analyses – full dataset 2012-13		
	Cases (n)	Cases (n)
Total cases (returns made)	2,589	
Excluded - not offered/not signed up/still on programme.	250	2,339
Excluded – duplicate records	73	2,266
Final Valid Sample		2,266

ANNEX 2: Basic Tables on participant characteristics

All notified leavers from programmes between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013.

Valid Sample = 2,266

Table 1: Age

	Frequency	Percent
15 years	207	9.1%
16 years	1,115	49.2%
17 years	689	30.4%
18 years	191	8.4%
19 years	64	2.8%
Total	2,266	100.0%

Table 2: Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Female	1,011	44.6%
Male	1,255	55.4%
Total	2,266	100.0%

Table 3: Qualifications

	Frequency	Percent
SCQF 7 or above (Advanced Higher/HNC/Cert HE/SVQ 4)	1	0.0%
SCQF 6 (Highers/NC/SVQ 3)	15	0.7%
SCQF 5 (Credit standard grade/Intermediate 2/SVQ 2)	110	4.9%
SCQF 4 (General standard grade/Intermediate 1/SVQ 1)	361	15.9%
SCQF 3 (Access 3/Foundation Standard Grade)	522	23.0%
SCQF 2 (Access 2)	60	2.6%
SCQF 1 (Access 1)	45	2.0%
None	903	39.8%
Unknown	249	11.0%
Total	2,266	100.0%

Table 4: Additional support needs

	Frequency	Percent
Physical or motor impairment	20	0.9%
Visual Impairment	2	0.1%
Hearing impairment	2	0.1%
Language or speech disorder	16	0.7%
Autistic spectrum disorder	37	1.6%
Learning disability	49	2.2%
Moderate learning disability	50	2.2%
Specific learning disabilities	67	3.0%
Social, emotional and behavioural difficulty	628	27.7%
No additional support need	1,235	54.5%
Other	109	4.8%
Unknown	51	2.3%
Total	2,266	100.0%

Table 5: Looked after/Supervision order in place

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	316	13.9%
No	1,809	79.8%
Unknown	141	6.2%
Total	2,266	100.0%

Table 6: Care leaver

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	324	14.3%
No	1,899	83.8%
Unknown	43	1.9%
Total	2,266	100.0%

Table 7: History of offending

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	395	17.4%
No	1,712	75.6%
Unknown	159	7.0%
Total	2,266	100.0%

Table 8: Drug/Alcohol problems

	Frequency	Percent
Yes - self-reported drug/alcohol problems	163	7.2%
Yes - referred with drug/alcohol problems	108	4.8%
No known drug/alcohol problems	1,805	79.7%
Unknown	190	8.4%
Total	2,266	100.0%

Table 9: Young carer/parent

	Frequency	Percent
Yes – own child	72	3.2%
Yes – other relative	86	3.8%
No caring responsibilities	2,028	89.5%
Unknown	80	3.5%
Total	2,266	100.0%

Table 10: Referral method

	Frequency	Percent
CLD	120	5.3%
Criminal justice system	17	0.8%
School	602	26.6%
Skills Development Scotland	818	36.1%
Social work	257	11.3%
Voluntary organisation	54	2.4%
Youth work	15	0.7%
Other	44	1.9%
Total	2,266	100.0%

Table 11: In receipt of EMA

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	1,008	44.5%
No	1,220	53.8%
Unknown	38	1.7%
Total	2,266	100.0%

Table 12: Duration, from sign-up to completion/drop-out

	Frequency	Percent
Up to 1 month	184	8.1%
1-3 months	649	28.6%
3-6 months	720	31.8%
6-9 months	361	15.9%
9-12 months	210	9.3%
12+ months	142	6.3%
Total	2,266	100.0%

Table 13: Outcomes on completion

	Frequency	Percent
Custody	23	1.0%
Employment (no training)	189	8.3%
Employment (with training)	80	3.5%
Further Education (college)	446	19.7%
Get Ready for Work	377	16.6%
Inactive	91	4.0%
Lifeskills (GRfW)	144	6.4%
Modern Apprenticeship	54	2.4%
Other	121	5.3%
Other training (not NTP)	137	6.0%
School (returner)	27	1.2%
Training for Work	34	1.5%
Unemployed (seeking)	228	10.1%
Unknown	274	12.1%
Voluntary work	31	1.4%
(blank)	10	0.4%
Total	2,266	100.0%

Table 13a: Summary of positive and negative outcomes

	Frequency	Percent
Positive – FE*	473	20.9%
Positive - Employment	269	11.9%
Positive – NTP	609	26.9%
Positive – other training	137	6.0%
Positive – voluntary work	31	1.4%
Negative – unemployed	228	10.1%
Negative – other**	114	5.0%
Other	121	5.3%
Unknown	284	12.5%
Total	2,266	100.0%

Table 13b: Summary of positive and negative outcomes, by completed and dropped-out

	Complete		Dropped-out	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Positive – FE*	449	27.3%	24	3.9%
Positive - Employment	251	15.2%	18	2.9%
Positive – NTP	594	36.1%	15	2.4%
Positive – other training	132	8.0%	5	0.8%
Positive – voluntary work	27	1.6%	4	0.6%
Negative – unemployed	83	5.0%	145	23.4%
Negative – other**	17	1.0%	97	15.7%
Other	69	4.2%	52	8.4%
Unknown	25	1.5%	259	41.8%
Total	1,647	100.0%	619	100.0%

* includes school returners;

** includes those inactive and in custody

Table 14: Outcomes by age

	Positive	Negative	Other	Unknown	Total
15 years	159	16	2	30	207
16 years	775	159	58	123	1,115
17 years	443	117	40	89	689
18 years	103	39	17	32	191
19 years	39	11	4	10	64
Total	1,519	342	121	284	2,266

Table 15: Outcomes by gender

	Positive	Negative	Other	Unknown	Total
Male	857	178	56	164	1,255
Female	662	164	65	120	1,011
Total	1,519	342	121	284	2,266

Table 16: Outcomes by qualification

	Positive	Negative	Other	Unknown	Total
SCQF 7 or above (Advanced Higher/HNC/Cert HE/SVQ 4)	1	0	0	0	1
SCQF 6 (Highers/NC/SVQ 3)	13	0	1	1	15
SCQF 5 (Credit standard grade/Intermediate 2/SVQ 2)	91	10	2	7	110
SCQF 4 (General standard grade/Intermediate 1/SVQ 1)	269	41	18	33	361
SCQF 3 (Access 3/Foundation Standard Grade)	349	96	22	55	522
SCQF 2 (Access 2)	29	10	5	16	60
SCQF 1 (Access 1)	34	5	1	5	45
None	585	143	39	136	903
Unknown	148	37	33	31	249
Total	1,519	342	121	284	2,266

Table 17: Outcomes by additional support needs

	Positive	Negative	Other	Unknown	Total
Physical or motor impairment	13	2	2	3	20
Visual Impairment	0	0	1	1	2
Hearing impairment	1	0	1	0	2
Language or speech disorder	8	0	2	6	16
Autistic spectrum disorder	30	4	0	3	37
Learning disability	33	8	6	2	49
Moderate learning disability	37	10	0	3	50
Specific learning disabilities	50	10	2	5	67
Social, emotional and behavioural difficulty	388	123	41	76	628
No additional support need	856	163	58	158	1,235
Other	73	15	4	17	109
Unknown	30	7	4	10	51
Total	1,519	342	121	284	2,266

Table 18: Outcomes by duration

	Positive	Negative	Other	Unknown	Total
Up to 1 month	127	19	7	31	184
1-3 months	462	80	34	73	649
3-6 months	480	120	31	89	720
6-9 months	232	48	28	53	361
9-12 months	123	51	12	24	210
12+ months	95	24	9	14	142
Total	1,519	342	121	284	2,266

Table 19: Outcomes by history of offending

	Positive	Negative	Other	Unknown	Total
Yes	199	113	28	55	395
No	1,218	204	84	206	1,712
Unknown	102	25	9	23	159
Total	1,519	342	121	284	2,266

Table 20: Drug/alcohol problems

	Positive	Negative	Other	Unknown	Total
Yes - self-reported drug/alcohol problems	79	51	14	19	163
Yes - referred with drug/alcohol problems	53	28	8	19	108
No known drug/alcohol problems	1,260	243	90	212	1,805
Unknown	127	20	9	34	190
Total	1,519	342	121	284	2,266

Table 21: Outcomes by young carer/parent status

	Positive	Negative	Other	Unknown	Total
Yes – own child	39	16	9	8	72
Yes – other relative	66	8	5	7	86
No caring responsibilities	1,355	312	100	261	2,028
Unknown	59	6	7	8	80
Total	1,519	342	121	284	2,266

Table 22: Outcomes by care-leaver status

	Positive	Negative	Other	Unknown	Total
Yes	167	91	24	42	324
No	1,318	247	97	237	1,899
Unknown	34	4	0	5	43
Total	1,519	342	121	284	2,266

Table 23: Outcomes by looked after status

	Positive	Negative	Other	Unknown	Total
Yes	185	61	18	52	316
No	1,250	246	101	212	1,809
Unknown	84	35	2	20	141
Total	1,519	342	121	284	2,266



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