

Cost of the School Day Voice network leaders meeting - summary

Date: 17 June 2026

1. Celebrating young people's achievements

The Manifesto Action Group was recognised for its work developing resources, influencing decision-makers and representing thousands of young people's views at Parliament.

Young people have presented at conferences and local authority events, demonstrating the impact of pupil voice in tackling the cost of the school day.

40 Voice network members attended a children and young people's poverty hustings.

80 West Lothian primary school pupils came together at Winchburgh Academy to celebrate and share their cost of the school day work.

You can read all the [highlights here](#)

2. Guest speakers

Two guest speakers highlighted successful approaches and newly developed professional learning.

Allison Hopton from Auchenhavie Academy, North Ayrshire shared practical examples of reducing financial barriers for families in the school.

Emphasised the importance of supporting families to access benefits such as free school meals and clothing grants; flexible financial support based on individual family needs, which included sending short explainer videos out to all families.

Allison also shared the beginning of a piece of work on a proposed **National Equity Charter** which aims to create a shared framework to help schools embed equity. The charter is being shaped collaboratively with other interested schools. The development group plans to meet in September at Springburn Academy. She invited anyone interested to join the discussion or contribute feedback on what this could look like.

You can contact Allison on gw08balmerallison2@ea.n-ayrshire.sch.uk

Equity Charter Challenge Questions

We are keen to look at an Equity Charter – similar to Rights Respecting Schools & Sports Scotland Awards.



- How would this look?
- How do we make it equitable for ALL schools regardless of location?
- Could we use the Child Poverty Manifesto as a SE tool relating to pupil voice?

Respect

Equality

Determination

Suzie Wood from Education Scotland introduced a new national professional learning programme on mitigating the impact of poverty. The resource builds on Scotland's Equity Toolkit and is designed to help educators develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to reduce the impact of poverty on children and young people's learning.

The professional learning:

- Designed for educators across early years to secondary, not just senior leaders;
- Aligns with current legislation, policy and Scotland's Equity Toolkit;
- Links directly to GTCS, CLD and SSSC professional standards, supporting practitioners' professional learning and update requirements.

The learning combines:

- Five self-directed introductory activities;
- Four facilitated group sessions led locally;
- Six professional learning activities completed between sessions;
- A reflective workbook to capture learning and evidence for professional development.
- The six learning themes include:

Pilot findings

The programme has already been piloted in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Dundee and Inverclyde. Feedback highlighted that:

- local authorities appreciated being able to adapt delivery to suit their context;
- participants at different career stages gained different insights;
- face-to-face sessions were generally preferred over online delivery;
- several authorities are already planning further cohorts.

Next steps

- The resource is currently in its pilot phase and is expected to go live on the Education Scotland website in August.
- Schools should work with their Scottish Attainment Challenge lead, Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) or local authority lead when implementing the programme.
- Suzie invited schools and partner organisations to become critical friends, providing feedback before the final version is published.

3. Opportunities for 2026–27

The following opportunities for voice network pupils were shared, please contact kirstycampbell@cpagscotland.org.uk if you would like to note an interest in your young people getting involved

- A visit to the Scottish Parliament (1 September) with members of the End Child Poverty Coalition to discuss priorities for tackling child poverty with politicians. Travel costs will be covered. Interested young people can attend an online planning meeting on 24th August to prepare.
- A “How To” guide created by young people for young people on leading Cost of the School Day work in schools.
- Short online learning sessions (around 20 minutes each) will be developed for new pupil groups and schools beginning this work.
- Young people to test and shape these resources during August and September.
- Review of national school uniform guidance, gathering young people’s views on: awareness of the guidance; affordability of uniforms; improvements needed.
- Work exploring school clothing grant uptake, including understanding why applications may be declining and how awareness can be improved.

The Scottish Government has requested young people’s input on other national engagement opportunities including reviewing the progress of the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, with engagement events planned early in the new term.

4. Feedback and next steps

Participants were asked to complete the following check in to evaluate their experience this year and express interest in future projects. [Cost of the School Day Voice Network Check In – Fill out form](#)

Kirsty will circulate slides, meeting summary and contact interested school with further dates and details about pupil opportunities.

A huge well done and thank you to all leaders this year for supporting young people to take part in cost of the school day work.