

# Minister's Foreword

## Introduction by Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning



This Government has, as one of its core values, a commitment to equality of opportunity for everyone. We want people to have the opportunities and support they need to reach their goals. That is why we have devoted so much of our time, energy and resources to education and lifelong learning, recognising that it is a key factor in improving prospects, employability and personal fulfilment.

We have a particular concern for young people who are sometimes on the margins because of physical or learning disabilities or mental health problems or because of the disaffection and alienation which can spring from low attainment and lack of confidence. Those young people are in danger of slipping out of our society and we need to help them re-engage to become full participants in the new inclusive Scotland.

To address the problems of this group of young people my predecessor, Brian Wilson, asked a number of experienced practitioners in this area to look at what we currently do, and to see if we could do better. The Committee, chaired by Robert Beattie, has in a remarkably short time covered a lot of ground and has talked, and more importantly listened, to an impressive number of young people and their parents/carers, and those who provide services for them.

The key recommendation in the report is that the principle of Inclusiveness should underpin all post-school guidance, education and training. I welcome that recommendation which reflects the approach of the Scottish Executive to the most vulnerable young people.

I will now be considering the proposals and recommendations in the report. They seek to address the wide range of needs among young people and could potentially have a major impact on a number of agencies and organisations in the public and private sector. There will be a series of dissemination seminars in the autumn. In addition, we would welcome your views and comments. It is my intention then to publish an Action Plan setting out how we plan to encourage and support young people to participate in post-school learning and realise their potential.

I believe that the Beattie Committee report will help us to move ahead in tackling disadvantage and disaffection among young people. I am grateful to Robert Beattie and his Committee for the care and thought that they have given to their work.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Henry McLeish".

Henry McLeish

**Implementing Inclusiveness** Realising potential

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# Foreword: Chairman



I am delighted to present this report on behalf of the Beattie Committee. It has been hard work but the amount of support I have received from every member of the Committee has been outstanding. The Committee has also received great co-operation from parents, carers and many organisations across Scotland and beyond. Most importantly, the young people themselves were willing to give their honest views of how the system is currently failing them and the sort of help they need. My grateful thanks to all of them!

In particular, I want to record my personal thanks and that of the Committee, to Patricia Russell and Julie-Anne Jamieson of the Scottish Executive, for professionalism and endless hard work in support of our endeavours.

When the Committee started work in April 1998 it seemed a daunting task. As we continued to investigate what needed to be done, the task became more daunting! However, we then listened to some of the young people affected by disadvantage and developed a firm resolve that something had to be done. This was tackling an area of work for real young people - not just statistics in official reports.

During our work we realised that the route for many of these young people was not a straight line from school to education, training and subsequently to work. By the very nature of their problems they live uncertain lives. This often forces them to attempt to be involved in any one of these for a short period of time before moving to another and back again. I am delighted, therefore, that we were asked to cover the full range of education, training and guidance.

There are many organisations in Scotland working hard to support these young people who need help. Unfortunately, from the young person's perspective the support often is not reaching them and that is why the Beattie Committee was formed - to look at current provision, assess needs and make recommendations on how provision might be adjusted to best fit these needs.

If we are to meet the needs of these vulnerable young people then we must have "joined up thinking and action" on how we help them. This means putting the needs of each young person before organisational considerations. We have called this approach "Inclusiveness" and we believe firmly that it is only in this way we can help these young people **to realise their full potential**.

When I was appointed Chairman of the Committee, I promised that our recommendations would be practical, pragmatic and affordable. As you read this report, I believe you will agree that the Committee has fulfilled that promise.

Robert B Beattie MBE FRSA

**Implementing Inclusiveness** Realising potential

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