



Young Enterprise Scotland faces closure after losing Government funding

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Young Enterprise (YE) Scotland said its future seems “untenable” and warned up to 31 jobs will be lost if no emergency funding can be sourced.

The charity, which has delivered enterprise education to schools and colleges for more than 30 years, said it has lost its full Government grant, which accounts for the majority of its overall income.

Last year, YE Scotland supported more than 18,000 school and college students through its enterprise programmes, including its flagship Company Programme, which many entrepreneurs credit for setting them on a successful business career.

Young Enterprise Scotland chief executive Emma Soanes said: “We are absolutely devastated that the future of Young Enterprise Scotland now seems untenable with the loss of our major income source.

“Not only will this have a huge detrimental impact on our dedicated staff team, who now face redundancy, but given our extensive reach across Scotland it will also impact massively on the national education landscape and the education of young people in Scotland of which our work played such a crucial role.

“Failing to support this crucial stage of the entrepreneurial pipeline is entirely at odds with strategic priorities reflected in the Government’s National Strategy for Economic Transformation and the key recommendations of the Entrepreneurial Campus report.”

In the past three years, more than 1,000 students have gained a YE Scotland enterprise qualification (SCQF Level 6).

YE Scotland’s funding has historically come from a combination of a core continuity grant from the Scottish Government, support from trusts and foundations and, to a lesser extent, the private sector.

The charity said that for both the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24, the Government grant was significantly delayed.

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The charity said that for both the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24, the Government grant was significantly delayed. In July this year, YE Scotland said it was advised the grant process would cease with immediate effect and be replaced with a competitive process.

The Entrepreneurial Education Pathways Fund subsequently opened in August, offering public and private sector organisations grants of up to £250,000 to deliver new and innovative courses and projects to young people.

It is understood YE Scotland submitted five bids to the fund, none of which were successful.

YE Scotland chairman Andy Campbell, founder of the Scottish Space Network, said the charity is ready to engage with the Government.

He said: “For over 30 years, Young Enterprise has delivered life-changing opportunities for young people in Scotland, myself included. We understand that Government budgets can face challenges and delays, particularly in the current climate.

“As a committed partner, the charity has historically supported the Government’s delays in funding, continuing delivery to ensure our young people’s futures are not impacted.

“Historically, these delays were always addressed, with costs settled and accompanied by thanks and apologies. However, despite this constructive commitment, it now appears that future funding is to be withdrawn - which we can manage, albeit as a vastly smaller organisation and not delivering the vast majority of our current activity.

“However, critically it now seems that our historical outlays will remain unsettled, putting the entire organisation at risk of closure.

“Without emergency funding, the charity will be in a precarious situation, one that could have been avoided.”

The charity is now seeking immediate emergency financial support to ensure its survival, albeit in a reduced capacity.

A Scottish Government spokesperson said: “This year’s round of funding through the Entrepreneurial Education Pathways Fund is being awarded on a competitive basis for the first time. This is in alignment with wider entrepreneurial funding.

“All applications were assessed fairly against the criteria of the fund.

“The Scottish Government is currently in discussions with Young Enterprise Scotland.”

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