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OUR NEXT GENERATION

Young People in Argyll and the Islands: Attitudes and aspirations. Research report

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Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean

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1 Introduction

1.1 This report presents the findings of a wide-ranging study to explore the attitudes and aspirations of young people aged 15-30 in relation to the Highlands and Islands (H&I) of Scotland, with a particular focus on young people in Argyll and the Islands. Overall a total of 4,409 young people from within and outwith the H&I participated in the research sharing their views on the region as a place to live, work and study. This summary report analyses the views of 588 young people from Argyll and the Islands who contributed to the research.

1.2 The report presents findings for Argyll and the Islands as a whole, providing comparisons with the wider H&I. It also looks at three key Argyll and Bute Council administrative areas: Cowal and Bute; Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (which includes Islay, Jura, Colonsay and Gigha); Oban, Lorn and the Isles (which includes Coll, Mull and Tiree); as well as Arran and the Cumbraes in North Ayrshire[1][2].

Approach

1.3 The approach made extensive use of social media, through which young people were invited to complete an online survey, and an online discussion portal allowed young people to provide further insight on their views. Six high schools across Argyll and the Islands also participated in the study. The study also gathered perspectives from stakeholders from both within and outwith the H&I region, including representatives from public sector and other organisations.

Study Context

1.4 The H&I has a deficit of young people, and there has traditionally been an outflow of young people from the region; this has particularly been the case in Argyll and the Islands. There are a wide range of factors that impact on the choices and aspirations of young people, including educational and employment opportunities, the cost of living, transport, housing, cultural and connectivity issues. There are also strong local factors affecting decision-making, including close community ties for many young people in the region.

1.5 There are a range of policies and strategic interventions that have been, and are being, implemented, both locally within Argyll and the Islands, and across the H&I region and nationally. These have a varying level of explicit focus and degree of impact on young people in the region.

The Argyll and the Islands Context

Population and Impact of Geography

1.6 Census data from 2011 highlights the 'deficit' of young people that exists across the H&I and this is especially the case in Argyll and the Islands. In 2011, there were around 9,800 young people aged 15-29 recorded as living in Argyll and the Islands, 14% of the total population, compared to 16% across the H&I and 20% across Scotland. Between the 2001 and 2011 census, Argyll and the Islands was also the only H&I region to experience overall

[1] Note: an overview of survey respondents by geography, age, gender, and status, can be found in Appendix 1.

[2] It is important to note throughout the sub-area Argyll and the Islands survey analysis that the results are slightly influenced by the higher than average percentage of school pupils responding from Cowal and Bute (representing 78% of respondents in comparison to 53-58% in the other sub-areas).

population decline.[3] Although the population of young people aged 15-29 years in Argyll and the Islands grew over this period, it had the second lowest rate of population growth for this age group (at 3%, just above Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross with 2%), compared to a H&I average growth of 10%.[4]

1.7 Argyll and the Islands covers a large geographic area of approximately 7,000km² and, with a total population of 68,485 at the time of the 2011 Census, has a very low population density of approximately 9.8 inhabitants per km². This presents a number of infrastructure and connectivity challenges. There is no single large population centre; rather there are five principal towns: Campbeltown, Oban, Rothesay, Dunoon and Lochgilphead.

1.8 Some parts of Argyll and the Islands are economically and socially more connected to the Central Belt than others, notably parts of Cowal and Bute; whereas other parts of Argyll and the Islands such as Oban, Lorn and the Isles have more in common culturally with other parts of the H&I. Arran and the Cumbraes lie to the south of Argyll and the Islands, and Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands is home to the administrative centre of Lochgilphead.

Key policies and strategies

1.9 HIE's Operating Plan places a range of sectors at the centre of its long-term strategy. For Argyll and the Islands, Energy and Life sciences are key to pursuing the regional goal of international recognition for renewable energy and marine science expertise. The area is also highly important in terms of other priority sectors, including Sustainable tourism, Creative industries, Food and drink and Aquaculture.

1.10 The Economic Development Action Plan (EDAP) 2013-2018 for Argyll and Bute was approved by the Council in April 2013.[5] Four area-based EDAPs were approved as working documents for the financial year 2014-15, and for the next three financial years up to 2017-18. The EDAPs provide a framework for sustainable economic development centred round four 'C's:

- **Competitive** Argyll and Bute – businesses, places and sustainable economic assets;
- **Connected** Argyll and Bute – transport, infrastructure, digital connectivity and grid;
- **Collaborative** Argyll and Bute – national and European policy and funding, employability and skills development, and harnessing the potential of the third sector; and
- **Compelling** Argyll and Bute – increasing the profile of the area to attract economically active new residents (individuals and families), inward investors and visitors.

1.11 Further, North Ayrshire's Economic Development Strategy[6] recognises the importance of Arran and the Cumbraes. The strategy identifies Tourism as a key sector for Arran, although Food and drink is also important, and North Ayrshire's approach to account managing businesses locally includes a number from Arran and the Cumbraes.

1.12 Argyll and Bute is also covered by the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership's Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). Its objective for the 10 years to 2023 is that

[3] Highlands and Islands Enterprise (2014) *Argyll and the Islands Area Profile.* May 2014, p.2
[4] Highlands and Islands Enterprise (2014) *Young People in the Highlands and Islands: Socio-economic Profile.* May 2014, p.18
[5] http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=71401
[6] http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Documents/CorporateServices/ChiefExecutive/EconomicDevelopment/EconDevRegnStrat1020.pdf

Argyll and Bute's economic success is built on a growing population.[7] This message is also emphasised in the March 2015 Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan.[8] The 2011 Census demonstrated that the total population of Argyll and Bute had declined by 3.4% since 2001 from 91,306 to 88,166.[9] Consequently, reversing population decline is crucial to achieving the SOA's goal of economic success.

1.13 At a regional level, the Highlands and Islands Regional Skills Investment Plan[10] (RSIP), developed by Skills Development Scotland (SDS), identifies skills challenges. It cites the greatest challenge for the H&I as the retention and attraction of working age people. Out-migration is also identified as a major skills challenge, with net out-migration evident for all ages from 15-39. The plan identifies growth opportunities for the area, including Energy and the Creative Industries, sectors where there are also skills shortage.

Key Investments

1.14 HIE, Argyll and Bute Council, and other partners are responding to the opportunities and challenges in Argyll and the Islands through key investments. These include the European Marine Science Park, in partnership with the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS), which has its centre at Oban. Such investments aim to provide high-quality laboratory and office space for science and research across the region. SAMS is Scotland's largest and oldest independent marine science organisation.

1.15 Other investments include more wide-scale infrastructure, such as the Next Generation Broadband Access (NGA) roll-out and transport improvements to the A82 and A83 road routes, the rail link from Oban to Glasgow and the Ardrossan-Campbeltown ferry link. Oban is being proposed as a University town and Argyll College UHI continues to be developed and to offer further and higher education across Argyll and the Islands, at 15 centres located throughout the mainland and islands of Argyll. There are also investments in housing to increase supply and projects in a number of key locations, for example investment in Brodick Harbour in Arran; the Machrihanish business park near Campbeltown; and business units at Sandbank, north of Dunoon, and Rothesay Pavilion. These, alongside other interventions, will be required to address the issues of out-migration facing the area.

[7] http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-success
[8] http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/ldp
[9] http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/understanding-argyll-and-bute
[10] SDS (2014) Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan

2 Staying and leaving

2.1 This section of the report considers whether respondents are likely to stay in or leave the H&I (and whether this is out of choice or out of necessity, real or perceived), and how respondents view the choices of others.

Self-identification

2.2 More than half the young people in Argyll and the Islands (51%) describe themselves as **committed leavers**. This contrasts to 40% across the H&I. In part, this is due to a higher proportion of school pupils responding to the survey in Argyll and the Islands, who are more likely to be committed leavers regardless of where they live.

2.3 By contrast, Argyll and the Islands has a lower proportion of **committed stayers** (30%) than the H&I (43%). However, as in the H&I overall, there is a substantial proportion of **reluctant leavers** in Argyll and the Islands (13%), which as the report goes on to show, is likely to reflect perceived lack of opportunities.

Table 2.1

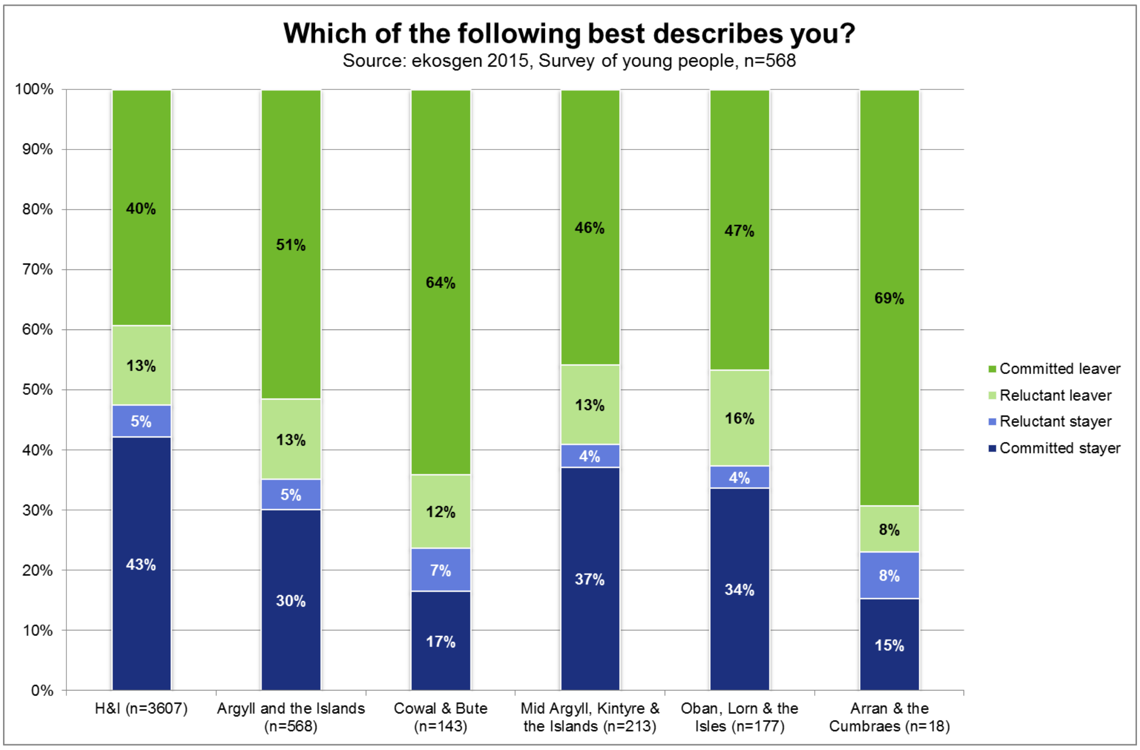
Which of the following best describes you? *Expressed in terms of % of total excluding potential returners, new residents and none of the above*	**Argyll & Islands (n=568)**	**Highlands & Islands (n=3,607)**
	%	%
Committed stayer*: I live in the H&I and I plan on living and working here*	30	43
Reluctant stayer*: I live in the H&I; I would prefer to leave but I don't think I will be able to*	5	5
Reluctant leaver*: I live in the H&I; I would prefer to stay but I don't think I will be able to live and work here*	13	13
Committed leaver*: I live in the H&I, but I plan to leave, and live and work elsewhere*	51	40

Geographic variations

2.4 Besides Arran and the Cumbraes[11], respondents from Cowal and Bute are most likely to identify as committed leavers – more than 64% do so and this is higher than average across all age groups in Cowal and Bute, not just those of school age. Elsewhere in Argyll and the Islands, the proportion is lower, though still above the H&I average. Some 46% of those in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands class themselves as committed leavers, as do 47% in Oban, Lorn and the Isles. For Arran and the Cumbraes, the proportion of committed leavers is 69%, though relatively few responses means this data should be treated with a little more caution. Reluctant leavers are highest in Oban, Lorn and the Isles (16%), which is above the H&I average of 13%.

[11] The low response rate may have influenced results here

Figure 2.1



Variation by age and status

2.5 It is worth noting that there is significant variation by age. For all areas of Argyll and the Islands, as with the H&I region, there are higher proportions of committed leavers amongst those aged 15-18 (65%, compared to 52% across the region). This ranges from 56% in Oban, Lorn and the Isles (close to the H&I average) up to 73% in Cowal and Bute. When school pupils rather than those of school age are considered, the proportion of committed leavers rises to 68%.

2.6 For those aged 19-30 in Argyll and the Islands, there are fewer committed leavers (35%), although this proportion is still higher than the H&I average (26%). The largest proportion for this age group is committed stayers (62%); significantly higher than the average for Argyll and the Islands as a whole (30%).

Perceptions of stayers and leavers

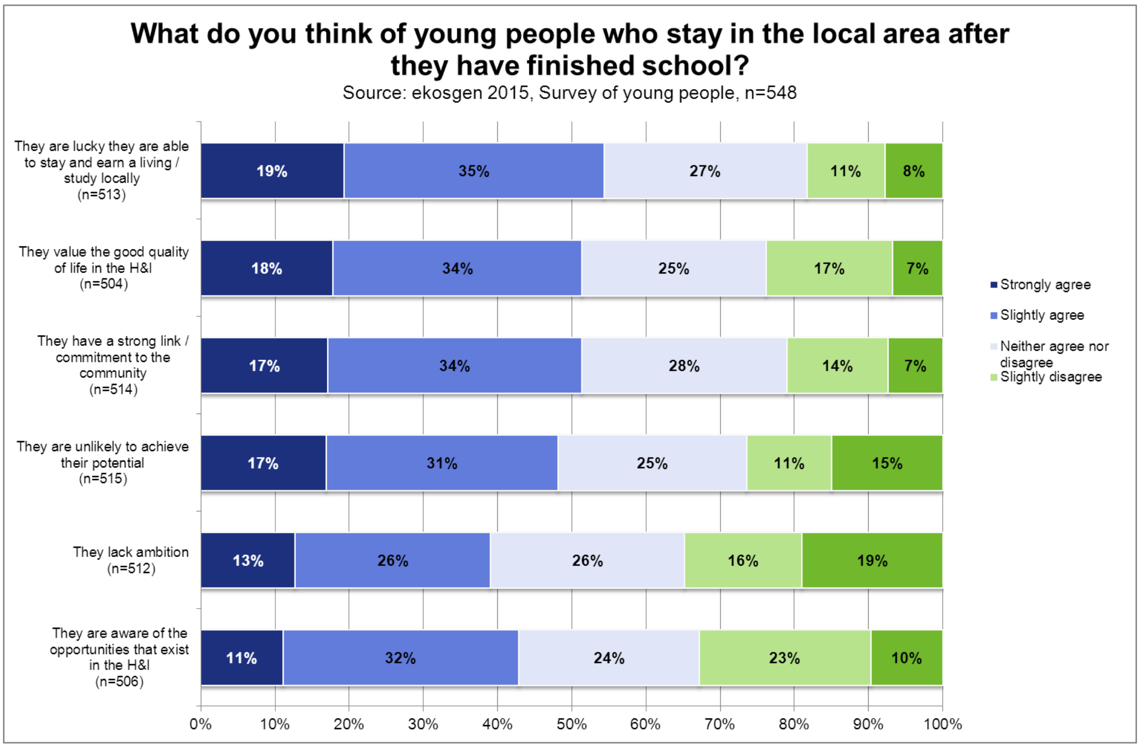
Views on those who stay

2.7 Young people in Argyll and the Islands generally have positive perceptions about those who stay, but to a lesser extent than across the H&I as a whole. 54% agree that those who stay are lucky to be able to work / study locally, and around half say they value the good quality of life (compared with 62% and 58% respectively across the H&I). The majority (51%) agree at least to some extent that young people that stay have a strong link / commitment to their local community, close to the H&I proportion of 54%.

2.8 Of the sub-areas, those in Cowal and Bute are least likely to agree with positive assertions – for example, only 48% agree that that those who stay are lucky to be able to work / study locally.

2.9 Negative connotations of staying are typically higher in Argyll and the Islands, compared to the H&I overall. In all, 39% agreed that stayers lacked ambition, compared to 34% across the H&I. Almost half (48%) agreed stayers limited their potential, compared to 39% in the H&I. Again, while most sub-areas were largely in line with Argyll and the Islands overall, those from Cowal and Bute are more likely to agree that stayers lack ambition (45%), and that stayers limit their potential (55%).

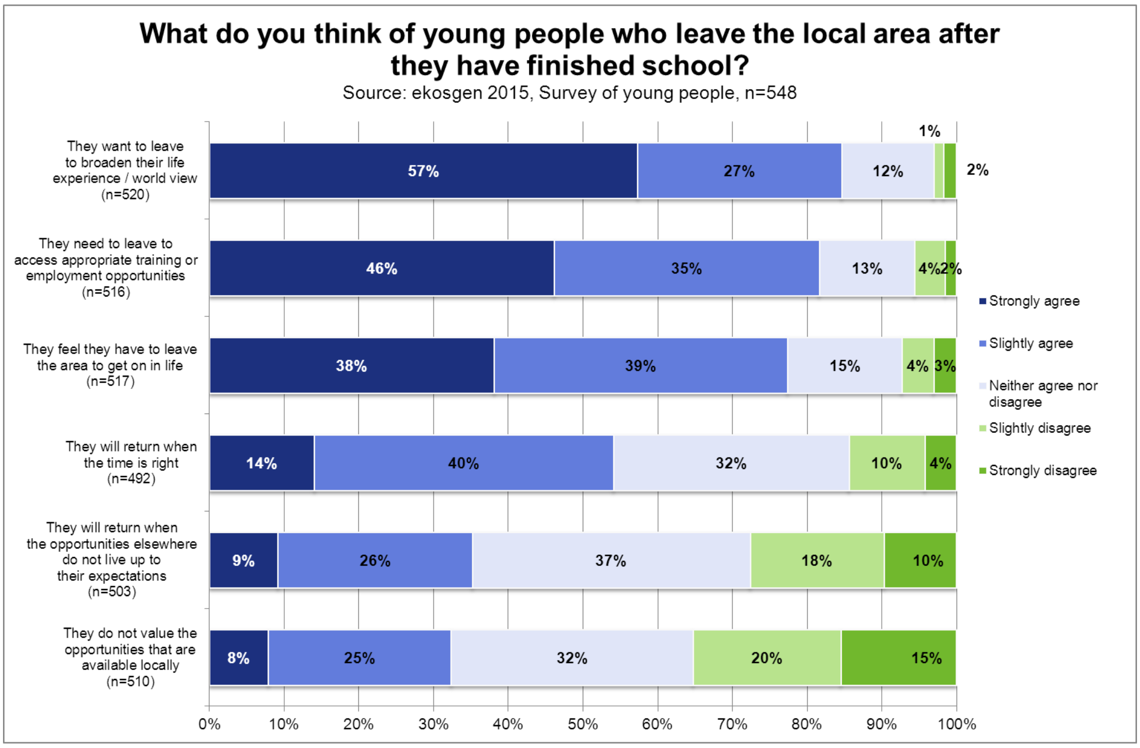
Figure 2.2



Views on those who leave

2.10 Young people in Argyll and the Islands tend to disagree that others leave because they do not *value* local opportunities, less so than across the H&I (35% versus 42%). More than eight in 10 agree others leave to pursue training and employment opportunities or to broaden their world view. This is highest in Cowal and Bute and lowest in Oban, Lorn and the Isles who are less likely to strongly agree.

Figure 2.3



Aspirations of school leavers

2.11 The majority of school pupils in Argyll and the Islands (74%) wish to go to university or undertake further education after leaving school, slightly higher than for the H&I (72%). Most wish to attend university; this ranges from under 20% in Arran and the Cumbraes to 54% in Oban, Lorn and the Isles. In Cowal & Bute and Mid-Argyll this is 49%.

2.12 The most popular destinations for post-school activity are either elsewhere in Scotland (26%) or the Central Belt specifically (20%), similar to H&I but for the former, almost 5 percentage points higher. Those in Cowal and Bute are most likely to want to go to the Central Belt (32%), whilst those in Arran and the Cumbraes (9%) and Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (10%) are least likely – and respondents from these areas are the most likely to want to stay in the local area post-school (though this is only around 18% of respondents).

Factors influencing decisions after leaving school

2.13 As with the H&I overall, exam results (88%) are the most strongly influential factor for post-school decisions, while 83% said that the availability of interesting college/ university courses would influence their choices. Young people in Argyll and the Islands are more likely than those across other areas in the H&I to say factors such as availability of Further Education (FE), Higher Education (HE) or employment opportunities has no influence on their decision on what to do when they leave school. More than two-fifths said that the availability of local college or university courses would have 'no influence' on their decision-making.

2.14 Those in Cowal and Bute, in particular, are more likely to say the availability of college or university courses of interest is a strong influence on decision-making (70%), as are those in Oban, Lorn and the Isles (54%). The range of subjects *at school* in Cowal and Bute is also a strong influence (40%), more so than for Argyll and the Islands (32%) or the H&I overall (33%).

3 Learning in Argyll and the Islands

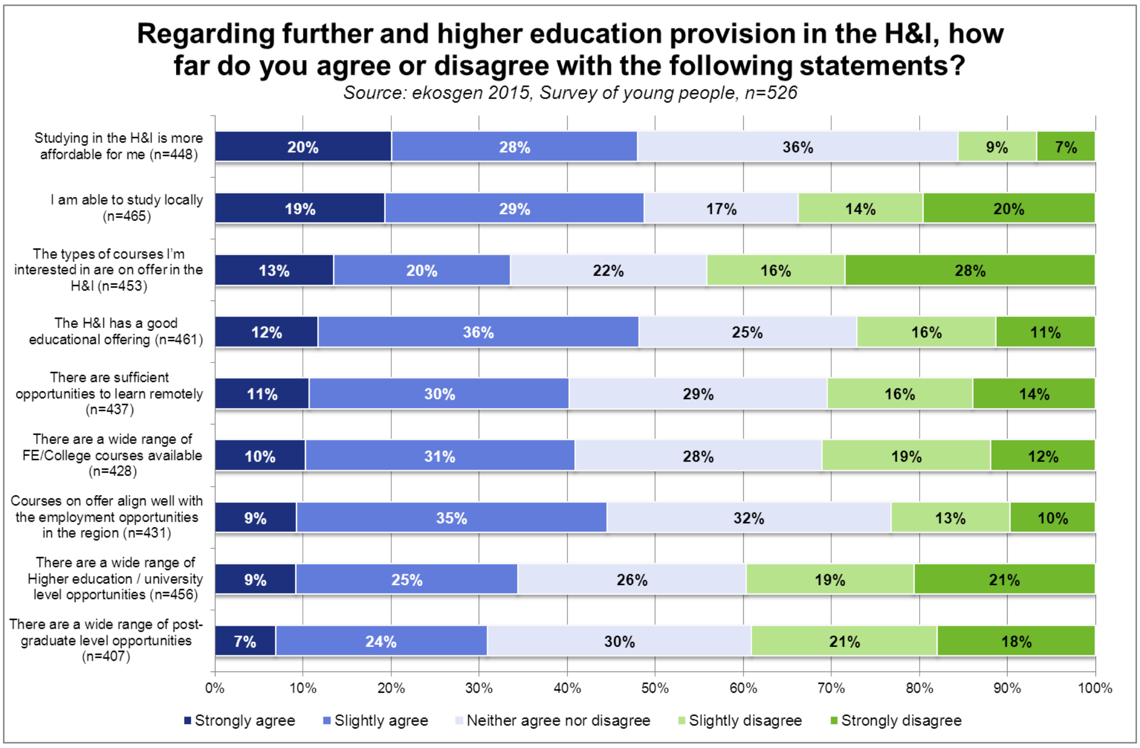
3.1 This chapter explores attitudes and aspirations evident in Argyll and the Islands in relation to learning; covering Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE), and related matters such as graduate placements and the opportunities presented in terms of routes into employment from FE and HE.

Further and higher education provision

3.2 Just under half of young people in Argyll and the Islands agree there is a good educational offering (48%), and slightly fewer that courses align with employment opportunities, both lower than the averages for the H&I overall (56% and 53%). For the educational offering, this varies considerably by sub-region; for Cowal and Bute only 40% agree, in Mid-Argyll 43% agree, whilst in Oban, Lorn and the Isles, 62% do so, and in Arran & the Cumbraes 63% agree.

3.3 Overall, young people across Argyll and the Islands are less likely to agree with statements regarding FE and HE provision in the H&I, between 5 and 14 percentage points lower than the H&I responses overall. A third of respondents in Argyll and the Islands agree that the types of courses available are of interest to them, compared to 39% across the H&I. This is much lower in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (26%); but above the H&I average in Oban, Lorn and the Isles (44%).

Figure 3.1



3.4 In all, 41% of respondents think that there is a wide range of FE/ college courses available, compared to 54% for the H&I overall; this ranges from 34% in Cowal and Bute to 51% in Oban, Lorn and the Isles. In contrast to other age groups, more 25-30 year olds disagree that there is a wide range of FE / college courses (42%) compared to the H&I (25%).

3.5 Four in 10 young people in Argyll and the Islands disagree that there is good availability of HE opportunities in the region, and 21% strongly disagree. In Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the

Islands this rises to 48% and 25% respectively, as it does in Arran and the Cumbraes. Disagreement also increases with age. For those aged 15-18 there is a relatively even split, for 19-24 year-olds the majority disagree, but for 25-30 year olds almost 60% disagree that there are a wide range of Higher education / university level opportunities. There is an identical situation with regard to postgraduate opportunities.

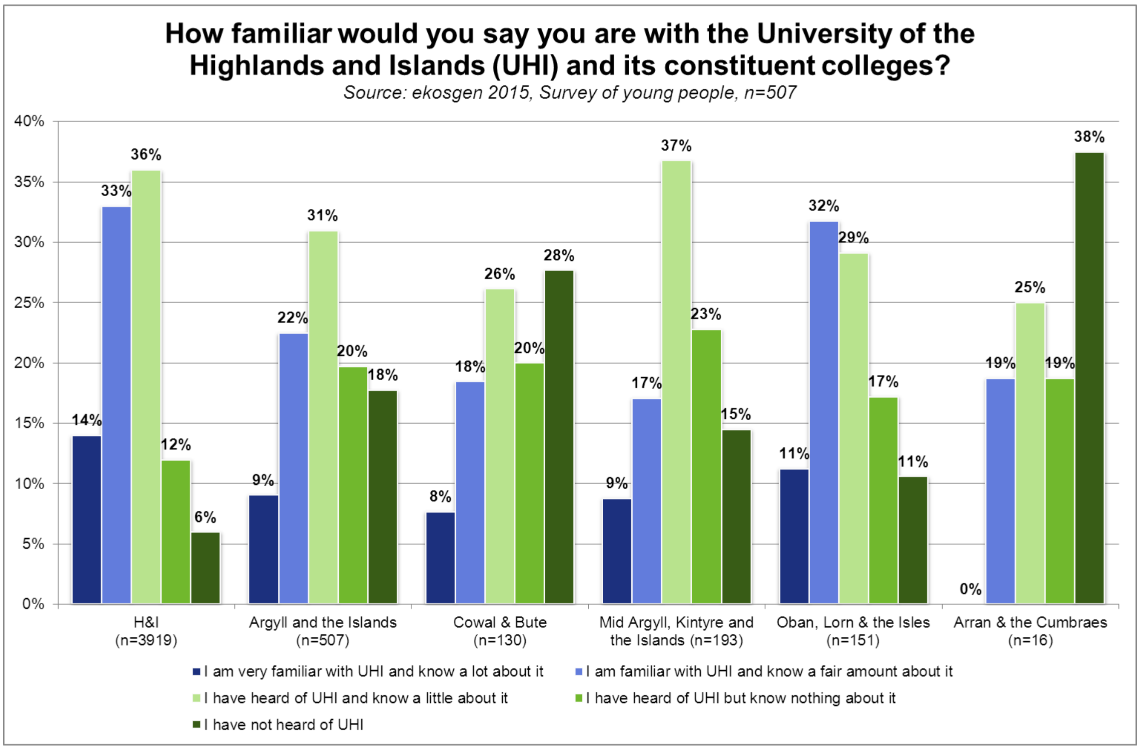
3.6 Almost half state that they are able to study locally, with little variation across sub-areas, compared with 57% across the H&I. The proportion is the same amongst school pupils, although university and college students tend to agree more – 65% do so, which is a positive finding. However, those in employment tend to disagree (48%).

3.7 A lower proportion, some four in 10, considers that there are sufficient opportunities to learn remotely in Argyll and the Islands than across the H&I (49%). This is lowest in Cowal and Bute (36%) and Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (33%); although in Oban, Lorn and the Isles and Arran and the Cumbraes the majority agree (57%). In terms of age, agreement on remote learning opportunities is highest amongst 19-24 year-olds (48%), and university / college students (53%).

Awareness of UHI and its offer

3.8 Though there is good awareness of UHI across the H&I as a whole, this is less evident in Argyll and the Islands where young people are most likely to know nothing and/or not have heard of UHI (38% compared with 18% overall). This rises to over half amongst those from Arran and the Cumbraes and almost half for those in Cowal and Bute. By contrast, four in 10 of those from Oban, Lorn and the Isles know at least a fair amount about UHI (see Figure 3.2), and in mid-Argyll almost two thirds know at least a little.

Figure 3.2

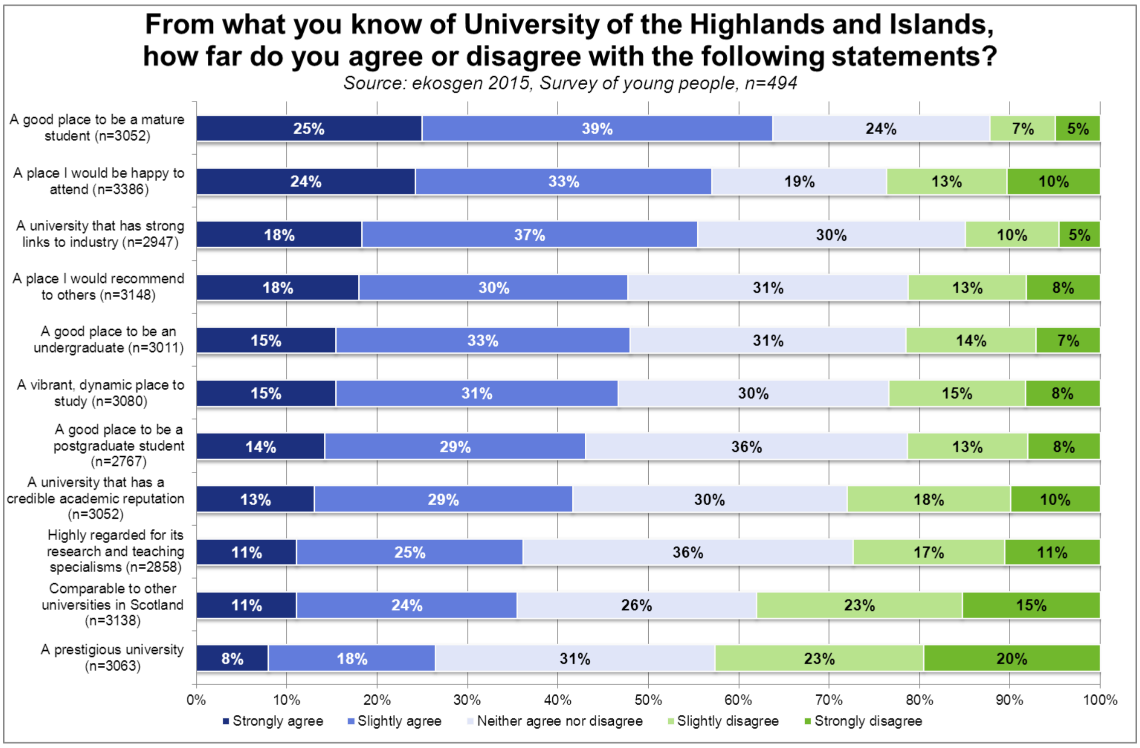


3.9 Awareness is unsurprisingly highest amongst young people of at least student-age, college / university students and those in employment. Almost half of all Argyll and the Islands school pupils have low or no awareness of UHI (47%), compared to 26% regionally, this being most pronounced in Cowal and Bute.

3.10 As is the case in the H&I, there is a perception that UHI is a good place to be a *mature* student (64% for both Argyll and the Islands and the H&I overall; see Figure 3.3). This is highest in Arran & the Cumbraes (71%) and Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (66%). Almost half of those in Argyll and the Islands think UHI is a good place to be *undergraduate* student, similar to the rest of the H&I (48%). This is lowest in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands at 36%. Overall, 19-24 year-olds are most likely to think UHI is a good place to study for undergraduates and postgraduates (50%).

3.11 Four in 10 young people across Argyll and the Islands think UHI has a credible academic reputation (42%, the same proportion as the H&I as a whole), and over two thirds think it to be comparable to other universities in Scotland, again similar to the views across the H&I (35%). Positive views on its credibility are highest in Oban, Lorn and the Isles (42%), and, surprisingly, for comparability in Cowal and Bute (42%). In the case of Cowal and Bute, this suggests that many of those who *are* aware of UHI, regard it as comparable to other provision.

Figure 3.3



Inverness Campus

3.12 Inverness Campus, which will see Inverness College UHI co-located with centres for business and research, opened in May 2015. Whilst more than one in five in Argyll and the Islands are aware of the Inverness Campus, 78% are not. Across the H&I, almost six in 10 know something of the Campus, although this rises significantly the closer the young person lives to Inverness. In mid-Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands, only 17% know something about Inverness Campus. In Cowal and Bute and Oban, Lorn and the Isles, awareness is slightly higher (25% and 27% respectively).

3.13 Those who *are* aware of the development, generally view it positively. For example, 59% think that it offers a city university experience for the region (this rises to 71% in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands) and 55% think that industry links offer good career opportunities for young people, although this is lowest in Cowal and Bute (40%). Though fewer would be happy to attend than in the H&I overall (48% compared to 56%), 59% in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands would be happy to do so.

Graduate placements

3.14 For graduate placements the response amongst young people in Argyll and the Islands was similar to the H&I overall. Just under half (47%) said that undertaking a graduate placement would improve their chances of securing employment in the region, but less than a quarter (24%) agreed that there were a wide range of placement opportunities – and only 21% agreed that there were sufficient opportunities in the more rural areas.

3.15 Further, fewer agreed that the graduate placement opportunities that did exist were appealing – 27% compared to 30% across the H&I. However, there is marginally more agreement amongst respondents from Cowal & Bute, where positive responses are around 3 percentage points higher than for Argyll and the Islands as a whole.

3.16 In Argyll and the Islands, awareness of the ScotGrad programme is lower than the H&I overall; 85% of young people are not aware of it compared to 79% regionally. However, similar proportions have been successful in applying for and securing a placement (5% against 4%). This is most pronounced in Oban, Lorn & the Isles, where awareness is comparable to the regional level, and 9% of respondents have been successful in applying and securing a placement – higher than across the H&I and any of the H&I sub-regions.

4 Working in Argyll and the Islands

4.1 This section outlines what young people in Argyll and the Islands think about local employment and career progression opportunities, their ideal location to work, familiarity with and interest in H&I growth sectors, and characteristics valued most in employers. Again it seeks to draw out sub-area variations.

Employment-Related Factors in the Local Area

Apprenticeships

4.2 In all, 45% of young people in Argyll and the Islands rate opportunities for apprenticeships as good, slightly lower than the H&I proportion of 49%. Opportunities are viewed as particularly good by those in Oban, Lorn and the Isles (53%), but weakest in Cowal and Bute, where just a third (32%) rate them as quite or very good and 35% rate them as quite or very poor. In all, almost half (48%) of young people aged 15-18 across Argyll and the Islands rate opportunities for apprenticeships as quite or very good, although this is lower than the H&I wide figure of 53%.

Self Employment Opportunities

4.3 Around four in 10 (38%) consider self-employment opportunities to be quite or very good, similar to the H&I as a whole (39%). Those in Arran and the Cumbraes (55%) and Oban, Lorn and the Isles (44%) are most positive while, those in Cowal and Bute are less optimistic, with just under a third (32%) rating opportunities for self-employment as quite or very good. The figure for Mid-Argyll is 39% - the same as the regional average. As with the H&I overall, those aged 25-30 are most likely to rate opportunities for self-employment as quite or very good.

Opportunities for Personal Development Locally

4.4 In all, 29% of young people in Argyll and the Islands consider local opportunities for personal development to be quite or very good (compared to 37% in the H&I). This is highest in Oban, Lorn and the Isles (38%), and lowest in Cowal and Bute where just 18% rate these opportunities as quite or very good, and 38% rate them as quite or very poor.

Local Employment Opportunities and Diversity

4.5 Less than three in 10 (28%) rate local employment opportunities as quite or very good, compared to 35% across the H&I. Those in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands are most positive (42% rating as quite or very good), while the proportion in Cowal and Bute is very low (12% of young people rate local employment opportunities as quite or very good, and 59% rate them quite or very poor).

4.6 As with the H&I as a whole, young people in Argyll and the Islands become more pessimistic about employment opportunities in their local area as they get older. Just 23% of those aged 25-30 rated opportunities as quite or very good, compared to 28% of those aged 19-24 and 29% of those aged 15-18.

4.7 The diversity of local employment opportunities is rated more poorly still, with 22% citing these as quite or very good. Again, just 12% in Cowal and Bute rate the diversity of employment opportunities as good, while 32% of those in Oban, Lorn and the Isles do so. Good employment opportunities locally do not always mean a good *range* of employment opportunities. In Oban, Lorn and the Isles, 42% say there are good employment opportunities, but only 32% say these are diverse.

Local Career Progression

4.8 There is also less optimism about opportunities for local career progression, with 23% rating them as quite or very good in Argyll and the Islands, compared to 29% across the H&I. Again, there are marked sub-regional differences; ratings in Oban, Lorn and the Isles are close to the regional average but are somewhat lower in Cowal and Bute.

Pay Levels

4.9 A lower proportion of young people in Argyll and the Islands cite pay levels as either quite or very good (23%) than the H&I average (27%), and more say they are quite or very poor. Those in Oban, Lorn and the Isles (28%) are more likely to rate pay levels as quite or very good, compared to 14% in Cowal and Bute. The wider study showed that the local sector mix of employment partly determines views on pay levels, with Cowal and Bute likely to have fewer jobs available in higher paid sectors.

Figure 4.1

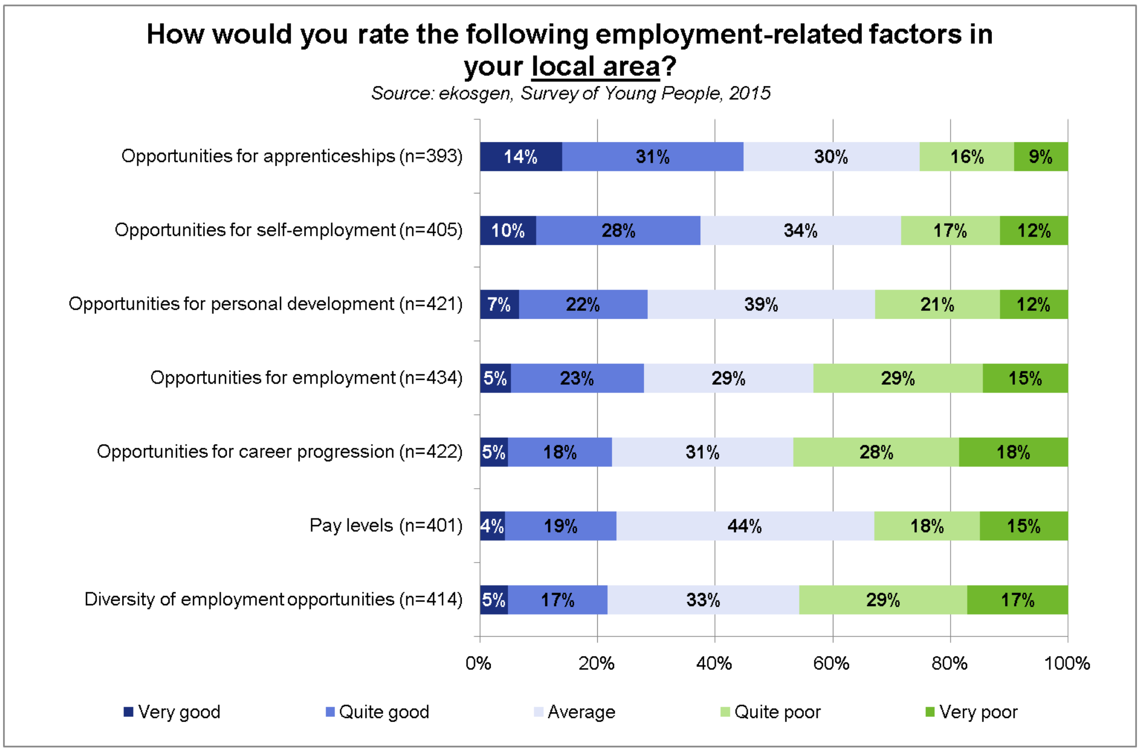
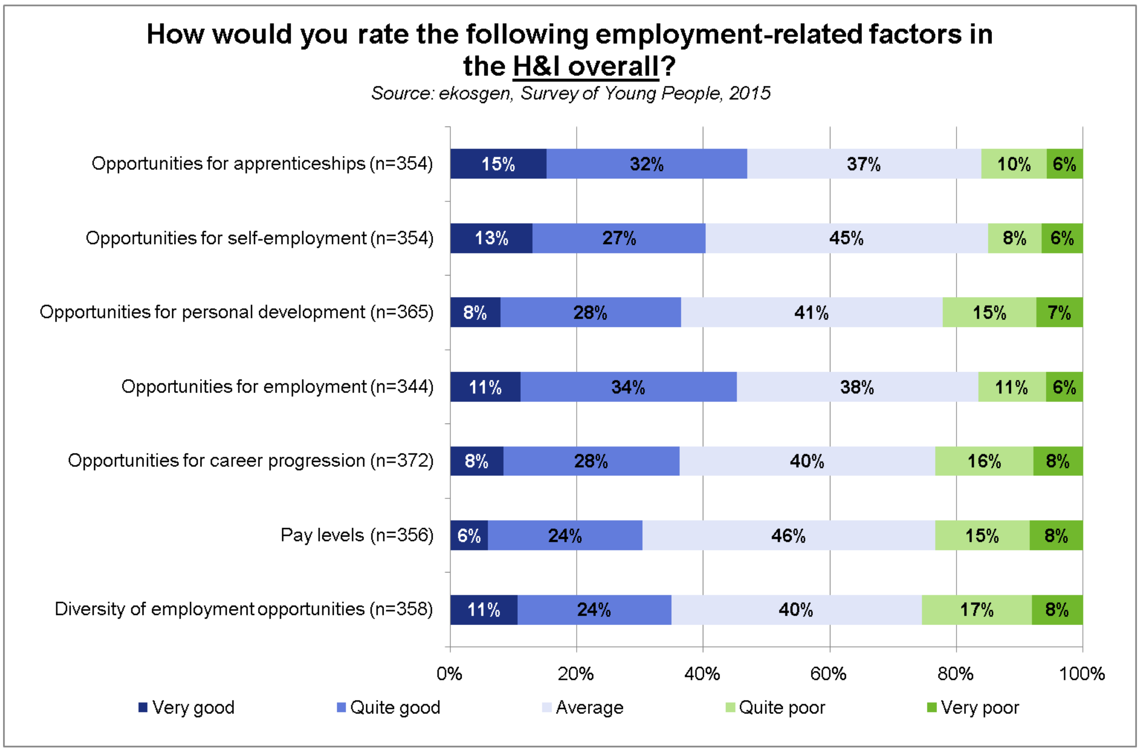


Figure 4.2



Employment Related-Factors in the H&I

4.10 Young people in Argyll and the Islands are generally more positive about employment-related factors in the H&I overall than they are about those in Argyll and the Islands, although not markedly so.

4.11 In all, 61% of young people in Argyll and the Islands either strongly (22%) or slightly agree (39%) that living in the H&I requires compromising on career opportunities. Those in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands are more likely to strongly agree with this (26%), compared with only 16% in Oban, Lorn and the Isles. There is some variation by status; 76% of those in employment strongly or slightly agree that living in the H&I requires compromising on career opportunities, while 55% of school pupils do so.

Ideal place to work

4.12 Overall, just over a third (36%) would ideally like to work in the H&I either locally (26%) or somewhere else in the region (10%). This compares to 44% of young people in the H&I overall, although the main difference is willingness (and ability) to work elsewhere in the region: 29% would like to work locally, and 15% somewhere else in the H&I.

4.13 Table 4.1 shows where young people would ideally like to work by sub-area. Those in Mid-Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (31%) and Oban, Lorn and the Isles (28%) are more likely to want to work in their local area, while those in Cowal and Bute (18%) and Arran and the Cumbraes (15%) are least likely to want to do so. As noted previously, these results may be slightly influenced by the higher than average percentage of school pupils responding from Cowal and Bute, with the wider survey showing that school pupils are least likely to want to work in their local area or the H&I.

4.14 Nearly three in 10 (28%) would like to work in Scotland, but outwith the H&I, and a third would like to work further afield (9% elsewhere in the UK and 24% elsewhere in the world). Those in Cowal and Bute most want to work in the Central Belt specifically (20%), elsewhere in Scotland (22%) or elsewhere in the world (24%).

Table 4.1: Desired Place to Work by Sub-Area

	Argyll and the Islands (n=444)	Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (n=181)	Oban, Lorn & the Isles (n=127)	Arran & the Cumbraes (n=13)	Cowal & Bute (n=123)
Local area*	26%	31%	28%	15%	18%
Somewhere in the H&I	10%	12%	12%	0%	6%
Central Belt	13%	11%	10%	8%	20%
Aberdeen	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Elsewhere in Scotland	15%	13%	11%	15%	22%
Elsewhere in the UK	9%	11%	6%	15%	8%
Elsewhere in the world	24%	20%	28%	31%	24%
Other	3%	2%	5%	15%	3%

*Source: ekosgen, Survey of Young People, 2015; * current home town/village*

4.15 Those in employment or self-employment in Argyll and the Islands are most likely to want to work in their local area (45%). School pupils are the least likely to want to do so (17%), this being in line with other parts of the H&I.

4.16 The proportion that wishes to work in their home town or somewhere else in the H&I generally increases with age/life stage. This applies in Argyll and the Islands in the same way as it does across the H&I. School pupils typically wish to move away when they finish school – either temporarily or permanently.

4.17 Table 4.2 places those wishing to work locally alongside the proportion thinking there are a good range of local employment opportunities to give an indication of perceived supply versus demand. While 31% wish to work locally in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands, just 21% rate the diversity of employment opportunities as quite or very good; suggesting that young people may sometimes be forced to look elsewhere for a wider range/ greater diversity of employment opportunities, even when they wish to work locally.

4.18 A relatively low proportion of young people wish to work in Cowal and Bute; they view very few opportunities to do so. In Arran and the Cumbraes, in contrast, more than twice the proportion of young people consider there to be good diversity of employment opportunities than would like to work locally, although this is based on a very small sample size.

Table 4.2

Argyll and the Islands sub-area	Those ideally liking to work in their local area	Those rating diversity of employment opp's as quite or very good	Percentage point (pp) difference
Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands	31%	21%	-10%
Oban, Lorn & the Isles	28%	32%	+4%
Arran & the Cumbraes[12]	15%	38%	+23%
Cowal & Bute	18%	12%	-6%
Overall Argyll and the Islands average	*26%*	*22%*	*-4%*

Source: ekosgen, Survey of Young People, 2015.

Views on H&I Growth Sectors

4.19 HIE's Operating Plan recognises that the region's natural assets, ambition, skills base and cultural background provide a range of opportunities to develop a vibrant sectoral economy.[13] HIE's growth sectors - *Financial and business services*; *Creative industries (including digital); Sustainable tourism (including hospitality); Food and drink; Life sciences*; and *Energy (including renewable energy)* are aligned to the six key sectors identified in Scotland's Economic Strategy[14], but with key regional specialisms under each sector.

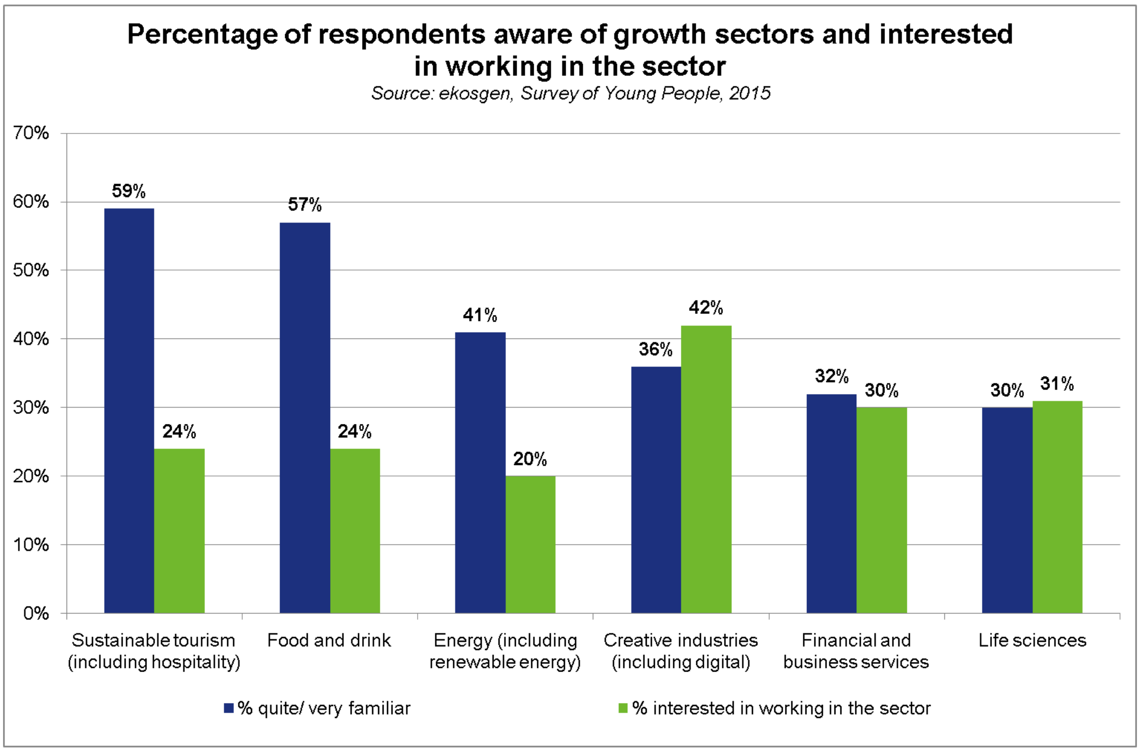
4.20 Awareness of growth sectors is generally lower in Argyll and the Islands than in the H&I overall (and particularly so in Cowal and Bute). Sustainable tourism (59%) and Food and drink (57%) are the sectors most well known, although even these, which are prominent in Argyll and the Islands, are less well known than is evident across the region (60% and 62%).

4.21 Creative Industries is the most desirable sector for young people in Argyll and the Islands, with over four in 10 (42%) interested in working in the sector. Only one in five are interested in working in the Energy sector (20%).

4.22 Figure 4.3 compares the percentage who are aware of each growth sector in Argyll and the Islands with the percentage that would be interested in working in the sector. The greatest disparity between awareness and interest is within Sustainable tourism (59% versus 24%) and Food and drink (57% versus 24%).

[12] Please note, the very low sample size for Arran and the Cumbraes means that generalisations cannot be made.
[13] HIE (2014) Building Our Future: Operating Plan 2014-2017
[14] These are Food and Drink (inc agriculture), Creative Industries (inc digital), Energy (inc renewables), Sustainable Tourism, Financial and Business Services and Life Sciences.

Figure 4.3



4.23 Creative industries are of more interest, comparatively, in Oban, Lorn and the Isles (47%), as is Energy (30%). Energy is also of interest in Mid-Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (23%), linked to renewable energy, but to just 8% in Arran and the Cumbraes and 3% in Cowal and Bute. The popularity of Financial and business services and Life sciences is consistent across most of the sub-areas, although lower in Arran and the Cumbraes (25%) and Cowal and Bute (22%). For Life sciences, this is highest in Oban, Lorn and the Isles (35%). Sustainable tourism is most popular in Arran and the Cumbraes (58%).

4.24 There are some noticeable differences by age. For example, just 13% of those aged 15-18 want to work in Energy, compared to 27% of those aged 19-24 and 35% aged 25-30. Financial and business services are particularly popular amongst those aged 25-30 years (with 40% wanting to work in the sector), while Food and drink is less popular than average (18%). Tourism is particularly unpopular amongst 15-18 year olds (15% wanting to work in the sector), compared to 40% of 19-24 year olds and 38% of 25-30 year olds.

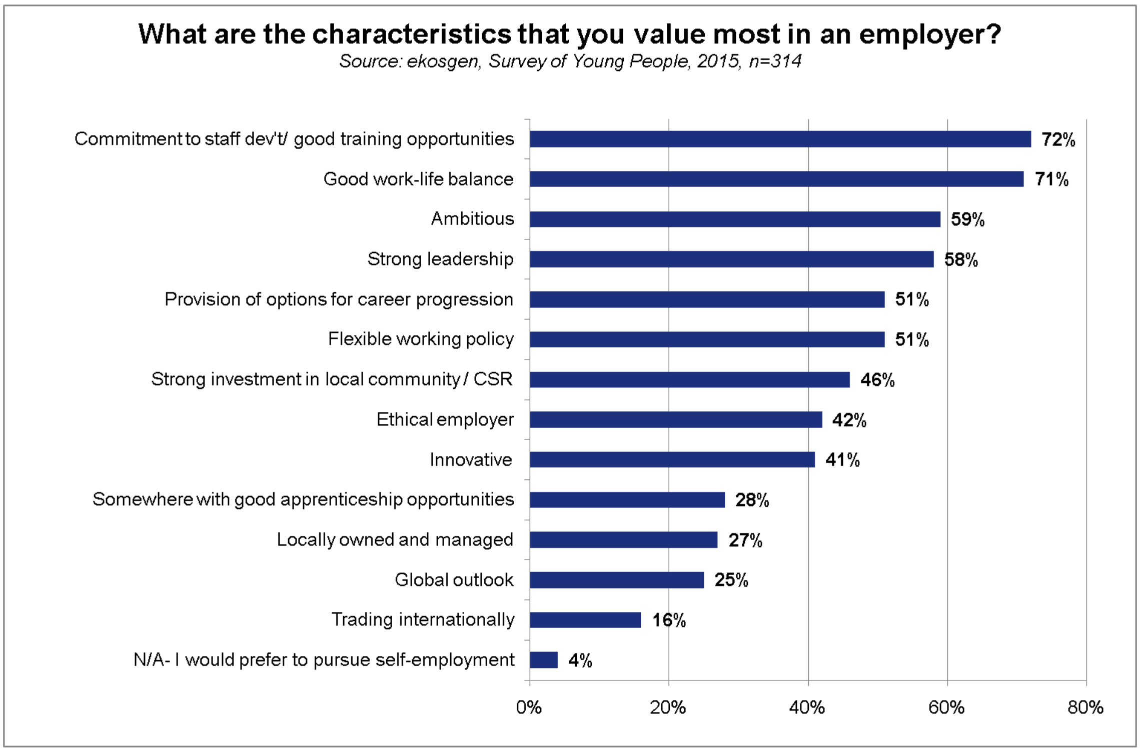
Desired Qualities in Employers

4.25 Views on employers in Argyll and the Islands are broadly comparable to those across the H&I. The top four desired qualities are a commitment to staff development/ good training opportunities (72%, compared to 75% across the H&I), a good work-life balance (71% versus 74%), an ambitious nature (59% compared to 56%) and strong leadership (58% compared to 56%). Slightly fewer young people value the provision of options for career progression (51%) compared to the H&I (58%); the same applies for flexible working policies (51% versus 56%).

4.26 A global outlook from employers (25%) and international activity (16%) are less important to young people in Argyll and the Islands than other factors, but these figures are slightly higher than for the H&I overall (22% and 12% respectively).

4.27 For respondents in all four council administrative areas, the top two desired qualities in employers are a commitment to staff development/ good training opportunities and a good work-life balance, following the picture in both Argyll and the Islands and the H&I. In Arran and the Cumbraes, strong leadership is also ranked joint first (with 70%).[15] Respondents from Oban, Lorn and the Isles are more likely to value the importance of an employer who is committed to staff development/ good training opportunities than others in Argyll and the Islands (82% versus 72%), a good work-life balance (83% versus 71%) and provision of options for career progression (60% versus 51%). For those in Cowal and Bute, the provision of career progression options is more important (59% versus 51%), along with strong investment in the local community (57% versus 46%) and employers who are ethical (57% versus 42%).

Figure 4.4



[15] Please note, this is based on a small sample size.

5 Life aspirations in Argyll and the Islands

5.1 There are a range of other factors, beyond education and employment, which affect a young person's decision on whether to stay or leave Argyll and the Islands. These include housing, transport, mobile and internet connectivity, arts, leisure and culture and the strength of the local community. This chapter explores these issues, their relative importance to decision-making and the nature and strength of feeling on each factor. Any significant variations by sub-region within Argyll and the Islands are outlined in the analysis.

Housing

5.2 As the overall H&I report shows, the lack of available and affordable housing is a significant issue for young people[16] and one that has risen in importance since 2009, relative to other factors. Whilst market conditions mean that housing has likely become an issue for young people more generally, housing availability and affordability are clear concerns for those in the H&I. This is also true for young people in Argyll and the Islands.

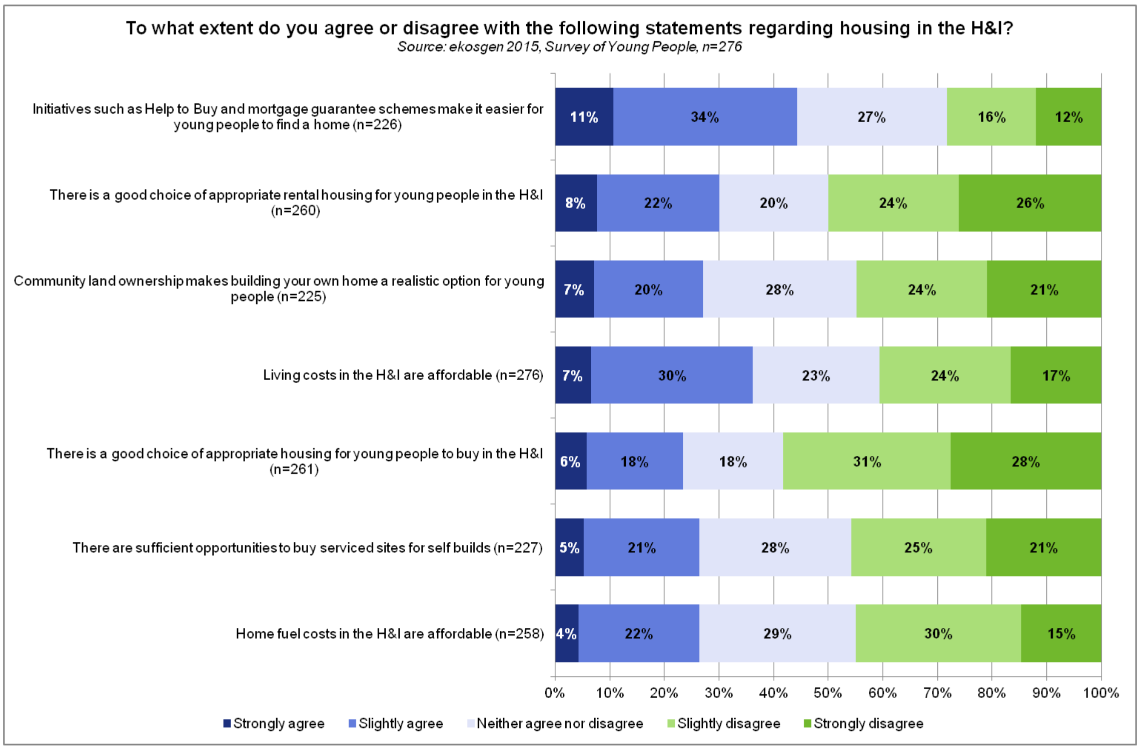
5.3 In terms of housing, the views of young people in Argyll and the Islands reflect those across the H&I. Just under a quarter (24%) consider there to be an appropriate choice of housing to buy while 59% do not think so and three in 10 think there is a good choice of appropriate *rental* housing in the H&I, although half disagree.

5.4 A lower proportion believes that living costs are affordable (37%), compared to the H&I overall (41%). Fewer young people in Cowal and Bute think living costs are affordable (27%) than in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (37%) and Oban, Lorn and the Isles (40%). In all, around one quarter (26%) of young people in Argyll and the Islands agree that home fuel costs are affordable.

5.5 Just over a quarter (27%) of young people in Argyll and the Islands agree that community land ownership makes building your own home a more realistic option – reflecting the views of those across the H&I (28%). Similarly, a slightly smaller proportion (26%) agree that there are sufficient opportunities to buy serviced sites for self builds, again similar to across the H&I (25%)

[16] The Housing questions were only asked to those respondents via the main online survey, i.e. they were not asked in the schools paper and online surveys.

Figure 5.1



Transport

5.6 Transport is a key issue in Argyll and the Islands, particularly amongst those living in the more remote areas of Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands, and some parts of Cowal and Bute.

5.7 **Bus travel**, compared to other parts of the H&I, is regarded favourably. The availability of bus services is rated second highest by young people from Argyll and the Islands (behind Moray), although still only half (47%) report it to be good. Similarly, buses are felt to be the most affordable of the services, although only 36% of young people rate this positively, while 32% rate it as poor, in line with the regional average.

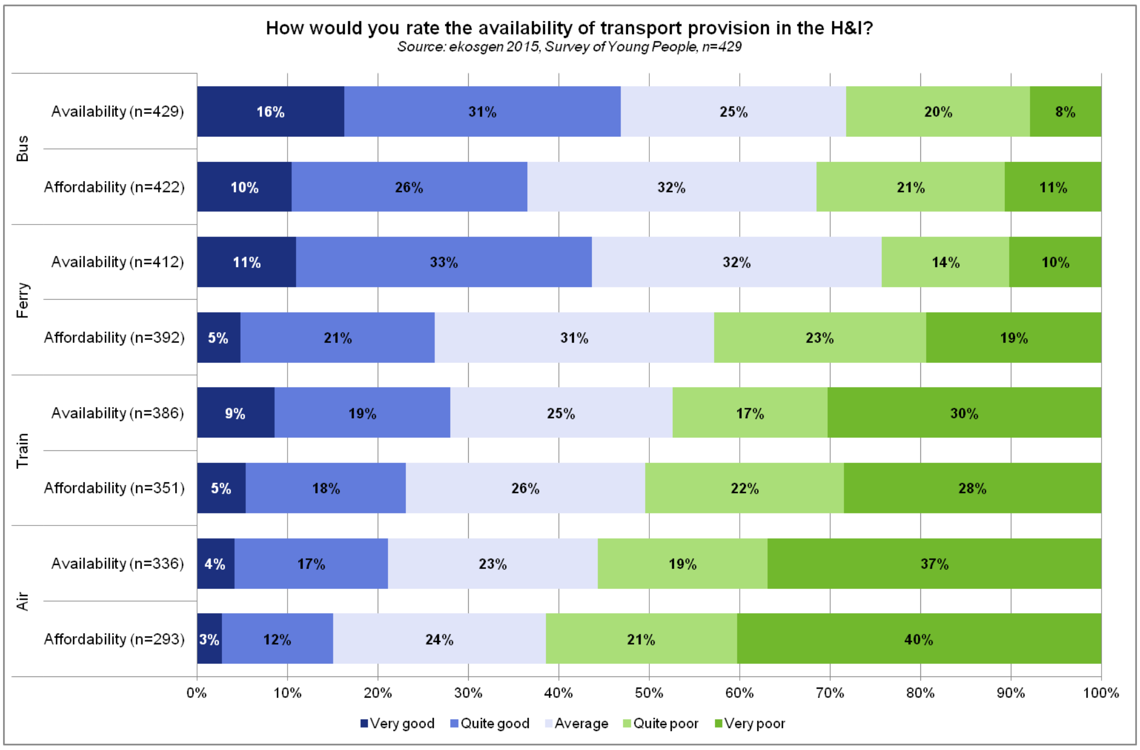
5.8 The availability of **ferry travel**, an important mode of transport throughout many areas of Argyll and the Islands is rated similar to that of bus services; 44% rate it positively (slightly higher than the regional average of 42%) and around one quarter (24%) rate it negatively. This masks considerable variation within Argyll and the Islands: 56% rate ferry availability good in Oban, Lorn and the Isles, 45% in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands, but just 31% in Cowal and Bute.

5.9 The *affordability* of ferries is rated fairly poorly by around four in 10 young people in Argyll and the Islands (42% above the regional average of 35%), with only one quarter (26%) rating it positively. Ferry affordability is regarded as an issue throughout the H&I, although the introduction of RET across all ferry routes – to be introduced by October 2015 – will help in this regard. RET is currently operating in the Western Isles, and some parts of Argyll and the Islands, such as Coll, Tiree and Arran. Interestingly, within Argyll and the Islands, affordability is the greatest issue in Cowal and Bute, one area where RET has not yet been introduced, where just 13%, half the Argyll and Islands average, rate affordability favourably.

5.10 **Rail travel** is relatively limited within Argyll and the Islands, with the exception of the (newly improved) Oban rail link. As such, almost half (47%) rate availability as poor, higher than the H&I average of 38%. Availability is regarded as significantly better in Oban, Lorn and the Isles (where it falls to 26% rating it poor) than areas such as Mid Argyll, Kintyre & the Islands (74%). Half also rate rail travel affordability as poor, in line with the regional average.

5.11 **Air travel** within Argyll and the Islands centres around Campbeltown in Kintyre which connects it to Glasgow, and Oban airport, which connects the mainland to Coll, Colonsay, Tiree and Islay. Air travel availability is rated as good by 21%, and this varies little within Argyll and the Islands, although it is rated slightly better in Mid Argyll, Kintyre & the Islands (24%). Nonetheless, even where availability is regarded as better, this is lower than in the Outer Hebrides, Shetland and Orkney where two thirds regard availability as good. In all, 15% consider air travel to be affordable, compared to 24% across the H&I.

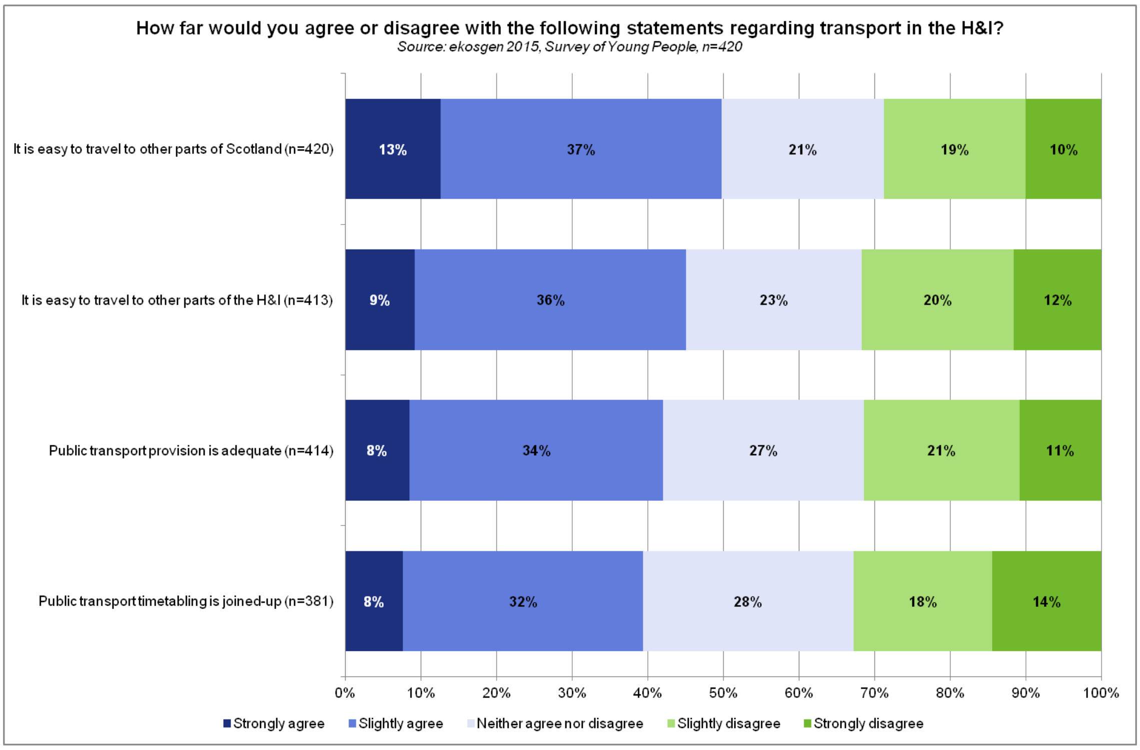
Figure 5.2



5.12 Half of young people agree that it is easy to travel to other parts of Scotland from Argyll and the Islands, and 45% agree that it is easy to travel to other parts of the H&I, although these are both slightly below the regional average, illustrating that young people in this area feel slightly less connected to the rest of the country. Responses are fairly similar for the different areas within Argyll and the Islands, although respondents from Cowal and Bute feel slightly more isolated from the rest of the H&I and Scotland.

5.13 Only four in 10 young people (40%) agree that public transport timetabling is joined-up, while 32% disagree. However, this feedback is more positive than in other parts of the H&I, where 39% disagree. Similarly, whilst just 42% of respondents agree that public transport provision is adequate, this is marginally higher than the H&I average of 40%.

Figure 5.3

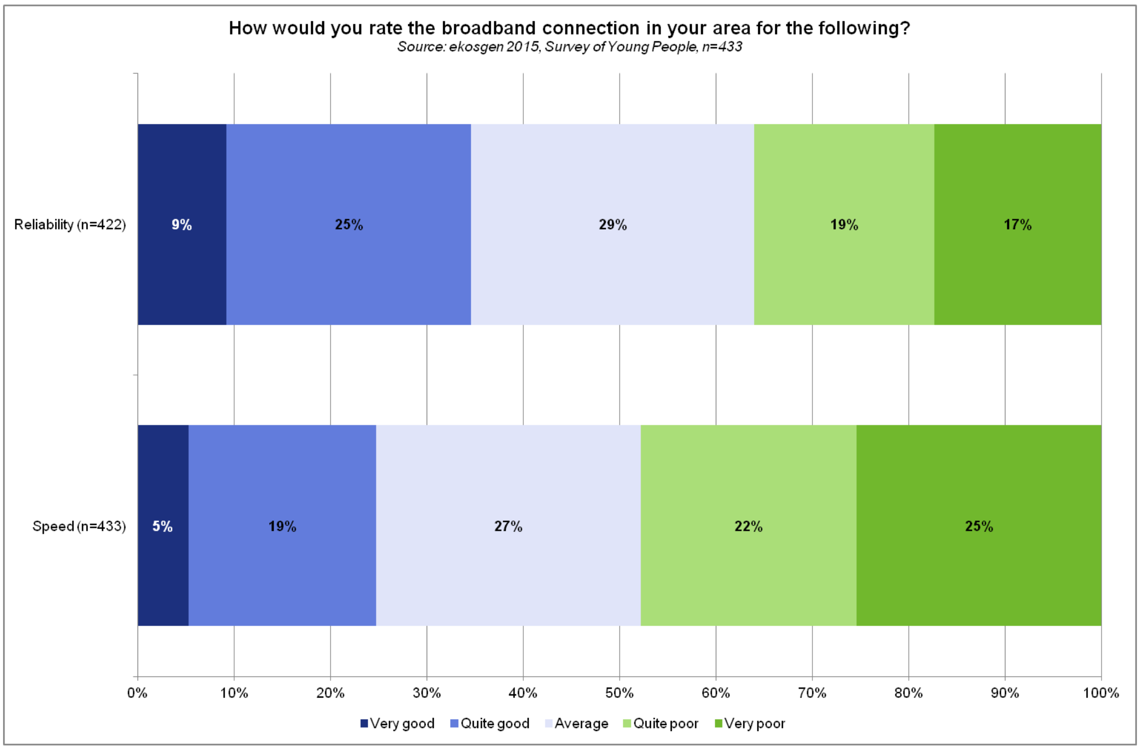


Digital Connectivity

5.14 In all, 95% of young people in Argyll and the Islands have access to broadband internet (standard broadband or NGA broadband), in line with the H&I average of 96%. Just 5% had access to NGA broadband at the time of the survey (April 2015), compared to 14% across the H&I, although this is set to change significantly in the next 12-18 months with the roll out of NGA. Awareness of the NGA roll-out, is, however, lower in Argyll and the Islands (53% have heard about it, although to varying degrees) than elsewhere in the H&I (56%).

5.15 Broadband reliability in Argyll and the Islands, shown in Figure 5.4, rates less favourably than in the H&I overall, with 34% of young people rating it positively, compared to 43% in the H&I, and 36% rating it negatively. Broadband speeds are rated poorly by almost half (47%), the lowest approval rating within the H&I.

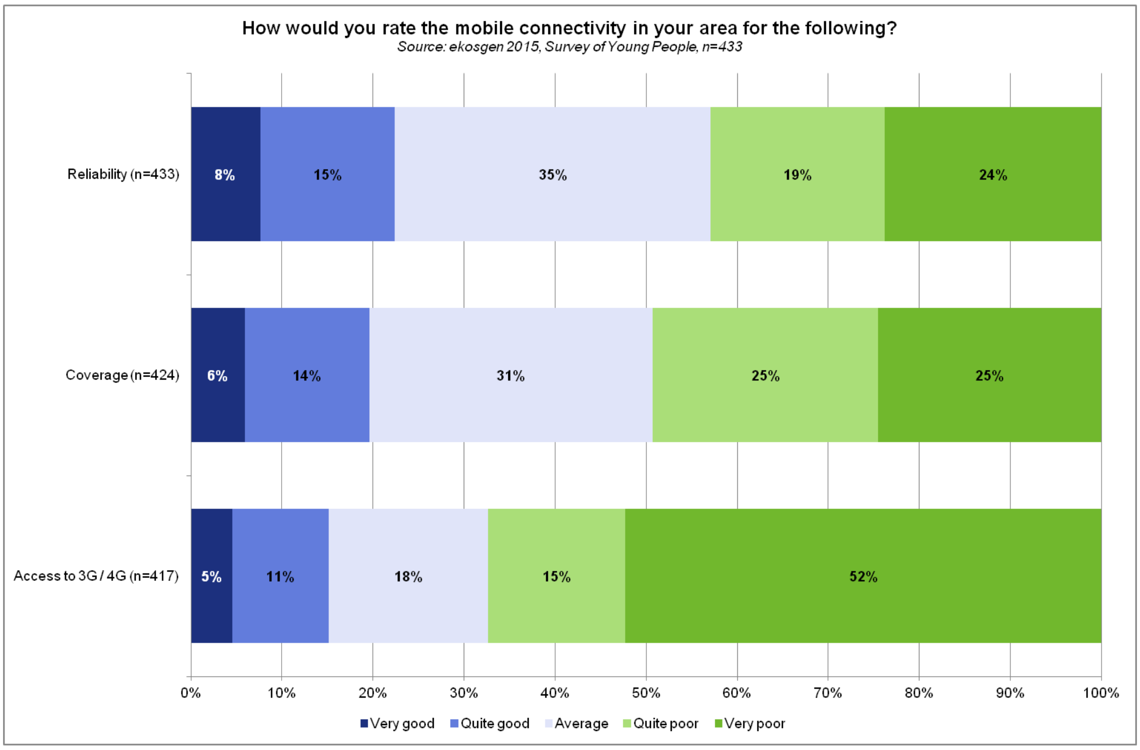
Figure 5.4



5.16 The three key benefits of NGA broadband reported by young people in Argyll and the Islands were the same as for those across the H&I, namely: 1) deliver improved music, film and entertainment streaming 2) lead to improved communication with family and friends and 3) allow better access to education. Few young people recognised the potential benefits of NGA in facilitating flexible work arrangements and allowing home/remote working.

5.17 Mobile connectivity is a significant problem within Argyll and the Islands, as it is across many parts of the H&I. Over half (52%) of young people report access to 3G/4G to be ‘very poor’, higher than the regional average of 47%. This is particularly the case in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (64%) and Oban, Lorn and the Isles (60%) when compared to Cowal and Bute (34%). Mobile coverage and reliability are rated slightly more favourably.

Figure 5.5



Arts, Leisure and Culture

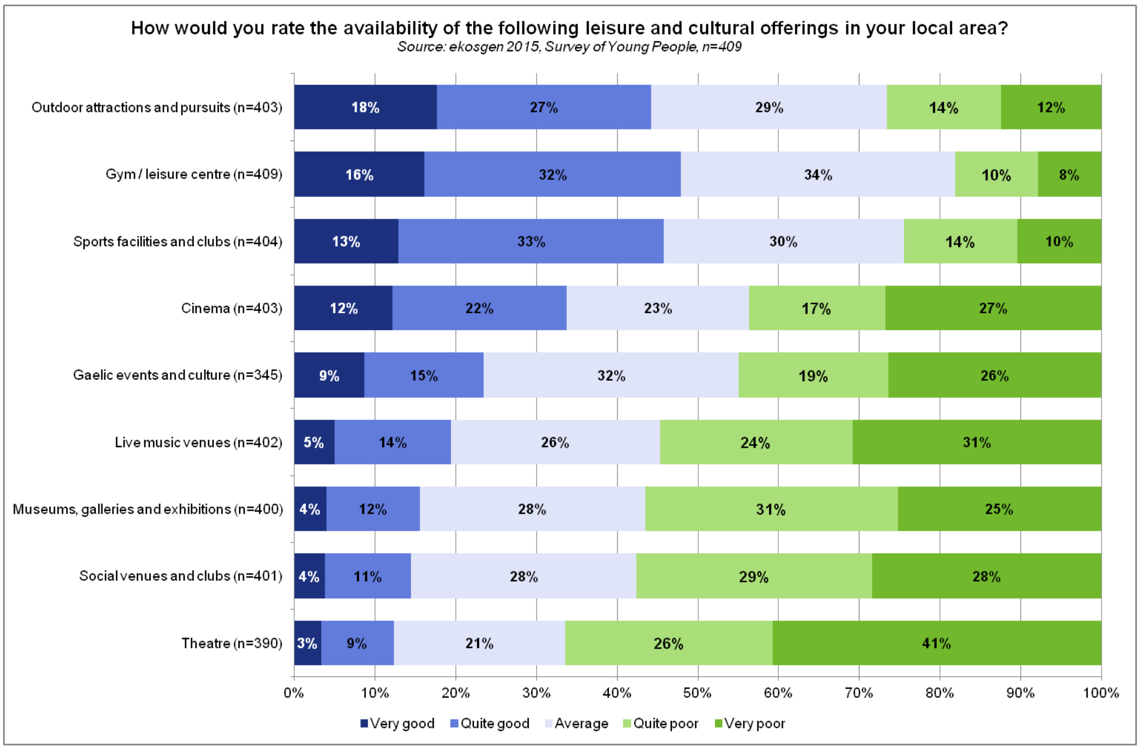
5.18 There is a mixed picture on the perceived availability and strength of the arts, leisure and culture offer in Argyll and the Islands. On the whole, the offer is perceived as less available than across the H&I. However, for gym/ leisure centres (48%), sports facilities and clubs (46%) and outdoor attractions and pursuits (45%) just under half cite availability as good for each. A similar pattern is evident across the H&I, although availability ratings are higher (59%, 52% and 53%).

5.19 There is a mixed response when comparing the local leisure and cultural offerings to the H&I and Scotland overall. Around four in 10 young people in Argyll and the Islands perceive the access to these offerings in their local area to compare favourably to the H&I overall (40%) and to Scotland overall (39%), lower than the region-wide averages of 50% and 47% respectively.

5.20 The availability of theatres (including stage shows, live comedy etc) is rated the poorest offering by young people in Argyll and the Islands, with only 3% reporting this to be 'very good' and 67% stating that this offering is either 'quite poor' or 'very poor'. The availability of social venues and clubs (57% citing as poor) and museums, galleries and exhibitions (56%) are also rated poorly. These are typically perceived to be the weakest offerings by young people across the H&I.

5.21 There are some variations by geography within Argyll and the Islands. Cinema offerings (68% rate at least 'quite good') and gym/ leisure centres (65%) are rated very highly in Oban, Lorn and the Isles, reflecting the improved cultural and leisure offer in recent years. Sports facilities and clubs (44%) and outdoor attractions (42%) are rated highest in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands. Gym/leisure centres (44%) are the most available offering in Cowal and Bute.

Figure 5.6



5.22 For Argyll and the Islands as a whole, the three most available local leisure and cultural offerings are also the three most important offerings to young people. Within Argyll and the Islands, young people in Oban, Lorn and the Isles consider access to gym/leisure centres (84%) and outdoor attractions (77%) to be most important, while those from Cowal and Bute regard cinema (79%), gym/leisure centres (77%) and social venues and clubs (75%) to be most important. In the case of cinema in Cowal and Bute (important to 79% but only 32% deem it available) and social venues and clubs (important to 75% but only 11% report good availability) there is a mismatch between local availability and importance.

Community

5.23 There are some very strong and positive feelings amongst young people about the town or community in which they live, with almost three quarters (73%) in Argyll and the Islands proud to be associated with their local community. However, this is not universal. Young people are most positive in Oban, Lorn and the Isles, where nearly nine in 10 (88%) are proud to be associated with their local community, in common with many of the remoter island communities across the H&I. In Mid Argyll, Kintyre & the Islands (78%) are proud to be associated with their community, in line with the H&I regional average (78%). In Cowal and Bute, however, just over half of respondents (54%) are proud to be associated with their town or community, amongst the lowest across the H&I.

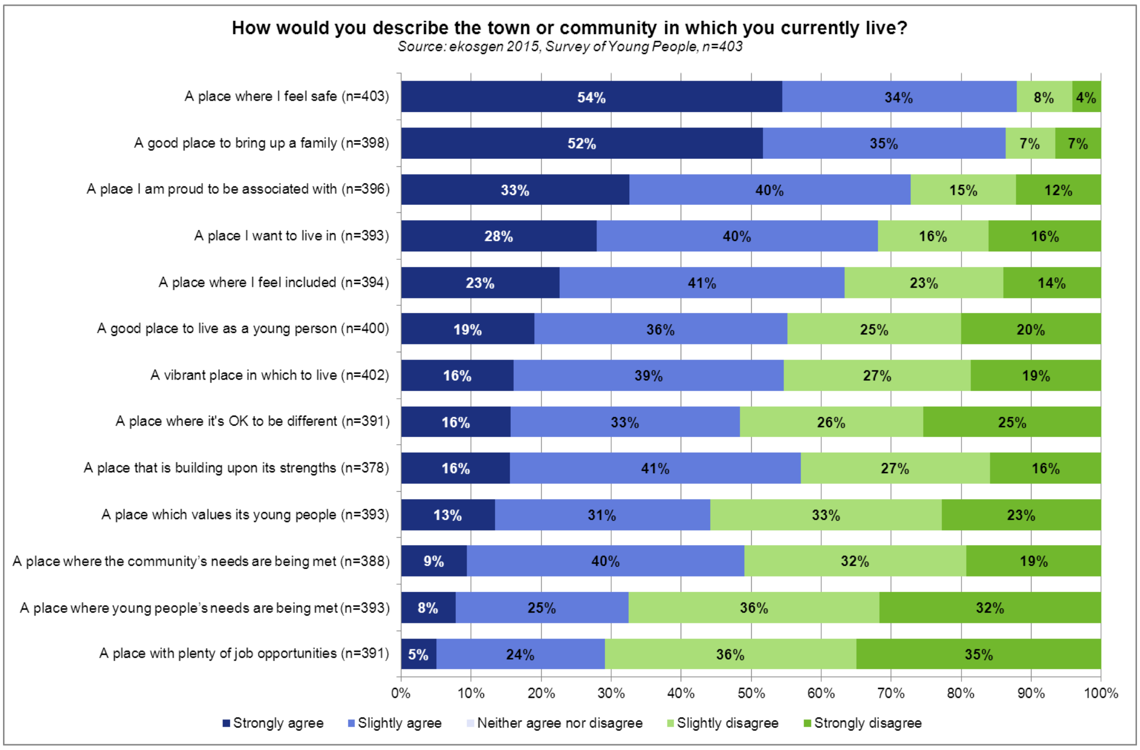
5.24 The vast majority of young people in Argyll and the Islands feel safe in their local community (88% agree) and feel that it is a good place to bring up a family (87%). This is a very positive response, and is in line with the H&I average of 87% for both criteria.

5.25 There is a good level of community engagement by young people in Argyll and the Islands. Almost four in 10 (38%) report participation in local community events (45% for the H&I), while over one third (34%) are members of local youth groups or sports clubs etc (32% for the H&I), and 28% undertake volunteering for their local community, all three in line with H&I proportions. Just over one third of young people (36%) do not engage with the community in any of these ways, slightly higher than for the H&I as a whole (29%). Those from Cowal and Bute tend to be slightly less engaged with their local community than the other areas within Argyll and the Islands.

5.26 Against a number of the indicators relating to local town or community, Argyll and the Islands is perceived more negatively by young people than across the H&I as a whole. This includes a place where young people's needs are being met (33% agree compared to 41% in the H&I), being a good place to live as a young person (55% compared to 59% in the H&I) and the perception that it is a place that is building on its strengths (57% compared to 63% in the H&I).

5.27 There are just two indicators where perceptions are marginally more optimistic than across the H&I as a whole. Young people feel slightly safer in Argyll and the Islands (88% agree compared to 87% in H&I) and believe it is a more vibrant place to live (55% agree compared to 54% in H&I).

Figure 5.7



6 Future aspirations of Young People in Argyll and the Islands

6.1 The previous chapters have explored the education, employment, and other lifestyle factors that affect a young person's decision as to whether they stay in or leave the Argyll and the Islands area. This chapter looks at the relative importance of these various factors, as well as examining the future aspirations of young people living in Argyll and the Islands.

Making the Highlands and Islands an Attractive Place to Live

6.2 For young people in Argyll and the Islands, the five most important themes for making the H&I a more attractive place to live, work and study are: the availability of high quality jobs (59% saying this is very important); good access to housing (57%); opportunities for career progression and affordable transport links (both 55%); and good access to FE/HE (51%). These five are the same as for the H&I as a whole. The availability of high quality jobs is reported as one of the top two most important aspects in all three parts of Argyll and the Islands.

6.3 Good access to housing is a particularly important issue in Argyll and the Islands, more so than the rest of the H&I region (aside from Orkney and Shetland). This is evident in all sub-areas within Argyll and the Islands, although particularly so in Oban, Lorn and the Isles, where it is rated *the most important aspect*, and where 95% of young people perceive it to be important.

6.4 All of the 15 themes explored in the survey were reported as important for at least 80% of young people in Argyll and the Islands, and very important for at least 38% of young people, with the exception of a supportive environment for Gaelic, rated as very important by 13% of respondents (although this masks variations within Argyll and the Islands). Having a University in the region is relatively less important to young people in Argyll and the Islands compared to elsewhere in the H&I, possibly a result of greater proximity to the Central Belt for some.

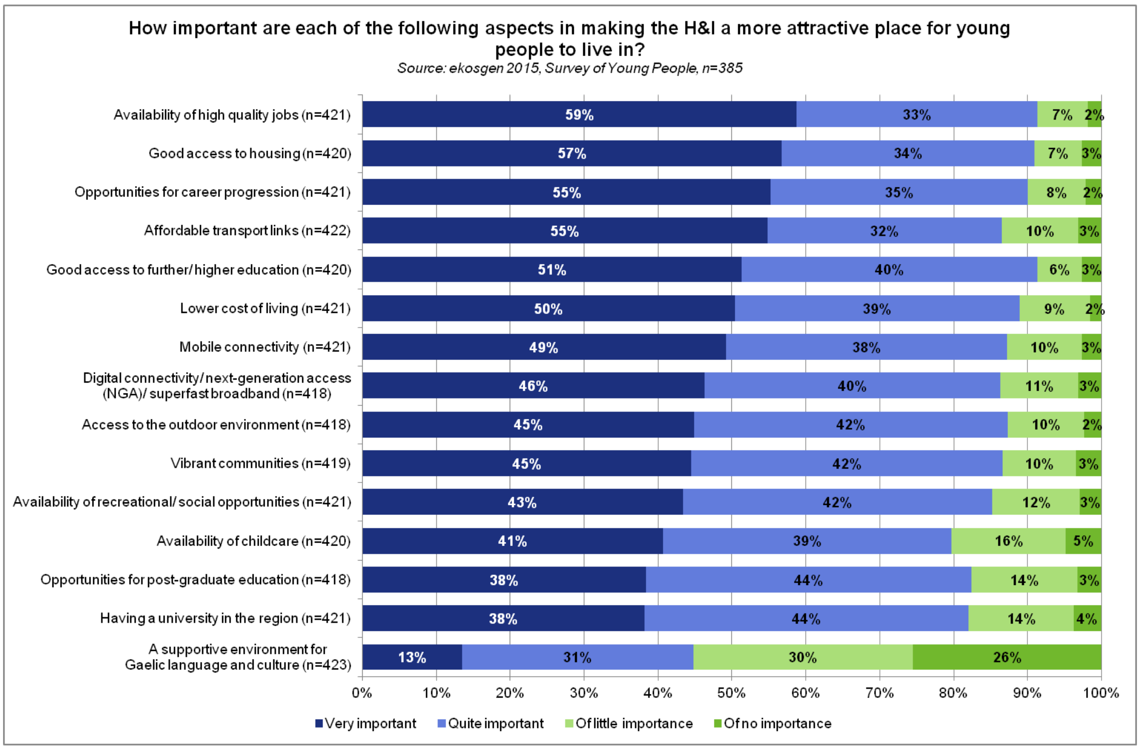
Table 6.1

Theme	% 'Very Important'	A&I Ranking	H&I Ranking
Availability of high quality jobs	59	1	1
Good access to housing	57	2	3
Opportunities for career progression	55	3=	2
Affordable transport links	55	3=	4=
Good access to FE/HE	51	4	4=
Lower cost of living	50	5	5
Mobile connectivity	49	6	6
Digital connectivity	46	7	8=
Access to the outdoor environment	45	8=	8=
Vibrant communities	45	8=	9
Availability of recreational/ social opportunities	43	9	7
Availability of childcare	41	10	11
Opportunities for post-graduate education	38	11=	10
Having a university in the region	38	11=	8=
A supportive environment for Gaelic	13	12	12

6.5 Affordable transport links is an important issue across Argyll and the Islands, but particularly so in Cowal and Bute, where this is the second most important aspect in making the region attractive to young people. Mobile connectivity is ranked slightly above digital connectivity (49% of young people reporting it to be 'very important' compared to 46% for digital connectivity).

6.6 The availability of recreational and social opportunities is not quite as important to young people from Argyll and the Islands as it is to young people from other areas of the H&I (43% reporting it to be 'very important' compared to 50% for the H&I as a whole). However, the importance of vibrant communities is evident, particularly so in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands and in Oban, Lorn and the Isles (90% in each area rate as important).

Figure 6.1

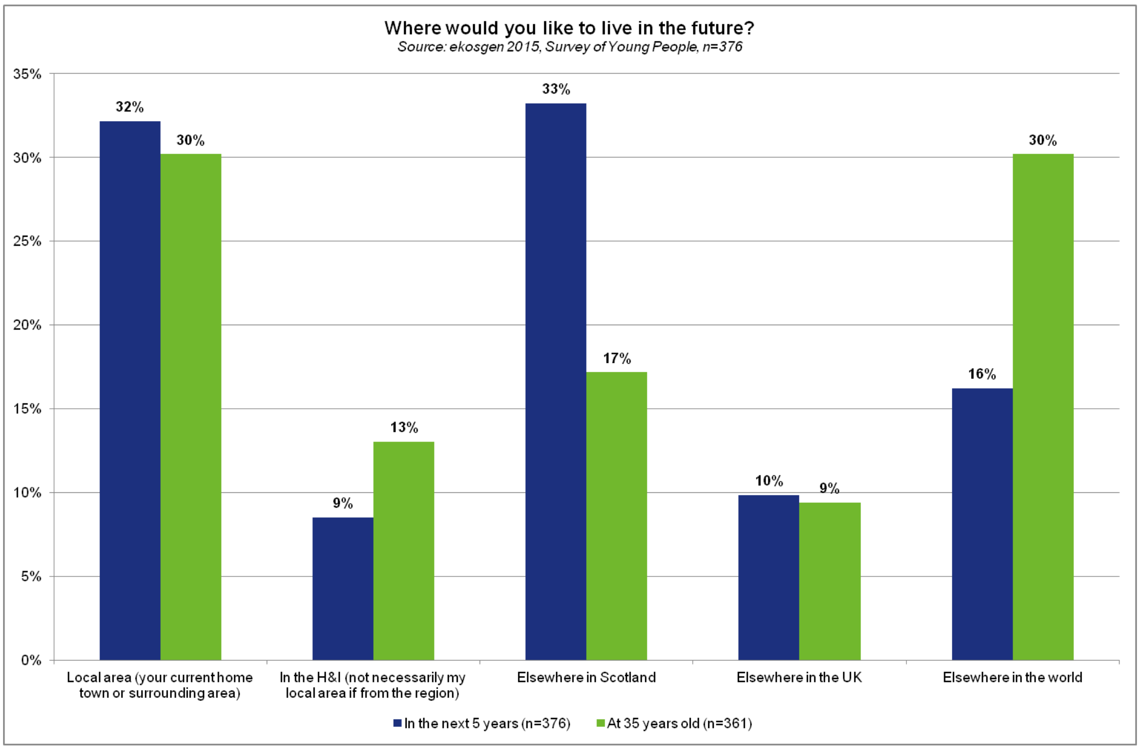


Future Aspirations

6.7 In all, around one third (32%) of young people from Argyll and the Islands would like to live in their local area in five years' time. Whilst this is a significant proportion, this is lower than the 36% across the H&I as a whole. Three in 10 (30%) would like to be doing so at 35 years old, again, lower than the 33% across the H&I as a whole.

6.8 Within Argyll and the Islands, the largest proportion of young people wanting to stay in their local area are from Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands, both in five years' time (38%) and at 35 years old (37%). Cowal and Bute has by far the largest proportion of young people wanting to leave the H&I in the next five years, (65%), with a similar proportion wanting to stay away (63%).

Figure 6.2



6.9 Almost nine in 10 young people from Argyll and the Islands either want to be in employment (45%) or studying/furthering their education (44%) in the next five years. The desire to be in employment at 35 years old rises to nearly two thirds (65%) for the area overall, with Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands higher than the other sub areas (70%).

6.10 A small but significant amount (8%) wish to be running their own business in five years' time, rising to 24% at 35 years old. These are the same proportions as the H&I as a whole, and they show appetite for self-employment within Argyll and the Islands.

How the H&I has changed

6.11 There is evidence that positive change has been felt in the area over the last five years. Some 43% of young people from Argyll and the Islands think that the H&I is a better place to live now than it was five years ago, although this is lower than the 51% for the region overall. Just 15% of respondents do not feel that it is a better place to live now, similar to the view from the rest of the H&I. Within Argyll and the Islands, this positive change is felt most by respondents from Oban, Lorn and the Isles, with 47% believing it to be a better place and just 11% disagreeing.

6.12 Similarly, young people from Argyll and the Islands are generally optimistic about the future, with almost four in 10 respondents (39%) believing that the H&I will be a better place to live in five years' time, just 17% stating that it will not be a better place to live, and the remaining 43% unsure. This is broadly in line with the view across the H&I as a whole.

7 Conclusions

7.1 Almost 600 young people across Argyll and the Islands gave their views on their local area and the H&I. This is a good evidence base of what young people are thinking in relation to a whole range of issues. What is clear from the review is that there are marked differences in attitudes, perceptions and aspirations across Argyll and the Islands.

Key Summary Findings

Staying and Leaving

- More young people in Argyll and the Islands see themselves as committed leavers, 51% compared to 40% across the H&I. This is particularly high in parts of Cowal and Bute and lowest in Mid-Argyll. By contrast there are fewer committed stayers.

- There is a similar proportion of *reluctant* leavers in Argyll and the Islands as across the H&I (both 13%), and this is higher in Oban, Lorn and the Isles (16%).

- Views on those who stay are becoming more positive, and more than half consider that those staying are lucky to be able to so. Those in Cowal and Bute are most likely to believe that young people leave to broaden their world view.

- There are strong aspirations to attend University or further education amongst those in Argyll and the Islands, slightly higher than the H&I's regional average (74% versus 72%). More than half of those in Oban, Lorn and the Isles wish to attend University.

- The availability of college and university courses of interest is a strong influence on post-school decisions, as is the breadth of the school curriculum, especially for those in Cowal and Bute. However, more than two-fifths said that the availability of local college courses would have 'no influence' on their decision making.

- School pupils in Argyll and the Islands feel a strong desire to move to the Central Belt or elsewhere in Scotland after they leave school, whether this be for work, further study or other activities. More of those from Cowal and Bute wish to move to the Central Belt (20%) compared to young people from Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (10%).

Education

- Almost half of young people in Argyll and the Islands agree that the H&I has a good educational offering (48%). This is below the regional average of 56%, affected by the more negative views of those in Cowal and Bute. Those in other parts of Argyll and the Islands are more likely to say there is a good offer.

- Almost half (49%) of the young people think they are able to study locally, with little variation across Argyll and the Islands, although this is lower than the 57% across the H&I. Fewer think remote learning is widely available, especially in Cowal and Bute.

- There are lower levels of awareness of UHI in Argyll and the Islands, especially in Cowal and Bute and in Arran and the Cumbraes, and this is especially evident amongst school pupils. Those in Oban, Lorn and the Isles have greatest awareness of UHI.

- A similar proportion to the H&I as a whole regard UHI as having a credible reputation and being comparable to other Universities. However, whilst half would be happy to attend, this is lower than across the H&I overall (48% versus 57%).

- Less than a quarter think there are sufficient graduate placement opportunities, although this is in line with the regional picture. There is marginally less awareness of ScotGrad in Argyll and the Islands (15% are aware of the programme compared to 21% across the H&I).

Employment

- Recent policy interventions have likely had a positive impact on some employment-related factors within Argyll and the Islands, particularly opportunities for apprenticeships in local areas. In all, 45% of young people in the area think opportunities for apprenticeships are good; slightly higher in Oban, Lorn and the Isles (53%) but weaker in Cowal and Bute (32%). This compares to the H&I average of 49%.

- There is a similar picture with regard to self-employment. Although 38% regard opportunities for self-employment to be very good (in line with the regional average), this is higher in Oban Lorn and the Isles (44%) and Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (39%) but lower in Cowal and Bute (32%).

- Fewer young people consider there to be good local employment opportunities than across the H&I (35%). Less than three in 10 (28%) think local opportunities are good, although young people in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands and Oban, Lorn and the Isles (42% respectively) are more positive. Just 12% of those in Cowal and Bute agree.

- *Diversity* of employment is perceived more poorly, and just 22% consider these to be good (compared to 29% across the H&I). Again, the proportions in Cowal and Bute (12%) and Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (21%) are low. Even in Oban, Lorn and the Isles, where there is perceived to be greater opportunities for local employment (42%), the range of jobs is viewed as weaker (32%).

- These views of the labour market also translate into perceived weaker prospects for career progression locally than in other parts of the H&I. Again, there is a similar split of opportunity within Argyll and the Islands. In all, around 60% of young people think living in the H&I requires compromising on career opportunities, the same as the regional average.

- Almost as many young people would *like* to work locally (26%) in Argyll and the Islands, as across the H&I (29%). This is highest in Mid-Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (31%) and Oban, Lorn and the Isles (28%), and lowest in Cowal and Bute (18%) and Arran and the Cumbraes (15%).

- The greatest mismatch between desire to work locally and diversity of local employment opportunities is in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands. Here, 31% want to work locally but only 21% perceive opportunities to be good. More in Cowal and Bute would also work locally if there were wider opportunities.

- Awareness of H&I growth sectors is lower in Argyll and the Islands than in the H&I overall. Creative Industries is the most desirable sector for young people in Argyll and the Islands to work in (42%), followed by Life Sciences (31%) and Financial and Business Services (30%). Desire to work in the Creative Industries is highest amongst those from Oban, Lorn and the Isles.

- As in the H&I overall, young people in Argyll and the Islands value a commitment to staff development and good training in their employer, and the provision of options for career development. They are also keen to have a good work-life balance and flexible working policies.

- As with young people across the rest of the H&I region, a global outlook and international activity in employers is less important to young people in Argyll and the Islands.

Housing

- Housing is a big issue for young people across Argyll and the Islands, and more important than across the H&I as a whole, in terms of making the H&I a more attractive place to live. It is *the* most important factor for those in Oban, Lorn and the Isles.

- Housing issues relate to the perceived lack of available housing both to buy and to rent, where just three in 10 think there is a good choice. Fewer young people also think living costs are affordable (37%) compared to the H&I as a whole (41%), and this is as low as 27% for those in Cowal and Bute.

Transport

- Transport is ranked the third most important issue for young people in Argyll and the Islands in making the H&I a more attractive place to live (compared to fifth across the H&I). Bus travel is well regarded, more so than by young people from other parts of the H&I. Ferry availability is better regarded than average, although this masks geographical differences, with lower levels of satisfaction among those living in Cowal and Bute. Ferry travel is also regarded as costly, although RET when extended to all CalMac routes should help in this regard.

- Rail travel is relatively limited within Argyll and the Islands with the exception of the (newly improved) Oban to Glasgow line. However, it is regarded relatively favourably for those with access, although half (in line with the regional average) think affordability is poor. Availability of air travel is not regarded as especially good, even in parts of Argyll and the Islands with access to air travel, such as Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands, and it is regarded as more costly than elsewhere.

- Those in Cowal and Bute feel least connected to the rest of the H&I, but also to the rest of Scotland, despite geographical proximity to the Central Belt. This is likely to be related to views on the cost of ferry travel. Overall, just over 42% of young people in Argyll and the Islands regard public transport as adequate, marginally higher than the H&I average (40%).

Digital Connectivity

Standard broadband is available to the majority, although just a few (5%) had Next Generation Access broadband at the time of survey. This is expected to increase markedly over the next 12-18 months with the rollout of NGA.

- Young People in Argyll and the Islands rate current broadband reliability and speed lowest of all the H&I areas. More than half also view mobile connectivity as poor, particularly in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands and in Oban, Lorn and the Isles. There is less recognition of the benefits NGA can bring in relation to flexible or home working by young people in Argyll and the Islands.

Arts, Culture and Leisure

- Overall, young people in Argyll and the Islands feel that there is less availability of arts, culture and leisure activities than in the H&I as a whole. This masks variations within the area, with a better offer in Oban, Lorn and the Isles driven by the broadening of the offer in Oban, including cinema and gym/leisure.

- The greatest mismatch between the availability of an activity and its importance is in Cowal and Bute; for example only 11% think there is a good social venues and clubs offer, yet 75% regard this as important.

Community

- High levels of pride were evident in Argyll and the Islands, as they were across the whole of the H&I. Young people in Oban, Lorn and the Isles are most proud of their town or community. Here, almost nine in 10 express pride in their community, as do eight in 10 in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands. This falls to 44% in Cowal and Bute.

- Community engagement levels, closely allied to community spirit, in Argyll and the Islands are broadly in line with the H&I overall, and around a third of young people are involved in groups, clubs and so on. Again, those in Cowal and Bute are slightly less engaged.

Future Aspirations

- Three in 10 young people wish to be living locally in Argyll and the Islands at the age of 35, which is lower than the 33% across the H&I. Whilst this is partly influenced by the higher proportion of school age pupils represented in the Argyll and the Islands sample (who are more likely to say that they wish to move away), the proportion is nonetheless low. Young people in Cowal and Bute are more likely to want to move away, regardless of age.

- Generally, young people in Argyll and the Islands think the H&I is improving as a place to live, and that this will continue to be the case over the coming five years. Those in Oban, Lorn and the Isles are most positive about recent change.

Concluding Remarks

7.2 What is clear from the Argyll and the Islands analysis, is that the perceptions of young people varies depending on where they live. Those in Oban, Lorn and the Isles are the most positive about their local area and the H&I generally. They are more positive about employment and education opportunities, the desire to stay in the area and about a range of associated factors. This reflects the investment in and growth of Oban as a key centre for education and employment.

7.3 Those in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands are fairly positive about their local employment and education opportunities, and this is the area with the most committed stayers and fewest young people wanting to leave. The perceptions of employment (and indeed self-employment) opportunities are in line with the region's average, and there is a high desire to be in employment in later life, although the low diversity of these opportunities is a concern for young people.

7.4 However, the positive view of young people from these areas is not shared across the remainder of Argyll and the Islands. Those in Cowal and Bute are much more likely to have more negative perceptions of the availability of local employment and education opportunities, and far more wish to leave. As well as perceptions that there are very few opportunities, there are negative views of the cost of living and the social offer. There are clearly issues in Cowal and Bute that will need careful consideration and an appropriate response to address the challenge of out-migration of young people.

7.5 Even where views are more negative, such as Cowal and Bute, a greater proportion of the Argyll and the Islands population wish to live and work locally than feel there are good opportunities to do so. This suggests that where out-migration has been most pronounced, more opportunities would enable more young people to stay. Further, where young people are more positive, in Oban, Lorn and the Isles, there are specific issues to address to attract/retain young people, notably housing.

7.6 The research is wide-ranging; it shows there is a positive base on which to build on in most parts of Argyll and the Islands, and that creating more opportunities for education and employment, and tackling specific issues, would help improve perceptions further. The notable exception is Cowal and Bute, where a multi-faceted, multi-agency response is required to address views which are far more negative than in other parts of Argyll and the Islands.

A. Annex 1: survey response profile

This chapter provides an overview of survey respondents by age, gender, geography and status.

Number of Respondents

In all, 588 young people from Argyll and the Islands responded to the survey (either online or through a paper version). This represents 14% of the total survey sample and a strong confidence level of 95% with a +/-4% margin of error, based on an estimated 15-30 year old Argyll and the Islands population of 10,411.[17] This provides a robust survey sample and high reliability in the findings.[18]

Age

Overall, 372 (65%) of those responding were aged 15-18 years, 108 (19%) were aged 19-24 years and 89 (16%) were aged 25-30 years at the time of completing the survey. Again, this provides a robust confidence level of at least 95% with a margin of error between +/-5% and +/-11%.

Survey responses have a slightly higher level of representation for those aged 15-18 years as a result of the high response rate amongst school pupils. These additional school responses were the product of a targeted approach to gathering data from this age group, a crucial age at which young people make decisions about their future. As a consequence, the survey sample is slightly less representative of those aged 19-30 years.

Table 4.1: Argyll and the Islands Survey Response by Age and Representativeness

Age group	Total (survey)	%	Argyll & Bute (%)	+/-
15-18	372	65%	27%	+38%
19-24	108	19%	39%	-20%
25-30	89	16%	34%	-18%
Total	**569**	**100%**		**N/A**

Source: ekosgen, 2015, Survey of Young People; National Register of Scotland Mid-year Population Estimates (2014). Please note, percentages are based on the population of the Argyll and Bute Council area as a best fit geography – in contrast to the Argyll and the Islands geography, this does not include Arran and the Cumbraes but does include Helensburgh and Lomond; percentages may not sum due to rounding.

Gender

In all, 60% of respondents from Argyll and the Islands (336) were female, compared to 51.6% across the H&I. Nearly four in 10 (38%) were male (212) (compared to 48.4% across the region), while just under 2% (11) preferred not to say.[19]

[17] Census (2011) – area office breakdown provided by Highlands and Islands Enterprise.
[18] Please note that a small proportion of young people did not provide answers to all socio-demographic questions. So, while these young people are included in the overall responses, it was not possible to attribute them to age groups; thus, not all of the categories sum to the full 588 responses received.
[19] Census (2011). Please note, these figures are for the Argyll and Islands population as a whole.

For both males and females, this again provides a high level of confidence at 95%, with a +/-6% margin of error for females, and a +/-7% margin of error for males.[20]

Geography

Respondents were asked to choose the area in which they live – the location of their current family home rather than a temporary residence used for study or short-term contracts. Within Argyll and the Islands, respondents were most commonly from Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (218 – 38%), just under two thirds (184 – 32%) were from Oban, Lorn & the Isles, just over one in four (148 – 26%) were from Cowal and Bute and a small number were from Arran and the Cumbraes (19 – 3%).[21]

Status

Over six in 10 (61%) respondents were school pupils at the time of responding (342); just under a quarter (23% - 128) were in employment or self-employment; and 14% (77) were university/ college students.

Small numbers responding to the survey were undertaking an apprenticeship (5), were a carer or home maker (3), had finished education, but were not currently in employment nor unemployed (2) or were unemployed (2). In all, five (1%) described themselves as none of the above.

In comparison to the wider sample, respondents from Argyll and the Islands are more commonly school pupils, and less likely to fall within any of the other categories.

Summary

In all, a high number of responses were received from young people in Argyll and the Islands across the four sub-areas. These responses provide good confidence in the results by age, geography and gender, providing a robust data-set for analysis.

[20] Census (2011). Please note, these figures are for the Argyll and Islands population as a whole.
[21] Please note, this is based on the respondents' postcode. There were 19 individuals that it was not possible to determine the sub-area for.

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