

#YOUTH
WORK
CHANGES
LIVES

YouthLink
Scotland
The national agency for youth work

A Call to Action

YOUTH WORK OUTCOMES

Irrespective of the youth work activity these outcomes can be achieved for young people through youth work.

Young people:

- Are confident, resilient and optimistic for the future
- Manage personal, social and formal relationships
- Create, describe and apply their learning and skills
- Participate safely and effectively in groups
- Consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control
- Express their voice and demonstrate social commitment
- Broaden their perspectives through new experiences and thinking

YOUTH WORK AND PUBLIC POLICY

The definitive features of youth work and the outcomes it achieves intersect with many areas of public policy - including, but not limited to:

- Education
- Health and Wellbeing
- Social Justice and Inequalities
- Employment
- Democratic Participation, Civic Participation and Citizenship
- Criminal Justice
- Community Safety
- Sport and Physical Activity
- Environment
- Play, Arts, Culture and Creativity
- Community Empowerment

INVEST IN YOUTH WORK

YouthLink Scotland is the collective voice of youth work. YouthLink Scotland is a strategic partner within the National Youth Work Strategy. We believe that youth work needs investment to ensure that every young person in Scotland, irrespective of their background or where they live, has access to a high quality youth work opportunity or service. To achieve this, the youth work sector requires sustainable funding, investment in research, and incentives to support volunteering.

We ask for:

- The creation of a 3-year capital fund for youth work to invest in facilities and resources to ensure the sector can deliver high quality youth work opportunities.
- Sustained financial investment in youth work:
 - Through commitment to reinvest the proceeds of crime into youth work via the CashBack for Communities programme.
 - Continuation of the National Voluntary Youth Organisations Support Fund.
- Investment in research for the youth work sector - to ensure our workforce are informed and sector leading, as well as to evidence the impact of youth work on the positive outcomes in young people's lives. For example, to understand the impact of youth work on educational attainment and the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence.
- Employer Supported Volunteering to ensure everyone is supported to volunteer, meeting the needs of youth work where volunteers contribute their time frequently and over the long-term. We ask the Scottish Government to lead as an exemplar of best practice by providing Employer Supported Volunteering options for all staff, as an ongoing commitment to the voluntary sector.
- Recognition of the outcomes of youth work across public and social policy - by embedding the youth work contribution within the strategies and policies of the Scottish Government and other public bodies.

INVEST IN YOUNG PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

YouthLink Scotland is committed to ensuring that all young people have access to high quality youth work. In addition to the provision of youth work, YouthLink Scotland believes in the need for investment in young people and their communities. This includes continuing to address issues of access and equality within education and the labour market, democratic participation for those aged 16 and 17, and investing in young people's wellbeing, mobility, and connectivity.

We ask for:

- Continued commitment to delivering the measures contained within Developing Scotland's Young Workforce and the critical contribution of youth work to the development of young people's skills and attributes as future employees. We ask for a guaranteed work placement for all young people and adequate financial support for training and work for all.
- Investment in digital participation - invest in upskilling of youth workers to ensure they are knowledgeable, confident, capable and innovative in meeting the digital participation needs of young people, whilst also widening access to free Wi-Fi in public and community spaces to ensure young people can experience their right to information.
- Continued support and advocacy for the extension of the franchise for 16 and 17 year olds in UK elections and referendums by members of the Scottish Parliament. Opportunities to work with the sector and other partners to ensure new and first time voters are informed and engaged in democratic opportunities.
- A review of Scotland's concessionary travel programme with the ambition of targeted provision of 'smart' concessionary travel for young people in circumstances of greatest need.
- A national review of young people's mental health services and support, to include the role that youth work contributes in early intervention, which will improve health and wellbeing outcomes for young people in Scotland.

INVESTMENT IN FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY

YouthLink Scotland is committed to fairness and equality for all. We are committed to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the promotion of human rights. We believe that Scotland should fully incorporate the UNCRC to ensure that children and young people are given the special protection they need in all realms of their life. It is our growing concern that austerity policies will continue to negatively impact the lives of children and young people, and that their rights will be compromised.

We ask for:

- Recognition and investment in youth work to allow it to contribute to closing the educational attainment gap and reducing inequalities of life outcomes for young people. We ask that work is undertaken to recognise the value of achievements gained in informal and out of school learning.
- Full incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scots Law.
- Increased policy priority and the commitment of resources to fully realise Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, for all children and young people at all times.
- Investment in actions which will tackle discrimination, prejudice and bullying behaviours, ensuring that young people can experience safe and inclusive environments to live, learn and work.

ABOUT YOUTHLINK SCOTLAND

YouthLink Scotland is the national agency for youth work. We are a membership organisation, representing over 100 regional and national youth organisations from both the voluntary and statutory sectors. We champion the role and value of youth work and represent the interests and aspirations of our sector.

We have a vision of a youth work sector which offers sustainable, dynamic and accessible youth work opportunities that support young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

Our vision is of a nation which values its young people and their contribution to society, where all young people are supported to achieve their potential.

SCOTLAND'S YOUTH WORK SECTOR

Scotland's youth work sector is as rich and diverse as the nation itself. In Scotland there are more than 80,000 adults working with young people through youth work. We reach in excess of 380,000 young people in our provision of youth work opportunities each week. The youth work sector work has three essential and definitive features:

- Young people choose to participate
- Youth work must build from where young people are
- Youth work recognises the young person and the youth worker as partners in a learning process

The activity, venue, and approaches utilised to deliver this are varied and include; youth clubs, youth projects, specialist or targeted provision, social activism, outdoor learning, awards programmes, uniformed organisations, and democratic participation.

YouthLink Scotland, Rosebery House, 9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5EZ

T: 0131 313 2488 **E:** info@youthlinkscotland.org **W:** www.youthlinkscotland.org

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