Chief Executive’s Report

When I sit down to write the introduction for our annual report, I always attempt to find some inspirational words that might frame and give a deeper meaning to what is, after all, a list of key activities and achievements for the past year.

What we do as a sector, for the cause of young people and their development and welfare, to me is encapsulated in Stephen Covey’s words. Validation and affirmation are very American terms but they do convey the kernel of what good youth work is about.

To the young people we work with we are significant others that they have allowed into their lives. We must respect that, and transmit our belief in their enthusiasm, ability and goodness to help them deal effectively and positively with their life choices to achieve their potential. In addition, youth work should be enjoyable, challenging and inspirational.

A few highlights from the year include the launch of the revised National Youth Work Strategy and the subsequent debate at Holyrood. This was followed by our ‘Wild in the Park’ event which saw 50 plus MSPs as well as Party Leaders attend our outdoor learning event in Holyrood Park. Subsequently we published a special edition of The Link magazine dedicated to youth work and outdoor learning.

Our other two very large scale events saw Digital Youth Work take centre stage in November at our National Youth Work Week Conference, again accompanied by a special edition of The Link. In March the National Youth Worker of the Year Awards had a record attendance and some fantastic examples of excellent practice, dedication and commitment. Callander Youth Project was a worthy overall winner from a very strong field.

YouthLink Scotland continued to work closely with the Scottish Government Justice and Community Safety Department in particular, as well as with Police Scotland on a variety of topics. These included CashBack for Communities, Action on Sectarianism, No Knives Better Lives and Police Scotland Youth Volunteers Scheme. Our Looking Forward Not Back Conference, which focussed on action research to tackle sectarianism, was a great success with the Minister for Community Safety, Paul Wheelhouse MSP, in attendance. We continued to co-ordinate Activity Agreements across 32 local authorities and to organise CPD events for local staff involved in this critical work.

The build up to the Independence Referendum in September saw us partnering with Young Scot and Scottish Youth Parliament to bring young people together to discuss and debate both independence and the importance of using their franchise.

The Commonwealth Games also saw a massive amount of youth work activity linked to sport and again we were able to reflect on this with another special edition of The Link magazine.

Internally, YouthLink Scotland has taken on the task of improving its Equalities and Diversity footprint, with a view to being able to work with members to ensure, as a sector, we understand and respect diversity and comply with best practice.

We have continued to work with our colleagues in government and at Education Scotland to get a better national grants system approved and the roll out of this will take place from 2016 onwards.

“Next to physical survival, the greatest need of a human being is to be affirmed, to be validated, to be appreciated.”

Stephen Covey, American Educator
Chairman’s Report

As ever it is a great privilege and pleasure for me to introduce this report from the National Agency for Youth Work, which shows the strength and resilience of the sector.

This was a watershed year which has seen some massive changes in the way in which we relate to Government and with regard to our ongoing discussions with Education Scotland.

The Board and Chief Executive have been heavily involved in negotiating what we hope will be a ground breaking Memorandum of Understanding with Education Scotland which should be signed by the time you read this.

The launch of the revised National Youth Work Strategy and setting up of the National Stakeholder Reference Group has been important, as has the debate on the Strategy at Holyrood, which saw all political parties supporting the document and its implementation plan, something we have strived to achieve for many years.

We continue to try and attract funding and resources into the sector and it was heartening to see all of our major contracts renewed this year.

New areas of work are also coming on stream and we also welcomed several new members during the year.

On your behalf I thank the staff, Board, associates and funders for their ongoing commitment to Scotland’s young people.

I hope you find this year’s annual report a useful and interesting document and please feel free to use it in your organisation if it can help the cause in any way.

Alex Linkston CBE
Chairman

Training and staff development opportunities continue to be offered and the strength of the Networks and Policy Forum have never been more in evidence.

Attendances are at an all-time high and the first ever joint residential of the National Voluntary Youth Work Organisations and the Local Authority Youth Work Managers was a real success and is being replicated and expanded in 2015-16.

Our media and communication platforms continue to grow and flourish, and on the digital front, the publication of the Digitally Agile National Principles in CLD is a major plank of support to youth workers.

We have said goodbye to some key staff in the past year with Ian Hay, our Senior Networks Officer, and Julie Wilson, our Graphic Designer, both retiring. We wish them well and thank them for their considerable contribution.

There are a myriad of other events, opportunities and discussions which have taken place and the Board are delighted with both the amount and quality of the activity to support young people and those who work with them.

My personal thanks go to staff, Board, members and associates for their commitment, hard work and passion.

To conclude, we need to, each one of us, go forward with a renewed confidence and belief in what we do and its value. We know these next few years are critical from a ‘resource’ viewpoint. We must do all in our power to win the argument and fight unfair cuts in youth work budgets.

Burns said “Facts are chieles that winna ding”, and we will make sure our message gets out there.

We will continue to gather evidence and submit it, but our biggest asset is the young people we work with and we need to get them to tell their stories to those in power.

Let’s be confident in the right of our cause and in the power of youth work to change lives. I finish with a quote from the Roman philosopher, Cicero, to illustrate the point.

“Confidence is that feeling by which the mind embarks on great and honourable courses with a sure hope and trust in itself.”

Jim Sweeney
Chief Executive
£778,449 of CashBack for Communities funding awarded to 202 projects benefiting 21,730 young people.

6 grants totalling £42,000 to support action-based research around youth work’s impact on sectarianism, through the Looking Forward Not Back project.

£461,380 of National Voluntary Organisation Support Funds awarded. This fund supported 12,401 voluntary sector staff and volunteers to access development opportunities.

39 grants totalling £461,380 of National Voluntary Organisation Support Funds awarded. This fund supported 12,401 voluntary sector staff and volunteers to access development opportunities.

102 staff and volunteers trained to use No Knives Better Lives (NKBL) training resources ‘Sharp Solution’ and ‘On a Knife’s Edge’ to support work with young people in schools and youth groups.

12 National Press Releases, 3 editions of The Link magazine which resulted in 72 case studies/practice descriptors published on YouthLink Scotland’s website.

33 member organisations and stakeholders demonstrated the youth work sector’s contribution to outdoor learning at Wild in the Park. This high profile public affairs event was supported by the four main party leaders and attended by 50 MSPs who pledged their support.
2,618 young people participated in an Activity Agreement and 1,993 young people moved on to employment, formal learning/training.

71 young people involved in action research through the Looking Forward Not Back project.

1,191 resources downloaded from the NKBL Website

182 individual items of positive media coverage generated across national, local and sector publications.

89% increase in Twitter following in 6 months. 135 videos on the AoS Youtube channel with 3,634 views.

114% increase in the number of visits to the Action on Sectarianism website.

@youthlinkscot Twitter followers increased from 3,229 to 4,260

26 YLS Network Meetings/Opportunities. 278 members attended YLS Networks. 26 presentations from Scottish Government, National Bodies and Agencies and managed by YouthLink Scotland.

55 senior managers and prison officers at Polmont Young Offenders Institution trained in Equalities and Diversity training.

1,191 resources downloaded from the NKBL Website

CEO and other staff delivered 12 sessions on the National Youth Work Strategy to a variety of members and partners.

71 young people involved in action research through the Looking Forward Not Back project.

55 senior managers and prison officers at Polmont Young Offenders Institution trained in Equalities and Diversity training.
What we did

1. A new No Knives Better Lives website providing information and resources to address the issue of knife crime. Events delivered include a national launch, 2 practitioner network events as well as training sessions for 225 practitioners and 190 young people.

2. 2,618 young people have participated in an Activity Agreement and 70% of young leavers have moved on to employment, formal learning or training.

3. Operational evidence from Activity Agreements supports national policy development in relation to youth employment.

4. 114% increase in the number of visits to the Action on Sectarianism website and 105% increase in the number of downloadable resources utilised, with 12,270 downloads.

5. Healthy Young Lives Training Pack developed and ‘Training the Trainers’ event held with members in January 2015, in partnership with NHS Health Scotland and others.

6. 6 projects across Scotland funded to examine the effectiveness of youth work in tackling intra-Christian sectarianism with 1,360 community members involved. Successful in gaining continuation funding from Scottish Government for 2015/16.

7. Digitally Agile National Principles finalised and launched at Scottish Youth Work Week conference.

8. National Digital Futures Group continued, and YouthLink Scotland was represented on Scottish Government Internet Safety and SCVO Digital Participation Charter groups.

9. In partnership with Police Scotland and Young Scot, delivered introductory training to Adult Volunteers (5 pilot areas). Introduction of Participative Democracy Certificate awards to young people recruited to the Police Scotland Advisory Panel.

10. YouthLink Scotland’s new Equalities and Human Rights Strategy devised as the organisation works towards ‘Investors in Diversity’ status.

Outcomes

• Access and inclusion for young people to quality youth work provision has improved and is evident throughout Scotland.

• Youth workers have developed new, innovative and quality youth work practice to meet the challenges young people face in today’s world.

Impact

• Activity Agreements - Promoting youth work solutions for employability issues

• Action on Sectarianism - Developing and sharing resources, and best practice

• Looking Forward Not Back - Supporting emerging areas of practice
North Ayrshire Council's Opportunities for All has established strong partnerships to broaden the reach of its Activity Agreement delivery.

The development of positive partnership working between social services and education has enabled Activity Agreements (AAs) to engage with some of the most vulnerable young people, particularly those receiving extensive social services intervention. North Ayrshire Council’s Through-Care Service provides heavily supported and individualised AAs for young people who have been in residential care and who need additional support before engaging with wider, group-based AA provision. Activity Agreements are also an essential element of the Programmes Approach Team’s (Youth Justice) support for young people who offend. All young people identified by the team are considered for an AA, ensuring that young people at risk of offending or who have a history of offending behaviours can engage with this intervention.

Young people looked after at home are supported into Activity Agreements through the Social Service’s Rosemount Team, who delivered an AA programme in partnership with the National Galleries, focussing on personal development through creativity. Delivery was also supported by the Council’s Community Learning and Development colleagues, who deliver creative and meaningful AAs for some of the most vulnerable young people in North Ayrshire.

Through such partnerships, Activity Agreements in North Ayrshire are engaging the hardest to reach young people and supporting them into employment, further learning and training.

Impact:

Promoting youth work solutions on employability issues

Activity Agreements

Promoting youth work solutions on employability issues
Action on Sectarianism provides information that inspires action on sectarianism across Scotland by providing dedicated channels for children, young people and adults to learn more about the issues, and a space for practitioners to share resources and best practice as well as showcase their work.

One way in which Action on Sectarianism does this is to offer support in recording workshops and events hosted by other funded partners. For example, the Conforti Institute together with Faith in Community Scotland and Place for Hope hosted a number of Intra-faith events responding to intra-Christian sectarianism. These included a Question Time event with questions on sectarianism from community members and a community event called ‘Weaving the Threads’ on responding to sectarianism together as a community. Action on Sectarianism captured the events and the thoughts of community members on the work done by the three organisations. These videos along with some other examples can be seen here; https://www.actiononsectarianism.info/adults/interactive-zone/other-videos/action-on-sectarianism
Looking Forward Not Back (LFNB) is an action research project examining the effectiveness of youth work in tackling intra-Christian sectarianism. With the support of a researcher from YouthLink Scotland, six projects have produced an evidence base on the challenges and successes of youth work in tackling intra-Christian sectarianism. The purpose is to address the gap in qualitative research into effective approaches.

The projects included Dumfries and Galloway Council, East Renfrewshire Council, South Lanarkshire Council, YMCA Bellshill and Mossend, North Lanarkshire Council and Stirling Council. The projects reached 1,360 community members through their youth work practice. The learning from the projects was shared at the LFNB National Conference at Stirling Court Hotel on 19th February 2015 with over 100 delegates and representatives from the projects in attendance. The research findings, case studies on each of the projects and a toolkit are currently under development.

Impact:

Supporting emerging areas of practice
Investing in youth work

What we did

1. Promotion of the Erasmus+ Funds.
2. £800,000 in CashBack for Communities grants allocated to the sector.
3. £500,000 in National Voluntary Sector Support Funds allocated to the sector.
5. Production and promotion of case studies of youth work programmes which demonstrate the positive impact of a youth work approach and the social return on investment.
6. National Youth Worker of the Year Awards, which celebrates outstanding practice, was presented by the Minister for Children and Young People and attended by over 300 guests.
8. Increased local and national media coverage of youth work including extensive coverage in relation to CashBack, National Youth Worker of the Year Awards and Wild in the Park with regular CEO inputs in national press and sector publications.
9. A programme of events which showcased youth work to potential investors including Wild in the Park and the CashBack Youth Work Fund Launch.

Outcomes

- The youth work sector has the skills and knowledge to take advantage of available funding opportunities.
- Peer led grant-making programmes target investment where there is the greatest level of need.
- Charitable trusts, public sector funders and business recognise the value and impact of youth work and commit to sustained investment in it.
- Political parties recognise the value and impact of youth work and commit to sustained investment in it and support an all-party commitment to the National Youth Work Strategy.

Impact

- CashBack for Communities - Supporting the sector to access existing funding streams
- Wild in the Park - Raising the profile of youth work
- The Link magazine - Demonstrating the social and economic value of youth work
CashBack for Communities Youth Work Fund awards were made to 172 groups from the youth work sector. 18,908 young people from across Scotland benefited from the programmes delivered.

Strathmore Centre for Youth Development facilitated a residential experience for 13 young people. The programme included visits to Edinburgh Zoo and Butterfly World for an educational project on animals/insects and their environments. The group also visited Camera Obscura, World of Illusions and the Scottish Parliament alongside a series of workshops to build confidence, friendships and self-esteem. Although the activities were an important component of the programme, it was equally important that youth workers were able to spend this time with the young people to foster positive relationships that will benefit them throughout their teenage years. Positive adult role models are crucial for some of these young people who may not have a positive influences at home.

Minister for Children and Young People, Aileen Campbell MSP, continues to support the youth work sector’s contribution to improving opportunities for all of Scotland’s young people. In April 2014 the Minister spent time with youth workers and young people on the day she announced further CashBack money for the youth work sector:

“Earlier today, I visited the Green Shoots programme, which works with young people in East Lothian. On top of meeting modern apprentices, seeing primary 7s building dens and doing environmental art, and clearing ditches with a young guy called Anthony, we announced that YouthLink Scotland will administer more than £2 million of CashBack for Communities funding to support the life-changing work that youth work delivers through organisations across Scotland.”

Impact:

CashBack for Communities

Supporting the sector to access existing funding streams

CashBack for Communities Youth Work Fund awards were made to 172 groups from the youth work sector. 18,908 young people from across Scotland benefited from the programmes delivered.
‘Wild in the Park’ was about raising the awareness and profile for the outdoor learning section of the youth work sector, which makes a significant contribution to a raft of educational outcomes. The entire sector has much to offer from residential centres to camps and water based activities through to hill walking, climbing, environmental projects and of course a myriad of sports related activities.

The afternoon included around 50 MSPs from across Scotland taking part in a host of challenges including: mountain biking; raft building; fire lighting; wild cooking and survival techniques. The event culminated in the UK’s first ever outdoor parliamentary reception.

The event generated substantial national media coverage and many supportive quotes from the MSPs themselves.

Conservative MSP Murdo Fraser described the event as: “the best example of a political engagement event I have experienced in my time as an MSP.”

Alison Johnstone, Green MSP for the Lothians, was very enthusiastic about the range of outdoor learning on offer:

“The ‘Wild in the Park’ event brought together some brilliant organisations from the youth work sector in the first outdoor reception of its kind. The success of the event showed strong support for outdoor learning in Scotland, but we need further investment in outdoor learning to bring together more young people in healthy, educational activities which benefit our communities. I hope this is the first of many outdoor receptions at Holyrood.”

Impact:

Wild in the Park

Raising the profile of youth work
To celebrate the incredible success of the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, YouthLink Scotland published a special edition of The Link magazine - 'Youth Work and Sport'. The magazine highlighted the strong link between youth work and sport. Sport, in all its forms, is one of the many tools used by youth workers and this edition was full of innovative working designed to build a meaningful sporting legacy for our young people.

The Games showed us many things, not least the attraction of friendly competition, the immense power and resilience of individual and team efforts and the love for sports of all kinds by large sections of the community.

The magazine featured examples of good practice from across the sector with one of these articles demonstrating the impact of the work of Shetland's Youth Legacy Ambassadors.

Shetland's Youth Legacy Ambassadors planned a two day sports conference for children aged 12+ with support from Youth Services and Active Schools. The conference aimed to promote the Commonwealth Games, an active lifestyle, and highlight the variety of different sports people can be involved in, as well as increase the participation of young people involved in sport in Shetland.

The conference was a roaring success. It supported young people to try new things whilst celebrating the Commonwealth Games. Shetland's Youth Legacy Ambassadors really benefitted from having the opportunity to organise such an event. Their confidence has increased, they have discovered more of their strengths and have identified areas for improvement. Massive congratulations must be given for their efforts in assuring such a large event was so successful.

Impact:

The Link Magazine

Demonstrating the social and economic value of youth work

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Developing the workforce

A workforce that is confident, skilled, well led and effective

What we did

1. Input into the CLD Standards Council CPD Strategy refresh, to promote and develop support pathways for volunteers.

2. Partnered with Young Scot and Education Scotland to promote #Iwill in Scotland to increase youth volunteering and social action.

3. Supported a bid to the UK Commission for Employment and Skills to sustain and refresh Modern Apprenticeships and SVQ in Youth Work, through the joint ETS.

4. Developed and delivered CPD opportunities with partners in traditional and emerging areas of practice such as: Digitally Agile CLD; Healthy Young Lives; GIRFEC; Curriculum for Excellence; and the Prevention of Teenage Sexual Exploitation.

5. Delivered 'Youth Work Approaches' training for Police Scotland probationers, for Police Scotland Adult Volunteers, and for the Scottish Prison Service at Polmont on Equalities.

6. Partnered with Education Scotland to pilot and deliver the CLD Workforce Survey "Working in Scotland’s Communities", mapping the sector and boosting labour market intelligence.

7. Ongoing workforce representation with SCVO, SCQF, UK ETS, SQA, SDS, the CLD Standards Council and Education Scotland.

8. Supported the National Voluntary Youth Work Organisations and Local Authority Youth Work Managers networks to develop a draft suite of outcomes for young people through youth work.

Outcomes

• The workforce has improved access and awareness of CPD, including effective leadership development pathways.

• The workforce has demonstrated its ability to work flexibly with partners to achieve the best outcomes for young people.

• The case for a sufficient workforce to match young people’s needs and aspirations, supported by labour market intelligence, is made to funders, employers and key stakeholder bodies.

• YLS with its key networks has begun to develop a suite of youth work outcomes to support development of the sector.

Impact

• Healthy Young Lives - Facilitating cross-sector CPD and training

• Working with Scotland’s Communities - Advocating on behalf of the sector

• Digitally Agile National Principles - Providing advice and support to the sector on youth work and the digital challenge
Healthy Young Lives is a half-day foundation workshop which aims to increase the knowledge and skills of youth work, social care and CLD staff around how, within their own role and remit, they can promote healthy behaviours, encourage healthy lifestyles and help address the physical, social and emotional factors which impact on the health and wellbeing of the young people with whom they work.

It has been developed in partnership by NHS Health Scotland, YouthLink Scotland, Youth Scotland, Community Learning and Development Managers (Scotland) and the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS).

The course is designed to be very interactive with participants having the opportunity to deliver some of the session themselves. As a result, trainers will bring the additional expertise around youth work, social care and/or education to ensure the course retains its strong relevance to those sectors.
Working with Scotland’s Communities is a national research study to find out more about the diverse range of paid staff and volunteers in Community Learning and Development (CLD) roles across Scotland. Phase one of the study was carried out between February and April 2015. This online survey was aimed at the organisations employing these staff and volunteers.

This national research study was carried out in partnership with Education Scotland and YouthLink Scotland as well as The Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC); The Workers Educational Association (WEA); The CLD Standards Council for Scotland; and CLD Managers Scotland.

The survey was aimed at organisations rather than individuals and targeted community, voluntary or public sector organisations, large and small, that employ paid staff or volunteers in community learning and development roles.

The term Community Learning and Development (or CLD) describes a wide range of learning and development happening in communities across Scotland with groups and individuals of all ages. Staff and volunteers in Community Learning and Development roles work in many different settings and have many different job titles but they share common values and approaches and a common aim to empower the people they work with to make positive changes in their lives and in their communities.

The findings from the first phase of the research study can be found here:
http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/WorkingwithCommunities_tcm4-868173.pdf
Impact:

Digitally Agile National Principles

Digitally Agile CLD is a partnership project between YouthLink Scotland, Learning Link Scotland and the Scottish Community Development Centre and has been supported by Education Scotland. Digitally Agile National Principles is a national framework of guiding principles for the use of digital technology and social media in Community Learning and Development. The Community Learning and Development sector comprises community based learning in the broadest sense including youth work, adult learning and community development, family learning, community health and arts activities, practitioners, volunteers and organisations. The Principles have been developed with key stakeholders across CLD and are intended to drive forward effective and safe use of digital technology and social media in CLD practice.

Digitally Agile National Principles are designed to encourage organisations to empower their staff to use these tools in their practice. The Principles will help CLD practitioners to build digital considerations into policy, create robust professional guidelines, provide appropriate resources or train staff to make best use of digital technology and social media.

Providing advice and support to the sector on youth work and the digital challenge

www.digitallyagilecld.org
Youth work impact

Activities

1. Launch of the revised National Youth Work Strategy through a National Youth Summit event. Ongoing work with members, stakeholders and partners to ensure commitment to taking forward the National Youth Work Strategy, through the Strategic Reference Group.

2. Worked towards establishing a partnership agreement between Education Scotland and YouthLink Scotland to provide an underpinning framework for the implementation of the National Youth Work Strategy.

3. Five Policy Forum reports presented to YLS Board – highlighting policy and practice development.

4. Worked in partnership with Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium, Lothian Association of Youth Clubs, Youth Scotland, Robertson Trust and Edinburgh University, to produce research on ‘Universal Youth Work’ as part of long-term project.

5. Facilitated and ran a series of YLS networks including: LA Youth Work Managers; National Voluntary Youth Work Organisations; Policy Forum; Member’s Network and the Communications and PR Network.

6. Produced three special editions of The Link magazine on Sport, Digital and Equalities.

7. Shared policy briefings, key messages and consultation responses with members through our networks, website and electronic briefing newsletter.

8. Facilitated policy consultation events in partnership with policy colleagues, members and stakeholders.

9. Provided the joint secretariat for the Children and Young People Cross Party Group (CPG) with Children in Scotland and organised six issue based CPG meetings including: Commonwealth Games Legacy, Policing and Young People, Kinship Care and the Effect of Parental Imprisonment.

10. Seven local consultation events to develop the YouthLink Scotland Manifesto for the UK Elections 2015, as well as a manifesto framework established for the Scottish Parliamentary Elections in 2016.

Outcomes

• YouthLink Scotland partners and stakeholders acknowledge the role and impact of quality youth work opportunities.

• The role of youth work is articulated positively in policy documents at national and local levels.

• The youth work sector has the skills to collate, articulate and demonstrate the role and impact of its work.

• The impact of youth work is positively promoted by the media and government.

• Agencies and organisation with the responsibility of policy implementation acknowledge the role and impact of youth work.

• Policy development accurately reflects the potential role of youth work.

Impact

• Policy Forum - Facilitating research and communicating the findings

• National Youth Work Week Conference - Providing network opportunities and events

• Parliamentary Participation - Influencing government policy
The Policy Forum supports policy development by YouthLink Scotland, enabling wide-ranging discussion within its meetings and across YouthLink Scotland’s membership. Through the Policy Forum, YouthLink Scotland reviews and promotes research, keeping abreast of international and national good practice, influencing national policy and encouraging the sharing of good practice through published papers and other sources.

NHS Health Scotland representatives provided a very detailed presentation on Mental Health and Wellbeing at the June 2014 meeting of the Policy Forum. NHS Health Scotland recognised the key role youth workers have around this agenda and the impact they can have. There was also recognition that although youth workers do not need to be mental health experts, they are often key in engaging young people and providing signposting services. Through the work of the Policy Forum on this key issue, there was a commitment to take forward training for the sector, to increase the knowledge and skills of youth workers, giving them the confidence to recognise potential mental health issues and be aware of how to deal with them. Healthy Young Lives, a half day training workshop, has now been developed in partnership with NHS Scotland and others, to ensure youth workers are better equipped to promote healthy behaviours, and can understand the factors that can impact on the mental wellbeing of young people.

Impact: Policy Forum
Facilitating research and communicating the findings
National Youth Work Week Conference

Impact:

An important part of our membership offer is the opportunity to network and connect with other youth work colleagues from across Scotland. The National Youth Work Week Conference is the biggest networking event in the sector calendar, and a great place to share good practice and innovative youth work.

The 2014 Scottish Youth Work Week Conference focussed on digital media in relation to youth work as well as a selection of morning and afternoon Interactive Sessions. Speakers included:

- Aileen Campbell MSP, Minister for Children and Young People.
- Chris Yiu, Director of Digital Participation at SCVO.
- Dona Milne, Deputy Director of Public Health, NHS Lothian.

The conference was also the Launchpad for the Digitally Agile National Principles, a national framework of guiding principles for the use of digital technology and social media in CLD. This was one of the outputs of the third phase of the Digitally Agile CLD project (DACLD), delivered in partnership by YouthLink Scotland, Learning Link Scotland and the Scottish Community Development Centre and supported by Education Scotland.
Over the year, YouthLink Scotland has worked with the membership and the Policy Forum to submit 12 written responses on a wide range of government policy areas including: health; education; homelessness; young carers; employability; electoral reform and Scotland’s constitutional future.

In addition to submitting written responses, YouthLink Scotland received invites to present evidence on three occasions at meetings of Scottish Parliament Committees. This included providing evidence to the:

• Equal Opportunities Committee - ‘Enquiry into Age and Social Isolation’ – provided the opportunity to share our concerns for young people who face or are at risk of facing social isolation, and the opportunities that youth work provides which goes some way to address this issue.

• Education and Culture Committee - ‘Enquiry into the role of the Third Sector in the Attainment Gap’ – during this session YLS highlighted the contribution of, and challenges for, third sector youth work organisations to improve attainment for all school-aged pupils.

• Scrutiny of the Draft Budget for 2015-16 – YLS demonstrated the contribution youth work makes to the education of Scotland’s young people and their future life chances and opportunities.

Responses to consultations and calls for evidence are informed by the intelligence gathered and experiences shared by our members. This is gathered formally through requests for information, as well as informally during our members’ network events and the Policy Forum. The relationship between YouthLink Scotland and our members is extremely important to this process, ensuring that YouthLink Scotland is able to truly represent the best interests of the youth work sector in the policy development cycle.

Our policy influence is tracked within committee reports and by identifying our areas of contribution when enquiries progress into legislation or guidance stages of policy development.
Summary financial report

The following is an extract of the financial information contained in YouthLink Scotland’s audited report and financial statement for the year ending 31 March 2015. Copies of the full accounts may be obtained from the registered office.

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2015 (including income and expenditure account)

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net income for the year</td>
<td>99,360</td>
<td>39,821</td>
<td>(145,000)</td>
<td>(5,819)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actuarial (loss) on pension scheme</td>
<td>(272,000)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(272,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net movement in funds for the year</td>
<td>(172,640)</td>
<td>39,821</td>
<td>(145,000)</td>
<td>(277,819)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reconciliation of funds

| Total funds at 1 April 2014 | 481,983 | 7,000 | 147,231 | 636,214 | 667,349 |
| Net movement of funds in year | (172,640) | 39,821 | (145,000) | (277,819) | (31,135) |
| Fund balance carried forward at 31 March 2015 | 309,343 | 46,821 | 2,231 | 358,395 | 636,214 |

Balance sheet as at 31 March 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total 31 March 2015 £</th>
<th>Total 31 March 2014 £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixed assets</td>
<td>30,213</td>
<td>15,874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current assets</td>
<td>786,996</td>
<td>816,965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creditors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amounts falling due after one year</td>
<td>63,031</td>
<td>74,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amounts falling due within one year</td>
<td>136,783</td>
<td>121,774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension scheme liability</td>
<td>259,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets including pension</td>
<td>358,395</td>
<td>636,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserves</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted general fund</td>
<td>309,343</td>
<td>481,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted fund</td>
<td>46,821</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated fund</td>
<td>2,231</td>
<td>147,231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total funds</td>
<td>358,395</td>
<td>636,214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

According to the latest figures from the National Voluntary Youth Work Organisations Survey and Education Scotland’s CLD workforce survey:

- **75,000**
  - Our sector has a workforce in excess of 75,000, including over 70,000 adult volunteers.

- **195,000 hours**
  - Youth work volunteers clock up 195,000 hours every week.

- **380,000 young people**
  - We reach in excess of 380,000 young people in our provision of youth work opportunities each week.

The 'Nature and Purpose of Youth 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.

To find out more please visit: www.youthlinkscotland.org
#youthworkchangeslives