



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.

Scotland's youth work sector is as rich and diverse as the nation itself. Our sector has a workforce in excess of 75,000 – including over 70,000 adult volunteers. We reach in excess of 380,000 young people in youth work opportunities each week. 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.

YouthLink Scotland champions the role and value of youth work, challenging government at national and local levels to invest in the development of the sector for the benefit of our young people. Our vision is of a nation which values its young people and their contribution to society, where young people are supported to achieve their potential.

YouthLink Scotland welcomes the publication of the Pregnancy and Parenthood in Young People strategy and welcomes the comprehensive approach which has been taken to date to engage stakeholders; including youth work organisations, and young people themselves through the co-design and survey activities undertaken by Young Scot.

General Comments on Pregnancy and Parenthood in Young People Strategy

As the national agency for youth work, and in our role as an intermediary we have endeavoured to respond to this response in the best interests of the youth work sector, however the views contained within this response may not be held by each of our individual members.

Scope and Aim of the Strategy

Throughout the Strategy there are number of statements as to the scope and aim of the strategy, it would be very beneficial to have a clear and consistent aim stated and repeated throughout. One particular area of variation within the aims of the strategy is with regard to the target age. There are multiple mentions of age, including the aim which states 'those under 18 and provide extra support for young parents, particularly those who were looked-after up to the age of 26' ; whilst the measures and definition of teenage pregnancy is under-20 years; and earlier in the document ' this Strategy looks to support young parents aged up to 26'. We would welcome a clear and consistent statement on the target age of this document.

We particularly welcome the inclusion of the additional risk factors and needs of Looked after Children and Care Leavers, ensuring those responsible fulfil their collective corporate parenting duties. As the age remit of the Strategy extends beyond 16 and therefore the end of compulsory schooling, we would welcome greater recognition of supports, prevention and advice for young people who are no longer in school based education when they become expectant or actual young parents: to include those in employment, training, further or higher education, and the role that such providers may take in delivering the aims of this Strategy.

Values

YouthLink Scotland would like the Strategy to make a clear statement of its values. Values which are evident through this, include – child/youth-centred; GIRFEC; balancing universal and targeted approaches; proportionality; personalisation and choice. Having a set of values for the Strategy would provide the opportunity for these values to be carried forward in to the implementation and service design and delivery locally and within the remit of the Community Planning Partnerships.

Policy Connections

YouthLink Scotland recognises the volume of work that has been undertaken to map, track, and illustrate the policy connections and interactions for this Strategy. We would however make the following suggestions to improve this aspect of the Strategy and its supporting documents:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – this must be included, both for the rights of those under 18 as parents; and for the children born to young parents. Particularly within the section on “Why Young People need Extra Support” to include the following specific articles:
 - Article 2: child is protected from all forms of discrimination
 - Article 3: best interest of the child
 - Article 6: right to life, survive and development
 - Article 12: respect for the views of the child
 - Article 28: right to education
- *Conduct of Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood Education in Schools*. This important guidance is mentioned on p12 of the Strategy but not contained within the Policy Mapping document.
- *National Guidance for Under-age Sexual Activity*. We would recommend that reference to this be included in the context of this Strategy, for example, in p18 second paragraph.
- Role of the Named Person service should be referenced consistently throughout at the appropriate sections of the Strategy. Giving particular account of the Named Person service for both young parents and for their child. For example include this within the Pathways of Care on p19, and on p25 the role of the Named Person for the child born to young parents.
- We would ask that the Policy Links outlined on p6/7 be written explicitly within the context and lens of this new Strategy, i.e. what does this legislation mean for the pregnancy and young parenthood agenda. For example we would like to see the

section on the Children and Young People's Act should make the connections to the Named Person service, definitions of wellbeing, the provision of the child's plan, and the provision of children's services planning.

- We welcome the commitment that this Strategy will be subject to a Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment in line with the Ministerial Duties in the Children and Young People's Act and the findings of that assessment being made available at the time of publication.

Gender and Relationships

YouthLink Scotland has identified that this Strategy, in places, seems to unintentionally reinforce the current situation of low engagement with young fathers. We would welcome explicit recognition of the role, contribution and support needs of young fathers; it is only with such actions that we will begin to see change and greater engagement of young fathers. We believe this Strategy should be the opportunity to be proactive and to increase the level of engagement of young fathers in their parenting role and life outcomes. We would urge a review of the language of this document to ensure inclusion of young fathers when appropriate or to make an inclusive reference to young parents.

Specifically in Sections 2 and 3, we would welcome consideration and guidance which takes accounts of rights, views, and support needs of young fathers.

We were interested in reading (p9) that the data in the HBSC found an increased percentage of young people who had not had sexual intercourse at age 15 and that this is largely due to change in reported behaviours of young women. We would be interested to see what activities and approaches have created this change in behaviours, and what can be done to change the behaviours of young men to achieve a similar outcome.

The Strategy contains, in places, assumptions made of the relationship status of the young parents – e.g. on p24 “for young pregnant women and their partners.” We would ask that the document is reviewed and consistency in language is applied to account for all possible circumstances, including lone-parenting, co-parenting and co-habiting young people.

We would like the Strategy to make consideration of actions which would support young parents who are affected by imprisonment – and to consider what contribution this Strategy can make to the availability of interventions and positive outcomes for young parents who are imprisoned. Research in 2010 indicated that within the prison population of Polmont Youth Offenders Institution, that one in three young men were actual or expectant fathers. Information about this research is available from [Parenting Across Scotland](#).

Parenthood

The Strategy states that it will ‘provide young men and women with the knowledge, tools and skills they require to consider where parenthood lies in their future plans’. YouthLink Scotland supports this as a strategic ambition and the need for action which would achieve this; however we do not believe that the Strategy adequately addresses this ambition as it currently reads and lacks actions which will achieve this.

We would welcome the inclusion of how parenthood education (at any age) is being addressed within the remit of this Strategy or indeed how it is being progressed elsewhere. For example this is contained with Curriculum for Excellence and we believe that this Strategy would benefit from highlighting such connections. Specifically we would welcome further content within this Strategy about Informed Choice in the decision to become parents (at any age).

One of the key paragraphs of the Strategy is the final paragraph of p13; we think this clearly illustrates the need for parenthood education and would like to see this text earlier in the structure of the document.

Specific Comments

- Contribution of the 'Third Sector': at varying points in the Strategy and its actions mention is made of the role of the Third Sector. We would welcome more precision as to the types of Third Sector organisations who may be able to support the delivery of this Strategy. We would particularly welcome if mention was made to the commissioning of new or additional Third Sector youth organisation to meet the needs of this Strategy as identified or assessed by the local Community Planning Partnership.
- We would suggest a review of the chosen wording in the Introduction and the Background and Rationale sections: 'fundamental causes of pregnancy'. We would suggest wording such as influencing factors or risk factors to pregnancy in young people.
- Childcare funding (p29), this section requires increased connection between young people's choices to remain in a range of education or training environments and childcare support that is available. As per the earlier comment in this response, there needs to be greater acknowledgement of the range of positive destinations for young parents, beyond school.
- Defining 'Youth-Friendly' - this should include meeting the needs of service users by involving young people in the design of services. Localised models of implementation will ensure local interpretation of what is meant by and experienced as 'youth-friendly'.
- Housing and homelessness (p30), we would welcome the linkage of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to this section, particularly Article 27 – the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

Style/Structure

- Please number the actions
- The actions/activities in the logic model do not correspond with the actions in the Strategy, can this be acknowledged in some way
- The Introduction and Background and Rationale sections are repetitive, conveying the same meaning. Within the introduction the final sentence of both paragraphs are identical
- We would request that youth work was the agreed terminology used throughout this document where currently the terms youth services, youth development and youth work are used interchangeably
- Natsal Report – please can this have a reference or explanatory note as to what Natsal is.
- Please refer to achievement and not 'wider achievement' on p9 with regards to Positive Outcomes

RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please Note this form must be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

1. Name/Organisation

Organisation Name

YouthLink Scotland

Title Mr Ms Mrs Miss Dr Please tick as appropriate

Surname

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Forename

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2. Postal Address

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3. Permissions - I am responding as:

Individual / Group/Organisation

Please tick as

x

(a) Do you agree to your response being made available to the public?

Yes No

(b) Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your responses available to the public on the following basis

(c) The name and address of your organisation will be made available to the public.

Are you content for your response to be made available?

Please tick ONE of the following boxes

Please tick as appropriate
x Yes No

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

or

Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address

or

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

(d) We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Please tick as appropriate

x Yes

No

Once completed this form can be emailed to:

PPYPStrategyconsultation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or posted to:
Pregnancy and Parenthood in Young People Strategy Consultation
Scottish Government
3E St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

When returning responses please also complete and return the Respondent Information Form. The closing date for responses is **Tuesday 29 September 2015.**