It is vital that all of Scotland’s children and young people have a fair chance to flourish. Youth work makes a significant contribution to this: put simply, it helps to change lives. It is always humbling to hear stories from young people and practitioners which demonstrate the real life impact of youth work.

We welcome this interim report on the National Youth Work Strategy - ‘Our ambitions for improving the life chances of young people in Scotland.’ Youth work and community learning and development takes place across all our communities, helping young people to make positive choices as they emerge into adulthood by building their confidence, skills and capacity for further learning and employability.

Youth work is a key player in educational reform and in helping Scotland to close the attainment gap between the most and least deprived. Partnerships with third sector organisations in youth work, youth advocacy and community learning and development, address the wider needs of young people and are part of our efforts to ensure every young person is able to fulfil their potential.

Youth work widens young people’s horizons and builds the resilience and capacity required to support young people at key transition points in their life. As an important partner in our Youth Employment Strategy, youth work can help to increase the range of pathways available for young people to further learning, training and skills development.

We all have a responsibility to make young people’s rights a reality. Youth work has a strong track record in helping young people to realise their rights and engage in our democracy. One of youth work’s great strengths is the opportunities it gives young people to get involved in volunteering and decision-making in their communities.

Young people are leading the design, shape and focus of the Year of Young People in 2018. Their views and experience are also helping to inform the best approaches to design, create and lead a fairer Scotland. And all this engagement reinforces what some of us already know – we can learn much from listening to Scotland’s young people.

John Swinney MSP
Deputy First Minister and
Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP
Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science
I very much value the strong contribution that effective youth work can make to developing skills, promoting equity and improving life chances for young people and, with that in mind, I am delighted to see the progress highlighted in this report.

The National Youth Work Strategy is integral to the Scottish Government’s mission to deliver equity and excellence across Scotland’s education system. The wide range of youth work activity taking place in villages, towns and cities throughout Scotland is encouraging young people, particularly those who have to overcome barriers caused by poverty or other forms of inequality, to make positive life choices. It is helping them to develop their confidence, their skills, their knowledge and their capacity for further learning and employability.

Of course the Strategy does not stand on its own. There are many synergies to be made with the other national initiatives to improve the education system. The National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education emphasises the value of youth work in addressing its four priorities for improving outcomes for young people, either in direct partnership with schools or in other community settings. The Scottish Attainment Challenge and the Pupil Equity Fund are providing schools across the country with new opportunities to develop stronger partnerships with youth work services and organisations to address the wider needs of young people. Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce is helping to bring schools and youth work organisations together with employers, colleges, the third sector and local authorities to improve outcomes for young people and increase the range of pathways available to them.

I am confident that the partnership between the Scottish Government, YouthLink Scotland, Education Scotland and the youth work sector will continue to drive forward the strategy’s ambitions and so help to change young peoples’ lives. Let’s continue to work together to ensure that all young people across Scotland receive the support they need to realise their full potential.

Bill Maxwell
Chief Executive
Education Scotland
It is with great pleasure that I commend to you for your interest and information the interim progress report in relation to the National Youth Work Strategy. The strategy was published in the midst of a challenging time for public services and the voluntary sector, with current spending by Scottish councils reducing by 11% in real terms from 2010-2016, and this has led to some local youth work services facing cuts. Notwithstanding these challenges, there has been a significant movement and increase in the profile of youth work as we have made the case for it, as an essential part of our national infrastructure for learning and personal and social development.

The strategy is distinctive in that it is a partnership document between Scottish Government, Education Scotland and YouthLink Scotland. It contains and accepts the sector’s own definitions in terms of the nature and purpose of youth work. In addition, it was endorsed and received enthusiastic cross party support in the Scottish Parliament following its official launch. The reference group which oversees its progress is jointly chaired by YouthLink Scotland and Education Scotland and it has made considerable progress in meeting the ambitions set out in 2014.

It has been incredibly heartening how the strapline “Youth Work Changes Lives” has been recognised and used both by the sector and by government ministers in their speeches and reports. For the first time ‘youth work’ as an entity has appeared within a Cabinet Secretary’s portfolio. There has been real progress in young people’s involvement in developing policy and in the growth of research around youth work’s impact. Independent research published in 2016 demonstrated that youth work’s value to Scotland was at least £656 million. The creation of overarching outcomes for young people through youth work, endorsed by the whole sector has also been a tremendous development. We have endeavoured through the strategy to take youth work and its messages beyond the public and voluntary sector to business, media and wider society. This work continues and is beginning to bear fruit.

Youth work practice is at the cutting edge of government initiatives and we shall continue to ensure we are in the mix with regard to all of the main policies and strategies which affect the lives of our young people. We have still much to do in particular regarding the raising attainment agenda as well as making the case for better and more consistent support and funding for youth work, whether it be universal or targeted, voluntary sector, local authority or agency led.

My thanks to colleagues from the reference group and to our staff for their unswerving commitment to the cause despite the difficult financial times we find ourselves in. We look forward to the final two years of this plan and the development of the next strategy in due course.

Jim Sweeney MBE
Chief Executive
YouthLink Scotland
National Youth Work Strategy Ambitions

A) Ensure Scotland is the best place to be young and grow up in

B) Put young people at the heart of policy

C) Recognise the value of youth work

D) Build workforce capacity

E) Ensure we measure our impact
Young people are well informed and encouraged to make positive choices and contribute to civic society.

Young people should be directly involved in local and national decision making, including designing, co-producing and delivering services.

Young people, and their contributions are respected and valued, and their views are listened to with regard to issues that affect them.

Young Scot co-design unit has been established with over 3000 young people involved in consultations around policy.

144 face-to-face parliamentary meetings with MSP’s and young people in the run up to the UK and Scottish elections around Youth Work Changes Lives Manifesto – A Call to Action.

4 of 5 ‘asks’ for young people in a Call to Action have seen improvement.

72,000+ SYP’s manifesto Lead the Way generates 72,000+ responses from young people.
Ambitions A & B
Ensure Scotland is the best place to be young and grow up in
Put young people at the heart of policy

#iwill in Scotland established - recognising that 44% of young people in Scotland are volunteering, campaigning and engaged in meaningful social action.

LGBT Youth Scotland’s Manifesto 2016-2021 developed with LGBTI young people across Scotland with 20 suggested actions for the Scottish Government.

Launch of Scotland’s 5 Rights Youth Commission.

Minister for Children and Young People supported the recommendations of the Year of Young People Advisory Board.

Ministerial support for youth work is evident through the increasing number of events being supported by Ministers. Through 2014-16 Education Scotland prepared over 80 ministerial briefings for visits and meetings.

Education Governance: Next Steps - Empowering Our Teachers, Parents and Communities to Deliver Excellence and Equity for Our Children recognises the desire of children and young people to see closer engagement between their schools and community following consultation by Young Scot in partnership with Children in Scotland and the Scottish Youth Parliament.
Ambitions A & B

Ensure Scotland is the best place to be young and grow up in
Put young people at the heart of policy

OUTCOME

Youth work opportunities will be accessible, equitable and inclusive for all young people.

PROGRESS

Scottish Equalities in Youth Work Steering Group established and YouthLink Scotland accredited as Investors in Diversity. YouthLink Scotland and partners published guidance on mainstreaming equalities.

70% of young people furthest from the labour market and participating in an Activity Agreement progressed to a positive destination, through a youth work approach.
Ambitions A & B

Ensure Scotland is the best place to be young and grow up in
Put young people at the heart of policy

OUTCOME

Youth work is firmly embedded at the heart of policies that are central to making Scotland the best place to be young and grow up in.

PROGRESS

The Scottish Government published its Delivery Plan for Scotland in June 2016. CLD and youth work have an important role to play in delivering the plans through:

• Supporting young people’s attainment and transition into the world of work.

• Engaging families through adult and family learning.

• Connecting schools and wider learning in the community.

The Scottish Government published its National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education and Improvement Plan in 2017. This brings together the Delivery Plan and the Curriculum for Excellence Implementation Plan. It focuses on closing the attainment gap and improving the quality of education and the quality of the partnerships that are in place to support children and young people. Youth work and community learning and development professionals are identified as key partners in delivering the aims of the plan.

Education Governance: Next Steps - Empowering Our Teachers, Parents and Communities to Deliver Excellence and Equity for Our Children recognises the key role of youth work and community learning and development in provision of a holistic learning experience.

National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education and Improvement Plan, published in January 2016, specifically recognises the value of the National Youth Work Strategy “through which a wide range of partners in the public and third sector are contributing to improving outcomes for young people, either in direct partnership with schools or in other community settings”.

#youthworkchangeslives
Ambitions A & B
Ensure Scotland is the best place to be young and grow up in
Put young people at the heart of policy

PROGRESS CONTINUED

“Learning does not stop at the school gate. Communities, businesses, third sector groups, youth work, colleges and universities all have an important role to play in giving our children a holistic learning experience and contribute to lifelong learning.”

Education Governance: Next Steps, 2017

“School is a crucial part of a young person’s life but it is only one part, and children and young people talked about the importance of their other roles and responsibilities - in their family, with their friends, in sports teams, in their out of school learning and activities, and in their community. Youth work and community organisations told us that they were keen to play a more active role and work with teachers and schools. We value the significant contribution that Community Learning and Development services make to the progress and achievement of children in Scotland and we want to see this continue to expand.”

Education Governance: Next Steps, 2017
Ambitions A & B
Ensure Scotland is the best place to be young and grow up in
Put young people at the heart of policy

PROGRESS CONTINUED

What really turned my life around was when I had the opportunity to work with the Youth Literacies Worker who helped me achieve Intermediate 1 in Communications, Numeracy, IT and Exploring Wellbeing. Being part of the youth work project gave me the support I needed at a really difficult time. Most importantly it helped me feel more confident about myself. I know I can achieve anything if I put the hard work in. The youth work project has really changed my life and I’m very grateful.

Louis Pashley, young person

Youth Work and CLD highlighted in Improving Schools in Scotland – An OECD perspective.

Scottish young people work increasingly towards recognised awards such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, the Youth Achievement Award and the John Muir Award. There is thus recognition of young people’s personal achievements within and beyond school, including through partnerships which support learning.

OECD Report, 2015
Ambitions A & B
Ensure Scotland is the best place to be young and grow up in Put young people at the heart of policy

The Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland recognises the role of youth work in tackling sectarianism, through projects such as Action on Sectarianism; Looking Forward, Not Back; Stand Up to Sectarianism; Sense over Sectarianism, and others.

Tackling Prejudice and Building Connected Communities - Scottish Government’s response to the report of the Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime, Prejudice and Community Cohesion highlights the role of youth work in building innovative collaborative ventures and tackling hate crime.

The Fairer Scotland Action Plan lists 50 actions to be achieved in the next 14 years under five themes of a fairer Scotland for all. Youth work’s contribution to the plan is evident.

Education Scotland and YouthLink Scotland have been working with partners to establish links and opportunities to influence the Scottish Attainment Challenge and Developing the Young Workforce.

National Action Plan on Internet Safety for Children and Young People recognises the key role of youth work professionals in engaging young people through a range of interventions to support their online wellbeing.
Ambitions A & B
Ensure Scotland is the best place to be young and grow up in
Put young people at the heart of policy

OUTCOME

The value and impact of sustainable investment in youth work is recognised by charitable trusts, public sector funders and business.

PROGRESS

Continuation of project and capacity funding available to the sector through CashBack for Communities, National Voluntary Organisations Support Fund.

£2 million capital funding was available through CashBack for Communities Facilities Fund in summer 2016.

The National Youth Work Strategy ambitions are embedded into the Scottish Government’s Children, Young People and Families Early Intervention Fund (CYPFEIF).

Following recommendations from the sector, the CYPFEIF fund differentiates core and project funding streams, with three-year funding for core costs available from April 2016-March 2019.
Ambitions A & B
Ensure Scotland is the best place to be young and grow up in
Put young people at the heart of policy

OUTCOME

Youth work continues to make a positive contribution to young people’s health and wellbeing.

PROGRESS

Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD Perspective published in 2015 recognises the role of Community Learning and Development and Youth Work in promoting healthy lifestyles and addressing health inequalities in communities.

The National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education, published in January 2016, specifically recognises the value of the National Youth Work Strategy “through which a wide range of partners in the public and third sector are contributing to improving outcomes for young people, either in direct partnership with schools or in other community settings”.

Scottish Youth Work Research Steering Group established, chaired by Dona Milne (Deputy Director for Public Health, NHS Lothian) looking at longitudinal research into youth work’s impact, with health and wellbeing a key component.

Scottish Government’s No Knives, Better Lives programme impacts on young people’s health and well-being through community safety and prevention. Youth work and peer education is a key component of this success.
Ambitions A & B

Ensure Scotland is the best place to be young and grow up in
Put young people at the heart of policy

Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Gregor Smith, recognises the key role of youth work in preventing negative impacts on young people’s health and well-being.

"For the NHS to be an organisation which realises its potential – not just to treat illness – it must also promote health and wellbeing as a means of preventing illness. Youth work has a key role in that: by building communities who can take interest in others’ health and wellbeing, encouraging healthy choices and promoting health improvement."

Gregor Smith, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Scottish Government

Scottish Youth Parliament Speak your Mind - national campaign on young people’s mental health took place in 2015 and 2016.

Scottish Government published Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027 which includes focus on prevention and early intervention for young people.

NHS Health Scotland recognise youth work’s role in closing the attainment gap by preventing and responding to adverse childhood experiences.
Ambition C
Recognise the value of youth work

OUTCOME
The youth work sector, voluntary and statutory, and its workforce in its entirety, is clear that their contribution is both valued and understood.

PROGRESS
The launch of the National Youth Work Strategy in April 2014 by the Minister for Children and Young People and parliamentary debate demonstrated cross-party support.

Wild in the Park event in 2014 recognised youth work’s contribution to outdoor learning with more than 40 MSP’s and party leaders attending.

In 2015, Minister for Children and Young People led a debate in the Scottish Parliament about the positive Aspect Review and the positive contribution that youth work makes.


Sector-wide adoption of #youthworkchangeslives strap-line to promote the strategy and recognition by key figures in the Scottish Government, and other sectors.
National Youth Work Strategy Expo, hosted by RBS, brought together key public figures from health, justice, employment, education and sport with youth work managers, practitioners and young people who all endorsed the value of youth work.

£656 Million

Independent research by Hall Aitken demonstrates that youth work contributes at least £656 million to the Scottish economy.

Youth Work Changes Lives Prospectus – demonstrates youth work’s contribution across the national outcomes of the Scottish Government.

Scottish Youth Work Research Steering Group established with clear purpose to recognise youth work’s impact. The sector demonstrates effective partnership working by self-financing a scoping study and has produced an overview of youth work research in Scotland.

Youth work more evident through the national media. For example, a week-long media campaign supporting youth work, featured in the Daily Record.

Questions on youth work added to the Scottish Government’s Growing Up in Scotland survey (GUS).
Ambition C
Recognise the value of youth work

OUTCOME

Youth work will be firmly embedded within Curriculum for Excellence and its contribution understood and acknowledged at all levels.

PROGRESS

Key individuals in government talk about the key role of youth work within Curriculum for Excellence and in helping to close the attainment gap including, the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, John Swinney, the Director General for Learning and Justice, Paul Johnston, and Education Scotland’s Strategic Director, Graeme Logan, as documented in The Link magazine.

“We know that youth work is changing lives, by supporting young people to make choices that will shape the rest of their life. I look forward to seeing more of the energy, inspiration and impact that youth work can bring, as we work together seeking to change the lives of young people across Scotland.”

Paul Johnston, 2016

National Youth Work Strategy referenced in Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education.

Youth Work and CLD highlighted in Improving Schools in Scotland – An OECD perspective.
Youth work, through the CLD Guidance and CLD Regulations, is firmly embedded within the broader field of Community Learning and Development within Community Planning arrangements.

Publication of a report into the implementation of CLD Plans and CLD’s role in Community Planning Partnerships published by Education Scotland: Community Learning and Development Plans 2015-18 - Planning for change in Scotland’s communities.

- 40% of Plans name one or more of the youth awards listed in Amazing Things and there are references to a focus on youth work accreditation in an additional 47% of plans.

- 80% of Plans making reference to the attainment and achievement of children and young people.

- CLD providers support health and well-being in young people specifically in a wide range of ways. 53% of Plans have a priority or action focused specifically on this area.

- There is a specific emphasis on youth employability, with 70% of Plans stating a priority or action in this area.

Education Scotland carried out an Aspect Review of the CLD Regulations in 2016. It recommends that regular progress reports are produced by CLD partners to demonstrate progress against specific and measurable objectives.
Ambition D
Build workforce capacity

OUTCOMES

Scotland will have well-motivated, well-trained, and supported practitioners in order to achieve our ambition.

The contribution of volunteers is recognised and valued and volunteers properly supported and encouraged.

Youth work organisations are supported to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of their members.

PROGRESS

Working with Scotland’s Communities published - a survey of the CLD Workforce indicates that more than half of all paid staff in CLD roles in Scotland (52%) are working with young people.
Youth Workers continue to be recognised at the annual Youth Worker of the Year Awards, which celebrated its 10th year in 2017.

National Voluntary Youth Work Organisations survey and Local Authority Youth Work Managers’ survey commissioned in 2016.

Developments in leadership and management training for volunteers and professional staff. For example, Youth Scotland’s Leading in Youth Work ILM course with the Social Enterprise Academy and Education Scotland’s CLD national leadership development programme, also delivered by the Social Enterprise Academy.

CLD Standards Council for Scotland publish Growing the learning culture in CLD: A Strategy Statement and a Framework for Action to support the sector in developing their professional development strategies.

CLD Standards Council for Scotland, SQA and YouthLink Scotland support the sector to ensure SVQ in Youth Work and Modern Apprenticeship in Youth Work are re-approved.
Ambition D

Build workforce capacity

OUTCOMES

Scotland will have well-motivated, well-trained, and supported practitioners in order to achieve our ambition

The contribution of volunteers is recognised and valued and volunteers properly supported and encouraged

Youth work organisations are supported to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of their members.

PROGRESS

The youth work sector has supported and developed joint training tools and initiatives with NHS Scotland, Police Scotland, Scottish Prison Service, Scotland’s Colleges, Creative Scotland, British Council and many others. This has involved many opportunities for joint-training and CPD development for youth workers and practitioners from other professions.

A youth work approach features strongly in our Youth Engagement Framework where we highlight the importance that the CLD regulations play in the development and delivery of our services. I believe that youth work is already rightly gaining more prominence in both national and local policy. What makes a difference, however, is true partnership working at a local level.

David McGown, Deputy Chief Assistant Officer Scottish Fire and Rescue

YouthLink Scotland and partners publish guidance on using digital technologies - DIGITAL AGILE NATIONAL PRINCIPLES and establish Digital Futures Group with CLD partners and Digital Youth Network with Young Scot.

YouthLink Scotland invited to represent the UK, in the European Commission Expert Group on Digitalisation and Youth.

OUTCOMES

Youth work organisations self-evaluate practice and demonstrate the impact of outcomes for young people.

Youth work organisations and partners have opportunities to engage in joint-evaluation of young people’s achievements.

Young people are supported to record and articulate their own learning through youth work practice.

PROGRESS

Youth Work Outcomes (developed by Local Authority Youth Work Managers and National Voluntary Youth Work Organisations Scotland – both networks of YouthLink Scotland) were launched at the Youth Work Expo in January 2016.

Youth Work Strategy Stakeholder Reference Group has begun a process of impact evaluating the National Youth Work Strategy.

Education Scotland publish How good is our third sector organisation? (HGIOTSO), the sector is involved in its development. The sector also involved in the review of How good is our school? and How good is the learning and development in our community?
The phenomenal growth in the completion of youth awards is a real sign of youth work’s success. Since the Awards Network was established in 2008, participation and completion of awards has grown by 273% with over 73,000 awards completed in 2014-15 alone. That success is down to the talents and skills of thousands of youth workers, many of them volunteers, some of them young people, investing their time to help our young people be all they can be.

John Swinney, Deputy First Minister of Scotland and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Youth awards are supporting young people in their learning and to progress to further and higher education, training and employment on leaving school. HMIE carried out an Aspect Review of Youth Awards in 2015. The review found that the number of young people achieving accredited awards has increased significantly in schools and through youth work development activities since the establishment of the Awards Network. The review also offered recommendations for improvement to local authorities, schools, youth work providers and national bodies.

An HMIE Aspect Review in late 2014 evaluated the contribution made by CLD partners to the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence. It found that the contribution of national youth work organisations is increasingly being recognised and used by schools and other public services in the senior phase and post school. The review also offered recommendations for improvement to local authorities, schools, youth work providers and national bodies.

HMIE introduced a new model of CLD inspection in September 2016. This will provide more focus on the quality of strategic leadership and progress in implementing the CLD Regulations as well as evaluating the impact of CLD planning in local communities.
The Stakeholder Reference Group for the Youth Work Strategy met to review the strategy and agree initial outline priorities for 2017-2019, in line with the strategy’s ambitions. The outline priorities listed below, complement existing actions and priorities within the strategy. These will be factored into a more detailed implementation plan for the strategy and reported through the Youth Work Strategy’s outcomes-based logic model.

Celebrate young people and articulate the benefits of the youth work approach leading up to and during the Year of Young People 2018.

Work with government and partners to progress young people's rights and participation in decision making.

Work with the health sector and partners to positively contribute to young people’s health and wellbeing.

Work with all partners, to ensure that the youth work workforce, volunteers and paid staff are effectively supported and equipped to achieve the ambitions of the strategy.

Work with schools, employers and other stakeholders to build on youth work’s contribution to closing the educational attainment gap, developing Scotland’s young workforce and creating a fairer Scotland.

Further demonstrate the impact of youth work on young people through:

- the development of the youth work outcomes model,
- the development of credible research,
- the sharing of evidence from inspection and reviews of the impact of youth work.

Ensure that the youth work strategy is embedded locally, building on the development of CLD plans in every local authority area, with partners meeting the requirements of the CLD Regulations.

Evaluate the impact of the strategy through an outcomes based logic model.
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