

Youth Work Research in Scotland

Overview Matrix

(Version. 11 July 2017)

This publication has been produced by the Scottish Youth Work Research Steering Group, as part of the National Youth Work Strategy 2014-19



National Youth Work Strategy and the Need for Research

The National Youth Work Strategy 2014-19 aims to **Recognise the Value of Youth Work**. The key actions associated to this ambition include exploring the potential for commissioning research to demonstrate the role and value of youth work. YouthLink Scotland, working with a range of partners, has convened the **Scottish Youth Work Research Steering Group** (see page 13). This group is chaired by Dona Milne (Deputy Director for Public Health, NHS Lothian) and includes representatives of the youth work sector, academic institutions, Scottish Government, NHS Health Scotland, and Education Scotland.

Over the past few years there has been growing interest across the Youth Work sector in developing an evidence base to demonstrate the impact of practice. For many practitioners the value of youth work in terms of improving the life experiences of young Scots is a given. However, there exists limited evidence to support these common assumptions.

The principles, methods and approaches that characterise contemporary youth work practice in Scotland and beyond have also become the focus for a raft of academic publications and government reports. There is consistent and wide-ranging recognition of the significant impact youth workers can make across our local neighbourhoods and through engagement with communities of interest.

The overall value of this work is however difficult to discern and indicators of change often fail to capture the tangible direct impact on the lives and lifestyles of participating young people. Across the sector there is increasing recognition of a need to interpret data through research in the field of practice that demonstrates the impact of youth work services.

About this Document

This document is designed to give an overview of the research landscape of relevance to the youth work sector in Scotland. It includes details of research which has been completed, which is progress, or is in planning. It also includes the potential impact and implications of this research for the youth work sector.

Due to the changing picture of this area of work this report may not be comprehensive, and if readers are aware of other studies or emerging research they should contact YouthLink Scotland (info@youthlinkscotland.org) to provide updates or make us aware of any broken links in this document.

Table 1: Youth Work Research (2015-2016)

Study Name / Authors / Date	Website	Descriptor / Purpose	Method / Approach	Impact / Implications for Youth Work Sector	Status
Be(ing) prepared: Guide and Scout participation, childhood social position and mental health at age 50 – a prospective birth cohort study Chris Dibben, Chris Payford, Richard Mitchell 2016	http://jech.bmj.com/content/71/3/275	Study exploring whether youth participation in Scouts and Guides could protect mental health in later life.	Uses 1958 birth cohort National Child Development Study	Participation in Guides or Scouts was associated with better mental health and narrower mental health inequalities at age 50.	Complete and Published
The Economic and Social Value of Youth Work Hall Aitken – commissioned by YouthLink Scotland 2016	http://ow.ly/II5c30dwREg	To provide an initial assessment of the economic and social value of youth work – using SROI methodology	Desk Based analysis of existing SROI in Youth Work YouGov Poll Online Survey	Youth work contributes £656million to the Scottish Economy – return of £7 for every £1 of investment Youth work has made a major difference to the lives of over 450,000 people in Scotland today The social return on investment of youth work is at least 3:1	Complete and Published
Local Youth Groups Today Clear View Research Ltd – commissioned by UK Youth 2016	http://ow.ly/N1an30dwRJA	A commissioned response to reduction in youth services in England. Asking the question What is the role of local youth groups today?	Review of existing studies Case studies from local youth projects Survey	Main reasons young people take part in local youth groups: to see their friends; to take part in programmes; provide a safe place; acquire life skills. 68% believed crime would increase if the youth club closed Identifies most commonly provided activities in local youth clubs (personal development,	Complete and Published

				<p>sport, health and wellbeing, group learning)</p> <p>Identifies biggest challenges faced by youth clubs (funding, difficulty in demonstrating impact, staff and volunteer shortage)</p>	
<p>Universal Youth Work: A Critical Review of the Literature The University of Edinburgh – Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium 2015</p>	<p>http://ow.ly/JTbH30dwRMH</p>	<p>To review academic literature to explore theories and concepts driving youth work practice over the past decade</p>	<p>Literature Review</p>	<p>Identifies distinct purpose of universal youth work</p> <p>Demonstrates the rich array of methods and approaches to youth work and its evaluation</p> <p>Identifies outcomes of youth work practice</p>	<p>Complete and Published</p>
<p>One Million Voices – A Research Programme of the YMCA Movement (A report on a survey of Young People in 55 Countries for the World YMCA) World YMCA 2015</p>	<p>http://omv.ymca.int/</p>	<p>International study of young people participating in YMCA activities</p>	<p>Quantitative – interviewer administered questionnaire, self-completed questionnaires, random sampled online questionnaire</p> <p>Sample 17,247 young people in 55 countries</p>	<p>YMCA is well placed to provide a strategic role in facilitating transitions in to the job market.</p> <p>YMCA provides volunteering opportunities, which young people valued as a means to develop skills for employment.</p> <p>YMCA attracts young people who are entering adulthood and in need of emotional support. Making friends was a significant benefit for young people of participating in YMCA activities</p>	<p>Complete and Published</p>
<p>National Youth Social Action Survey Ipsos Mori – commissioned by the Cabinet Office 2016</p>	<p>http://ow.ly/ks6730dwRUE</p>	<p>To understand the enablers and barriers to taking part in Social Action (defined as ‘practical</p>	<p>Face to face surveys in respondents home.</p>	<p>Participation in Social Action in unequal (gender/income/religion/ethnicity)</p>	<p>Complete and Published (data available from 2014 and 2015 for comparison)</p>

		action in the service of others to create positive change')	Sample 2021 young people aged 10-20. Location quota sampling UK	Those most committed to social action first did so at 11 or younger. Key barrier to social action is not having enough time	
<p>Young People in Scotland Survey (Young People and Volunteering) Ipsos Mori / Volunteer Scotland & other clients</p> <p>2016</p>	<p>http://ow.ly/DTey30dwSVg</p>	<p>The study aims to examine the nature and extent of volunteering participation and attitudes towards volunteering among young people (aged 11-18 years).</p>	<p>The Young People in Scotland Survey is an annual school-based omnibus study run by Ipsos-Mori which captures the views, experiences and aspirations of young people in Scotland. It is a multi-client study which means the survey is made up of a range of questions purchased by a number of organisations.</p> <p>Sample of 2000 young people 11-18 from 50 state secondary schools. Survey is self-completion.</p>	<p>Interest in volunteering increases with age</p> <p>Participation and interest in volunteering differs by gender</p> <p>Volunteering with friends would most encourage volunteering</p>	<p>Complete and Published</p>

<p>A Systematic Review of Adolescent Physiological Development and its impact on Health Behaviours</p> <p>Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research and Policy – commissioned by NHS Health Scotland</p> <p>2016</p>	<p>http://ow.ly/VmBG30dwT5g</p>	<p>Comprehensive understanding of the relationship between physiological development and health related behaviours in adolescence</p>	<p>Integrative Review of literature from different fields; focus on ages 10-24 years</p>	<p>Health Behaviours</p>	<p>Published</p>
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Table 2: Pre-2015 Systematic Reviews of Youth Work

Study Name / Authors / Date	Website	Descriptor / Purpose	Method / Approach	Status
<p>The Impact of youth work for young people: a systematic review for the Health Council of New Zealand</p> <p>Fouche, C, et al</p> <p>(2010)</p>	<p>http://ow.ly/pJLs30dwToR</p>	<p>The main objective of this research was to systematically review the available research evidence on the impact and outcomes of youth work for young people as relevant to the Aotearoa/New Zealand context. This review was based upon primary research studies reporting on interventions defined by the authors of the publications as ‘youth work’ which had young people as participants or focus of the intervention.</p>	<p>Systematic Review</p>	<p>Complete and Published</p>
<p>Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union</p> <p>Dunne, A, et al</p> <p>(2014)</p>	<p>http://ow.ly/EVum30dwTt6</p>	<p>Providing information about the value of youth work, and how it results in a range of positive outcomes for young people. The study analyses the specific situation of the 28 EU Member States, highlighting the situation of youth work and its contribution to the well-being and development of young people.</p>	<p>Conceptual and Evidence Review</p>	<p>Complete and Published</p>
<p>Youth Work: a systematic map of the research literature</p>	<p>http://ow.ly/iMQ330dwTwG</p>	<p>In bringing together the international research on the impact of youth work activities, the map provides</p>	<p>Systematic Map</p>	<p>Complete and Published</p>

<p>Dickson, K, et al</p> <p>Published by Irish Government, Department of Children and Youth Affairs</p> <p>(2013)</p>		<p>evidence of a diverse and rich sector, in which youth work is delivered in a wide range of settings and under an array of themes in different countries. Notwithstanding this diversity, the research reveals a common core of purposes, programmes and practices.</p>		
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Table 3: Young People's Data Sources

Study Name / Details	Website	Descriptor / Purpose	Method / Approach	Status
<p>Growing Up in Scotland</p> <p><i>Tackling Inequalities in the Early Years: Key Messages from 10 years of the Growing up in Scotland study</i></p>	<p>http://ow.ly/4n9cPA</p> <p>http://ow.ly/4n9cJZ</p>	<p>Growing Up in Scotland is the longitudinal research study tracking the lives of thousands of children and their families from the early years, through childhood and beyond. The main aim of the study is to provide new information to support policy-making in Scotland but it is also intended to provide a resource for practitioners, academics, the voluntary sector and parents.</p>	<p>Cohort study, with families selected at random from Child Benefit records. Voluntary participation. Methods involve face to face data collection, telephone and online interviews, teacher surveys, child questionnaires.</p>	<p>Ongoing – with numerous topic reports published at intervals</p>
<p>SALSUS – Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey</p>	<p>http://ow.ly/4n9cly</p>	<p>SALSUS was established to provide a broad-based approach to the monitoring of substance use among young people in Scotland in the context of other lifestyle, health and social factors. SALSUS gathers information at national level with a boosted sample every four years in order to allow additional reporting at local level.</p>	<p>School class is sampling framework, minimum of 600 young people per local authority – sample target is 32,000. Local areas can buy data boosts.</p>	<p>Ongoing /Biennial study (subject to SG review of Wellbeing and Lifestyle Studies 2016)</p>
<p>Health Behaviours in School Age Children (HBSC)</p>	<p>http://ow.ly/4nbBVN</p>	<p>International study, summary of topics covered Self-reported health, substance use, diet, physical activity, sexual health, relationships, school environment, social and economic context</p>	<p>Sample of 1500-2000 young people aged 11, 13,15 – survey taken under exam conditions</p>	<p>Ongoing (20 years of data)</p>

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)	http://ow.ly/4nbBNS	National estimates with comparison internationally using samples within each school. Assessment of knowledge and skills in maths, reading, science and attitudes towards learning	School invited to take part via random sampling, random sampling of pupils. Young people answer questions on science, reading, maths, problem solving, attitudes and experiences	Ongoing – most recent published was 2012, with 2015 data has been gathered
Flash No.408 Eurobarometer (European Youth and Students)	http://ow.ly/YTQa30dwTLV	Measure of participation in sport, leisure, culture, human rights, global development , democracy, voluntary activities,	Sample of 13,000 young people in EU member states aged 15-30	Fieldwork in 2014, report in 2015. Themes and topics vary over time.
Macquarie Youth Index Prince's Trust	http://ow.ly/2PRF308nprM	Measure of how happy young people are with their lives today and confidence about the future. Themes include bullying, resilience, anxiety, employment, and health	YouGov online poll of 2215 young people aged 16-25	2017

Table 4: Policy Reviews and Youth Work Reports/Publications (2015-16)

Report Details	Website	Purpose/Summary
Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD Perspective OECD 2015	http://ow.ly/4newKS	The agreed purpose was to inform the ongoing development of education policy, practice and leadership in Scotland, by providing an independent review of the direction of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and emerging impacts seen in quality and equity in Scottish schooling. It focuses especially on the cycles corresponding to Broad General Education.
EU Youth Report European Commission 2015	http://ow.ly/4nexaD	It presents a full picture of the situation of young people in Europe and how policymakers have addressed it in the period 2013-2015. The report is based on responses from the EU countries to a Commission questionnaire covering all the 8 strategic fields of action. Young people are also consulted in their own countries, and different national ministries contribute to the process. National Youth Reports also provide information on how the EU Youth Strategy has been implemented at the national level during the current cycle.
Youth Work and non-formal learning in Europe's education landscape European Commission 2016	http://ow.ly/4nxy7	This publication marks a quarter of a century of EU youth programmes accompanied by EU youth policy. It brings together a range of views and highlights best practices with the aim of stimulating debate about what youth work and non-formal learning can contribute, alongside other sectors, to European education. From diverse viewpoints, it reviews EU cooperation in the field, points to successes and sets out possible future scenarios, particularly in the context of the Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020)
Expert Group Report: The Contribution of Youth Work to address the challenges young people are facing, in particular the transition from education to employment European Commission 2015	http://ow.ly/QB4630dwU6c	In order to recognise the true value and contribution of youth work in addressing challenges young people are facing, it is required to adopt and embrace the holistic youth work approach to working with young people. Young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, not only need to be provided with skills for the labour market but more importantly with life skills and supports. These are essential to enable them to deal with the many challenges they will encounter and also the confidence to embrace the opportunities that will arise. The findings of the expert group detailed in this report clearly demonstrate how youth work is currently working on these issues. The report also provides evidence (examples and practices) and some key messages with regard to the role of youth work.
Quality Youth Work – A Common framework for the further development of youth work European Commission 2015	http://ow.ly/K6JE30dwUci	Report from the Expert Group on Youth Work Quality Systems in the EU Member States

<p>A framework of outcomes for young people</p> <p>The Young Foundation</p> <p>2012*</p>	<p>http://ow.ly/4nrQsd</p>	<p>This Framework of Outcomes for Young People is designed to highlight the fundamental importance of social and emotional capabilities to the achievement of all other outcomes for all young people. This Framework will help to address the key challenges in measuring impact on the lives of young people – strengthening and creating greater awareness of the evidence base and leading to greater coherence in language. It will support progress towards a future in which providers are confident and able to evidence their impact, and commissioners are confident to supplement their focus on reducing negative outcomes with an equal or stronger focus on commissioning for positive and sustained personal and social development, which evidence shows is fundamental to young people’s current and future wellbeing and success.</p>
<p>Finding Common Ground – Mapping and Scanning the Horizons for European Youth Work in the 21st Century</p> <p>Williamson / European Youth Work Convention</p> <p>2015</p>	<p>http://ow.ly/enPs30dwUjo</p>	<p>“This paper is designed not only to look forward to the 2nd European Youth Work Convention and its quest for what we share in ‘youth work’ rather than what divides us, but also to look back in order to shed old light on new problems”</p>
<p>Innovation in Youth Work: Thinking in Practice</p> <p>Edited: Stanton / YMCA George Williams College</p> <p>2015</p>	<p>http://ow.ly/TewM30dwUoz</p>	<p>A book comprising reflections of youth work practitioners and academics – designed to explore values and youth work practice. Edited Collection of reflective contributions. Particularly concerned with reflecting on youth work at times when services are under threat.</p>

Table 5: Books/Journals – since 2013

<p>Grace, P., & Anderssen-Dukes, H. (2017) (Eds.) <i>International Journal of Open Youth Work: Theory and Practice</i>. http://www.newman.ac.uk/files/w3/research-centres/pdf/International_journal_of_open_youth_work.pdf?q=1215</p>
<p>Wood, J., Westwood, S. & Thompson, G. (2015) <i>Youth Work: Preparation for Practice</i>. Abingdon: Routledge.</p>
<p>Smith, M., Stanton, N. & Wylie, T. (2015) (Eds.) <i>Youth work and faith: Debates, delights and dilemmas</i>. Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing.</p>
<p>Sallah, M. (2015) <i>Global Youth Work: Provoking consciousness and taking action</i>. Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing Ltd.</p>
<p>Bright, G. (2015) <i>Youth Work: Histories, Policy and Context</i>. London: Palgrave MacMillan</p>

Fyfe, I. & Moir, S. (2013) (Eds.) *Standing at the crossroads - What future for Youth Work?* Edinburgh: CONCEPT.
<http://concept.lib.ed.ac.uk/index.php/Concept/article/view/213/210>

Table 6: Youth Work Sector Impact and Evaluation Reports

<p>Duke of Edinburgh's Award (2007) The Impact of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award on young people – Executive Summary, Research by the University of Northampton 2007-2009</p> <p>http://ow.ly/PY0B301TDv5</p>
<p>Prince's Trust (2016) Evaluation of the Future Starts Pilot Programme funded by the Wood Foundation and Scottish Government, Progress Report</p> <p><i>No web link available</i></p>
<p>Scottish Outdoor Education Centres – Social Return on Investment (Forth Sector Development)</p> <p>http://ow.ly/uIU301TF3k</p>
<p>Scottish Youth Parliament (2012) The Impact of the Scottish Youth Parliament</p> <p>http://ow.ly/YumT301TFM8</p>
<p>YWCA Scotland (The Young Women's Movement) (2016), Status of Young Women in Scotland 2016</p> <p>http://ow.ly/9N8K30dwVe9</p>
<p>World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (2016) Gender and Leadership in Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting</p> <p><i>No web link available</i></p>
<p>YWCA Scotland (The Young Women's Movement) (2016), Evidencing Our Impact 2015-2016</p> <p>http://ow.ly/FKvK30dwVKe</p>

Table 7: Youth Work Research

Scottish Youth Parliament (2016) Our Generation's Epidemic http://ow.ly/NM1a305CFrM
Girlguiding (2016) Girls' Attitudes Survey http://ow.ly/WsyX305CH4H

Towards a National Youth Work Research Programme

Scottish Youth Work Research Steering Group

The Steering Group was convened in late 2015, and emergence from the needs of the National Youth Work Strategy and to further the momentum gathered following the delivery and dissemination of *Universal Youth Work: A Critical Review of the Literature*.

The Group have identified opportunities for longitudinal research over the next 5-10 years that could help demonstrate the impact of youth work. We plan to use routine well established young people's surveys/data sources (e.g. Growing Up in Scotland) alongside qualitative components that captures the very essence of what youth work is and does and the outcomes it can achieve.

Our Aims:

- To critically examine the long-term impact of youth work on the lives and lifestyles of young people and the wider communities across Scotland.
- To identify what young people learn from participating in youth work provision.
- To gather data reflecting the broad outcomes of youth work as defined by young Scots.

The group is currently working to support the following methodologies and research activities:

- Utilising youth work trends from Growing Up in Scotland (Quantitative)
 - GUS is a Government funded cohort study; the participants are already selected and have been tracked since birth. This cohort will be in secondary school from August 2016 and there is opportunity to ask questions within the study to understand engagement with and impact of youth work on young people, as well as to explore correlations with income, deprivation and health/education outcomes.
- A Qualitative Study of the Impact of Community-Based Youth Work Provision in Scotland (Qualitative)
 - The purpose of the project is to investigate the impact of Universal Youth Work in a community setting through analysing data gathered through a participative evaluation project engaging youth work practitioners as researchers. The project is a collaboration involving members of SYWRSG and University of St. Mark & St. John Plymouth who will be training, advising and supporting the youth workers engaged in the project. The work being undertaken across Scotland is a parallel project building on a broader European project funded through Erasmus Plus which includes partners from England, Italy, France, Estonia and Finland.
 - The project will utilise an established Transformative Evaluation (TE) Process which draws on the theoretical model of *Appreciative Enquiry*. This is a participatory research method constructed around 4 stages; generating the stories, contextual analysis, sharing the most significant change stories with wider stakeholders, reflection.
- Natural Experiment or Retrospective Study
 - *Options are currently being explored to identify the strengths and limitations of a retrospective study. A retrospective study would gather data from previous youth work participants and correlate this to life/social outcomes. Cohorts which may be used include the Twenty 07 survey or BCS70.*

The group have been supported by the youth work sector and public sector stakeholders, through a crowd funded approach, to secure funds to develop this research programme. It is intended to seek additional monies via academic research funds to enable a researcher to be appointed to undertake the feasibility study of the methodology, design the pilot, and identify and apply for research funding for the full study.

Whilst the group are prioritising a longitudinal research component for youth work, they also want to gather together existing and emerging youth work research for the sector to make use of; to generate interest in conducting research locally and to offer support to those interested in doing this to ensure that the research is as robust as possible; and to ensure that any future research is answering the important questions for youth work in Scotland.

Scottish Youth Work Research Steering Group: Membership Organisations/ Representative Bodies

YouthLink Scotland	Susan Hunter (YouthLink Scotland), Fergus McMillan (LGBT Youth Scotland), Mark McGeachie (Youth Scotland), Kerry Reilly (YMCA Scotland), Dona Milne (Independent Chair)
The University of Edinburgh	Ian Fyfe, Callum McGregor
Scottish Government	Louise Scott
NHS Health Scotland	Garth Reid
Education Scotland	Vince Moore
Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium	Simon Jaquet, Graham McCulloch
CLD Standards Council for Scotland	Mike Naulty
Associates and Advisors	Andrew Williams, Lisa Whittaker, Helen Sweeting

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