

Using youth work as a means to support young people to engage with heritage

Youth work in Scotland has its own heritage (for more information take a look at [Scotswummin](#)) – but this resource is focused on how youth work can provide a means to support young people to engage with their heritage.

What is Youth Work?

Youth work in Scotland is characterised by three essential and definitive features:

Young people choose to participate

This means that the young person takes part voluntarily. They choose to be involved. The young person decides whether to engage or to walk away.

Youth work must build from where young people are

This means that youth work happens in young people's own spaces, and on their terms. This could be within a specific geographic community or a community of interest. The young person's life experience is respected and forms the basis for shaping the agenda in negotiation with peers and youth workers.

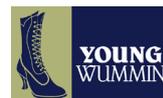
Youth Work recognises the young person and the youth worker as partners in a learning process

The young person is recognised as an active partner who can, and should, have opportunities and resources to shape their lives. The relationship and dialogue between the young person and youth worker is central to the learning process. In youth work, the youth worker learns from the young person through this relationship.

Youth work in Scotland is freely chosen by young people in a range of settings and contexts (such as youth clubs, uniformed groups, outdoor learning, youth awards, youth participation) and is available for young people aged 11-25, with many youth organisations also providing childrens or play work for those aged between 5 and 11.

Scotland's youth work sector have developed a set of [7 outcomes](#) for young people through youth work.

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What is heritage?

It is clear that young people take the lead in their learning, relationships and participation through youth work. Youth work provides an appropriate structure for young people to identify and explore topics and issues which impact or inform their lives. It provides them space to learn, to express their voice, and to broaden perspectives. This makes it well placed to be a vehicle through which heritage can be explored.

In the context of Scotswummin and Youngwummin (YouthLink Scotland heritage programmes), the definition of heritage was broad, and engaged the ideas and experiences of people, living or dead, who had informed or shaped the communities in which young people are currently living or belong to. In these contexts heritage was more than physical places, buildings, artefacts, or environments, it was primarily about culture and community.

The heritage sector in Scotland is in itself significant, with a number of national organisations committed to supporting individuals and communities to learn and develop through heritage. Examples of national heritage organisations include:

- National Trust for Scotland
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Forestry Commission
- National Library of Scotland
- Museums and Galleries Scotland

In your community you may already be familiar with heritage organisations, this would include libraries, museums, historic properties, public collections and archives, community based historical or heritage societies and group.

Heritage activities and projects which require specific funding may be eligible for support from the [Heritage Lottery Fund](#).

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About your practice:

Youth work is part of the wider family of non-formal learning called Community Learning and Development (CLD). Within CLD, practitioners subscribe to a Competences Framework. These competences provide a useful tool for youth work practitioners to reflect, plan, and evaluate their practice.



Source: [CLD Standards Council](#)

If you were to focus on knowing and understanding the community in which you work, you may begin to explore the heritage; and this of course could be achieved in collaboration with your learners.

Heritage provides a lens by which you could explore contemporary topics and themes including, but not limited to:

- Equalities
- Social Justice
- Fairness
- Power
- Democracy
- Environment
- Social responsibility
- Peace and Conflict
- Rights

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