Youth Work
FUND

EVALUATION

ROUND FOUR
YEAR TWO
CATCH THE LIGHT
This is the second evaluation report in the fourth round of CashBack for Communities funding - 'Round 4' which runs for three years from 2017 to 2020.

The Scottish Government's CashBack for Communities fund redistributes proceeds of crime, by targeting funded activities towards specific groups of young people:

- those in the most deprived areas (highest 20% of SIMD)
- those not engaged in education, training or employment, and
- those at risk of offending, anti-social behaviour or affected by the criminal justice system.

With one more year to run, YouthLink Scotland has surpassed many of the targets anticipated for 2017-2020. Therefore the evaluation of the Youth Work Fund seeks to track data and collate case studies to understand the extent of progress and levels of impact made by youth work organisations benefiting from the 'Youth Work Fund'.

As a national umbrella organisation for youth work providers, YouthLink Scotland supports local panels in each of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities. Panels consider an array of bids at the start of each year, ranging from £336 up to £13.5K (£4.1K ave.). The funding made available to the Youth Work Fund in year 2 was £716K, with a target of 6,666 young people to reach (£2.5m and 20,000 young people over three years). There were 171 bids funded with 75% of bids being awarded, which means organisations generally receive less than they bid for.

According to a recent report on universal youth work in Scotland, youth work has a central role in nurturing personal and social development of Scotland’s young people in relation to:

- Confidence
- Skills for life
- Being equal and included
- Friendship
- Feeling safe and well
- Ability to lead and help others
- Getting on with others

The best impacts are reportedly achieved through unique features of youth work practice, that are not readily assimilated in other settings. These are:

- Positive adult long-term relationships
- Providing a space to be be safe and be heard
- Giving praise and encouragement
- Working effectively alongside others
- Practitioners as role models
- Negotiated learning
- Inclusive practice

These features are echoed throughout the findings. Therefore the following report features: a brief overview of the funding context for youth work with highlights from the evaluation; an overview of the evaluation methods; a report on the outcome data gathered by YouthLink Scotland which includes references back to your one; the wellbeing (SHANARRI) results containing responses from a large sample of young people; a discussion of impact taken from initial case study results; links to all five case studies and a conclusion.
The breakdown of activities [see right hand panel on priorities] reinforces the extent that youth organisations are aligned with CashBack for Communities priorities. For most, the germane fit results from having long-established relationships with local communities and families, from large urban housing estates to isolated rural and island communities and excluded groups.

The analysis and case studies reiterate that CashBack for Communities is a valued fund that recognises youth work’s contribution. Although annual grants form a relatively small proportion of overall income streams, success is partly attributed to the significant wider investments secured by youth organisations. Consequently outcomes achieved are not exclusive to the Youth Work Fund. Instead they benefit from a multiplier effect where organisations provide a pipeline of support before and after the funded interventions. Having knowledge of individual needs, youth workers draw from wider contact to feed the right young people into appropriate interventions at the right time. Follow-on activities extend the range of meaningful experiences such as accredited learning, peer education, issue based work and international youth exchanges.

Nevertheless, organisations report being under increasing pressure from local cutbacks and the churn that occurs when funders look to innovate rather than sustain established good practice. Without a statutory obligation to fund youth work activities, services are squeezed as budgets tighten. As this continues there is a risk that youth services dissipate until there is an insufficient core for CashBack for Communities to connect with. Recent rises in knife crime in England serve as reminders of the real and present dangers this can pose. Maintaining the success of CashBack for Communities investment in future might therefore rely on protecting the youth work sector from further erosion and demise.
Priorities met by Youth Work Fund Projects

The panel above shows the percentage of projects that are working within the fund priorities.

- **97%** Working in areas of deprivation
- **76%** Involved or at risk of involvement in antisocial behaviour or offending
- **64%** Excluded or at risk of exclusion from school
- **44%** Unemployed or not in education or training

The videos [Re:make Scotland (left) and 'Jake's Story' from Inspiring Scotland's '10 Years of CashBack for Communities' film (below)] give a glimpse into the range of youth work on offer and what it means to young people taking part and their communities.

To discover more examples a digital wall was created, where each yellow brick reveals stories of ways the money was invested [Link Here].

A key feature of the wall is an ability to quickly filter projects by outcomes and themes. Users simply click on one of the outcome or tags to read more.
As part of the conditions of grant awarded to YouthLink Scotland annual targets are set for essential and non-essential outcomes. This occurs prior to YouthLink Scotland knowing which projects and activities will receive funding in the coming years. Despite YouthLink Scotland having a well maintained database of statistical data from all funded organisations, the out of sync sequencing causes considerable variances between the outcome targets and actual activity levels. Importantly, the primary target of reaching 20,000 young people over three years is already surpassed by 51% (30,141 participants) with one year to go. Other variances emerge from the natural adjustment reflected in the subsequent awards made. To develop a better understanding of the impact, young people were asked to complete a self-assessment on wellbeing (SHANARRI indicators). A sample of 1,457 responses were received, achieving a confidence interval of 99%. Accompanying these results are instrumental case studies with five youth organisations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with young people, youth workers and stakeholders. There was also an analysis of themes to ascertain which were most prominent.
positive wellbeing

Most of the 171 organisations funded are situated in areas of multiple deprivation and actively target minority or excluded groups. Results from the Wellbeing SHANARRI indicators confirmed that young people feel positive about all of the national wellbeing indicators when taking part in youth work activities, as follows:

- Feel safe: 97%
- Feel included: 93%
- Feel nurtured: 94%
- Feel respected: 94%
- Feel healthy: 93%
- Feel active: 92%
- Are achieving: 91%
- Feel responsible: 91%

People Reached and 17,120 in year 2
20,000 target

Given that SHANARRI results reveal a proportion of young people feel less safe at home, the evaluators sought to explore the circumstances affecting young people that take part in youth activities. This was based on a sensitive approach to gathering information relating to childhood adversity and the potential for youth work to alleviate the harmful effects. Results are in the early stages with further exploration planned for year three. Overall the themes analysis, outcome data, SHANARRI wellbeing results and case studies show positive results emerging across Scotland’s youth work sector.
IMPACT ON OUTCOMES

Below is an overview of the extent essential and non-essential outcomes are being met. Zoom in or click an image to access an online interactive of years one and two. The sections below show the accumulated number reached by the end of year 2 and the extent each target was exceeded. The gauge shows the proportion of year 1 and 2 participants impacted. Those marked with an asterisk * are a proportion of organisations selecting this option, as they are non-essential outcomes.

To date 18,029 young people have increased their capacity and confidence - Yr 2 was 85% above target of 5,876 per year.

To date 13,863 young people have increased their personal or physical skills - Yr 2 was 97% above target of 3,917 per year.

To date 15,848 young people have increased their aspirations - Yr 2 was 352% above target of 1,958 per year.
To date 28,908 young people are new to activity - Yr 2 was 221% above target of 3,489*.

To date 5,974 young people are diverted from criminal and antisocial behaviour - Yr 2 was 85% above target of 1,348*.

To date 2,720 young people were involved in leadership - Yr 2 was 129% above target of 584*.

To date 3,392 young people were involved in volunteering - Yr 2 was 45% above target of 1,177*.

Click here to access interactive results.
The 'treemap' diagram below gives a ratio breakdown of the types of themes that the funded organisations are working on as part of their youth work intervention. To achieve this analysis each project was categorised under two relevant themes, as follows:

Many of the organisations were focussed on aspects of health and wellbeing:

**Ignite** in Moray offered an 8 week programme of outdoor activities, 4 times per year to build motivation, personal organisation and development and leadership that would contribute towards longer term employability skills.

The **Granton Youth Project** provided opportunities to gain an award or qualification. They delivered Health, Fitness and Wellbeing activities including swimming, football and boxing to 12-19 year-olds deemed by schools to be most at risk. Achievements were recognised with a Dynamic Youth Award or Youth Achievement Award.

**Dumfries YMCA** provided training for young people to set up and run their own radio station.

In a bid to reduce road accidents, **Youth First** in Fife provided motor vehicle safety training covering crash management; first aid, basic mechanics and driving skills.

**Closing the Attainment Gap** was achieved in a high number of projects:

**Diversionary work**, that prevents young people from engaging in antisocial behaviour or falling into the criminal justice system is commonplace:

The diagram above illustrates the number of organisations that matched to each theme.
One example is the Govan Youth Information Project which tackles hate crimes linked to sectarianism and racism such as 'Show Racism the Red Card' training or First Aid. Once members are old enough they have the opportunity to train as 'positive role models' giving them leadership responsibilities to help reduce anti-social behaviour, make positive life choices and help ensure that their community is a positive place for everyone to live.

Meanwhile Community Central Halls in Glasgow actively targets young people aged 10-16 that are known to offend or engage in anti-social behaviour. Their outdoor activity based residential is designed to give young people a break away from the issues and pressures they face at home so that they can reflect on their daily lives, form new relationships with peers and adults and plan for a more positive lifestyle.

Issue-based work is characteristic of the successful bids that respond to identified needs:

The FAST Project in Shetland works to address behavioural issues, money management, housing and family support. It makes sure young people have access to a healthy cooked meal and used the funding to re-open a neighbourhood centre at the weekend so that young people have their own dedicated space. This in turn helped to reduce rises in anti-social behaviour at weekends.

Saheliya is an ethnic minority project based in Edinburgh. It engaged with Wildfire Theatre group to work with girls to write and perform their own play about issues which affect them. At the same time they promoted the Duke of Edinburgh's Award to increase the take up among ethnic minorities.

There were numerous holiday schemes and residential running across the country.

Creating positive pathways into employment emerged in a number of projects:

The Good Shepherd Centre in Renfrewshire worked with young offenders to build planters, install them in local schools and harvest their produce to cook healthy meals.

Re:store Crief engaged in up-cycling furniture, upholstery and textiles, ran lunch clubs and organised a scrap store to gain valuable creative and enterprise skills.

Flourish in South Lanarkshire is a social enterprise based on floristry training and sales to develop young people's skills and confidence.

Create Paisley, used the funds to support a 'Young Curators Team' that were trained to run festivals and events such as a Youth Mental Health Arts Festival, 'Write Here, and Write Now' young writers festival.

Peer Education initiatives featured among the funded initiatives:

North Berwick Youth Project have developed a 'drugs box' where peer educators cascade their learning to other young people on topics of smoking, drugs, alcohol, internet safety and sexual health. The funded project focused on extending the group of educators to P7's and S1's to inject good role modeling to a younger age group.

Some Mental Health initiatives took place:

LGBT Youth Scotland in Perth & Kinross created an Emotional Wellbeing Collaborative to improve the emotional wellbeing of 11-15 year olds.

The Rainbow Muslim Women's Group in Falkirk organised a range of stimulating activities for girls, so that levels of isolation are reduced.

Events featured in response to 2018 being Scotland's Year of the Young Person:

An outstanding example is the Oasis Events Team in Dumfries and Galloway that provided a hard hitting drama project 'The Toon' which according to their sources, reduced anti-social incidents by 62% in the area. Furthermore, their 'Youth Beatz' two-day free music extravaganza attracted 40,000 young people from across Scotland.
Wellbeing (SHANARRI) indicators are core to the Getting it Right for Every Child framework for services that work with young people and families in Scotland. The approach supports children and young people to grow up feeling loved, safe and respected and can realise their full potential.

The indicators are used in this evaluation to understand youth work's impact on wellbeing. Over two years, data was gathered from almost 1,500 young people which asked how they felt as part of the youth activity, at school or at home. Guidance notes were developed with youth workers and some organisations adapted the exercise to make it fit with their context.

Results confirm that most young people view their youth organisations and home life with equally high regard, with all eight indicators scoring an average above four out of a maximum of five.

School achieves a positive rating above the mid point of three, albeit at a lower level than at home or the youth activity. Feedback suggests that lower school ratings are due to youth work being
results

SHANARRI RESULTS (FILTERED)

Filtered by those feeling less safe at home (n=144, 10% of total 1,457 responses)

a choice rather than a necessity. For youth work it confirms that approaches and relationships are making young people feel safe and included, like part of an extended family - as many have testified.

Conversely, one in twelve respondents gave a negative rating (0-3) for feeling safe at home. Filtered responses for this group found that despite having negative views of home and school, youth work remained positive (above three) for all eight indicators. Negative feelings at home were often linked to a breakdown in relationships with parents, carers or siblings. Similarly negative views at school were associated to a breakdown in relationships with teachers or peers. Therefore case studies were used to explore potential reasons for the strength of positive relationships with youth workers and how this alleviates the effects of adversity.

Link to open interactive Wellbeing SHANARRI results for all respondents.

Link to open interactive Wellbeing SHANARRI results for those that feel less safe at home.
The wellbeing SHANARRI results suggested that a proportion of young people felt less safe at home. It was therefore agreed that the case studies would sensitively explore childhood adversity. Science has shown that the more adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) occur; the greater the risk of negative effects on adult health and wellbeing. The ‘Centre for Youth Wellness’ in the US devised statements that allow teenagers to self-report on ACEs. Within the case study organisations, young people were invited to identify how many causes of adversity applied to them.

All ethical guidelines were followed. Participation was voluntary with the ability to opt-out being reiterated at several points during the exercise. Two sets of ACEs statements were used. The original ten statements hail from the landmark 1998 study. Since then other statements evolved which recognise additional adversities that can have a similar ‘toxic’ effect but were omitted from the original ten. Therefore both sets of ten questions were included. To balance negatives with more positive attributes, additional questions on resilience factors were also asked.

Three of the five organisations agreed to participate in the ACEs and resilience evaluation exercise, with 21 responses gathered in total. Although the sample is too small to draw conclusions, the results reveal an interesting context to youth work’s role in supporting young people affected by ACEs and ways it builds resilience.
Case study participants were asked how many of the original ten ACEs statements they had experienced since birth. The small sample shows that three quarters (76%, 16) of respondents had experienced one or more of the original ten categories of adverse childhood experiences. Of these, 44% had experienced four or more ACEs. This is significant as research concludes that those with four or more ACEs are more likely to experience long-term health and wellbeing issues.

The second set of statements includes experiences such as parental separation, or a family history of mental illness, living in a household with someone who had a problem with drinking or drugs. Three quarters (76%) of respondents had experienced one or more of the ten statements. Half (50%) had experienced four or more adversities.

Emergent research on teenage brain development highlights that adolescence is a crucial time of brain growth where there is a second window of opportunity to repair damage and put young people back on track.

One of the reasons this limited evaluation sample provides a useful start point, is that research strongly advocates that good adult relationships can effectively build resilience to combat the effects of adversity. Therefore, case study participants were asked a series of questions designed to identify what resilience factors were in place.

Results show that 75% recognised that getting an education was important. However only 26% felt they belonged in school while 53% said they didn't feel they belonged. Over half (55%) said 'yes' they knew where to get help when they needed it and 40% said they sometimes knew.

When asked if their parents / carers know a lot about them such as who their friends are and what they like to do, 68% answered 'yes' they did and a quarter (26%) replied 'sometimes'.

When asked more specifically about the role that youth workers play in their lives, the majority (90%) agreed that they have a youth worker that looks out for them. Most (85%) agreed that they have access to youth services that support them when they need them. Three quarters (75%) believe that when they need help, they can speak to a youth worker that knows them. Finally, two-thirds agreed that when things don't go their way, youth workers help them to work it out.

Featuring strongly in the discussions is a perception of youth workers as 'good adults' that young people confide in, as this response laid bare: "I fell into a deep state of depression after a friend committed suicide. My youth worker and friends helped me come to terms with it."

Positive relationships appear to hold true despite weaker connections in school and at home. Therefore the extent that youth work builds resilience during adolescence is worthy of further exploration in year three of Round 4.
case studies

Click on the booklets to have a look inside
the five case studies from across Scotland.
The Youth Work Fund evaluation has uncovered persuasive evidence of ways youth work impacts on the CashBack for Communities outcomes and brings positive changes to the lives of many young people.

Outcome results demonstrate that most targets are being met or surpassed, although targets are out of sync with activities that are subsequently funded.

The wellbeing SHANARRI indicators reinforce that young people perceive their local youth organisations as part of an extended family, especially where families and education relationships are weakened. Starting where they are from within a safe and inclusive environment; young people welcome not being judged or criticised for mistakes, but valued, respected and supported to grow into the adults they wish to become.

Diverse ranges of intervention pay credence to the sector's claim that 'It's not what you do, it's the way that you do it.' This was evident in Edinburgh when About Youth responded directly to police records of rising anti-social behaviour as it occurred. Their outreach in a known crime hot-spot has diverted young people away from the downward spiral of the criminal justice system. Courage was needed to ignore the initial rejection and find a way of winning young people's trust to redirect negative energy into positive pursuits.

West Dunbartonshire stands out for taking a partnership approach to delivering a summer programme that successfully engages young people from all areas of deprivation identified across the local authority. It is a model that others should consider, to gain comprehensive coverage.

The Dundee & Angus ADHD Support Group arose in response to one parent's recognition of a gap in the system. It has grown to offer holistic support for families that often feel misunderstood.

PEEK in Glasgow's East End used the funds to support a girls group to build their resilience, whilst actively working to tackle acute food poverty. Surrounding the girls group is a package of progressive recreational, personal development and employability pathways.

In Perthshire, the Breathe Project has built a reliable youth hub in a remote area. It's attentiveness to a diverse and scattered population has led to tackling rural isolation whilst delivering alternatives to school for those that are disengaged.

Despite such diverse approaches all the projects have commonalities. They see young people as assets to their communities. They believe in young people's potential to be catalysts for change and seek to widen future horizons.
One hallmark of success is taking cognisance of the causes of adversity as well as easing the symptoms. Making and providing food has therefore become a growing necessity. Intensive interventions are most apparent where the core services are secure enough for staff to retain jobs and pursue the types of underlying issues, through nurturing positive relationships that are reported to be less available in other settings.

Rather than limiting young people to a narrow or singular activity type, the youth work fund’s ever changing programme - and vibrant examples accumulated through the evaluation - reflect an openness to young people leading the activities as much as their desires, imaginations and resources allow. The process of giving away power strengthens relationships whilst enabling young people to test and hone the skills and strengths needed to transition into adulthood.

Consequently, CashBack for Communities priorities and outcomes are fully met by the funded projects. When allied to the wider investments secured by youth organisations, there is evidence of an enhanced impact that stretches beyond the monetary value afforded by the fund. Hence, exploring ways to alleviate the pressures of an uncertain local funding landscape, through for example the option of three-year funding would be beneficial. There is also value in exploring ways to build capacity through sharing good practice as the sector looks to respond to Round 5 priorities.