



Young people across Scotland put their ‘Heids Together’ to build mental health and wellbeing resource

NEWS RELEASE

Embargoed until 00.01 14th August 2020

A free, online resource has been launched to reduce the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of young people in Scotland.

Developed in response to an increased demand for online mental health and wellbeing services, [‘Heids Together’](#) is a collection of podcasts, e-books, training toolkits and lesson plans, full of information and advice on how to address key issues for young people impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The project, led by YouthLink Scotland, began in the immediate aftermath of lockdown restrictions, where thousands of young people across the country found themselves cut off from vital local youth work services, sparking fears of a mental health epidemic.

After a national survey revealed that [77% of young people were concerned about their mental health and wellbeing](#), YouthLink Scotland put their ‘heids together’ with leading mental health charities Penumbra and See Me Scotland to adapt the services of six youth groups for online delivery.

Youth Work D&G, St Mungo’s Academy in Glasgow, Scouts Scotland, LGBT Youth Scotland, Glasgow Life and Passion4Fusion all submitted resources to Heids Together, covering a range of topics from anxiety, depression and self-harm, to the impacts of Covid-19 specific to BAME and LGBTQI communities.

Pupils from St Mungo’s Academy, Glasgow, produced a 21-episode podcast series featuring interviews from pupils and teachers on isolation, bereavement, strained family relationships and loss of friendship. The podcasts are accompanied by a set of ‘coping cards’, designed to give inspiration for managing mental health issues.

Passion4Fusion, a youth group in West Lothian supporting young people from BAME communities, worked together to create ‘Wise Milton’, a video and e-book storytelling resource which addresses the fears and anxieties associated with the pandemic, as experienced by young people.

Sarah Robertson, Health & Wellbeing lead at YouthLink Scotland, said:

"Youth work plays a massive role in supporting young people with their mental health. It is often the "go to" place for them when they need to discuss sensitive issues in a safe environment. We hope this resource, which is designed by and for young people, will provide creative and innovative ways of engaging in meaningful and effective mental health discussions."

Sean Humphreys, Mental Health Officer at YouthLink Scotland, said:



"At YouthLink Scotland, we are fortunate to witness the intelligence, creativity, adaptability and resilience of young people all of the time, not least when it comes to supporting others with mental health and wellbeing. This resource, created during the most testing of times, is testament to that."

Chris Grant, Education & Young People Programme Officer at See Me, said:

"At See Me we believe that talking about mental health stigma and discrimination is foundational to any Youth Work around mental health.

Mental health stigma & discrimination prevents young people asking for help when they might need it, can make them feel isolated or embarrassed, and can make mental health challenges worse.

It's been fantastic to be involved in the Heids Together with YouthLink Scotland. Our Youth Workers and Youth Champions have designed a resource for use in the Youth Sector which ensures that stigma and discrimination is considered in any mental health programmes. The youth work organisations involved participated with enthusiasm and passion and as always the young people involved were honest, open and inspiring. We hope this resource helps to improve the lives of young people and youth work organisations around the country."

Jonathan Ssentamu, Youth Development Worker at Passion4Fusion, said:

"Mental health has been a taboo subject in our community, so get involved with this project has given us the knowledge, good practice, capacity building to support our community better. We have also enjoyed sharing experiences from BME communities that other organisations could learn from."

Ends

For interview and media enquiries contact Eddie Nisbet, Senior Digital & Communications Officer, on enisbet@youthlinkscotland.org or 07815522701.

Notes to editors

Link to 'Heids Together' resource:

<https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/resources/heids-together-a-wellbeing-youth-work-resource/>



The project has been possible thanks to the Scottish Government's Wellbeing Fund which was established to assist third sector organisations to support people affected by the pandemic.

YouthLink Scotland is the national agency for youth work. It is a membership organisation and is in the unique position of representing the interests and aspirations of the whole of the sector both voluntary and statutory. We champion the role and value of the youth work sector, challenging government at national and local levels to invest in the development of the sector.