

South East Improvement Collaborative Practitioner Enquiry facilitated by YouthLink Scotland

Youth Work and Schools – working in partnership to improve outcomes for young people

Context

Evidence shows that effective partnerships between youth work and schools can support improved attainment outcomes for young people. The South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC) has identified a need for:

- Improved understanding about the role, approach and impact of youth work
- Stronger and more planned links between youth work and schools
- A clearer focus on impact measurement to demonstrate the difference that this kind of partnership can make to young people's learning.
- Strengthened collaboration in the use of data to track and measure progress in improving outcomes for young people.

We plan to engage youth work organisations and a school community in each of the five SEIC local authorities. Youth workers and a key contact in each school will take part in a collaborative practitioner enquiry, to address the needs outlined above, supported by YouthLink Scotland's Youth Work and Schools Partnership team.

Purpose of Practitioner Enquiry

The aim of the proposed study is to establish and sustain strategies, structures and resources for effective collaboration between youth work and schools that demonstrably improve outcomes for young people. At this stage, as schools return from lockdown, we envisage that the youth work projects included in this study will be those that support health and wellbeing and the re-engagement of young people in learning.

Partners and Roles

- **YouthLink Scotland's Youth Work and Schools Partnership Team** will co-ordinate the study across the 5 local authorities, working directly with youth workers and teachers in each location to plan, support and document the process and the insights, recommendations and resources that are developed as a result.
- **SEIC Quality Improvement Team** will sponsor the work, creating opportunities for all partners to share their learning and communicating insights more widely. The SEIC team will also provide practical support with data analysis to support impact evaluation.
- **Local youth workers** (CLD and third sector) will plan, deliver and evaluate youth work programmes in close collaboration with school partners.

- **School partners** will work with local youth workers to plan, support and evaluate the contribution of youth work in improving outcomes for young people, based on their existing tracking processes
- **Young people** will help to shape and evaluate the youth work programmes in which they participate, and share their views on their experience of the collaboration between schools and youth work organisations.
- **All partners** will participate as reflective practitioners, sharing insights, learning and recommendations at every stage to inform future practice.

Programme Objectives

The proposed enquiry process will enable participating teachers and youth workers in each location to:

- Build a shared understanding of enablers of and barriers to attainment in their local context, including the perspectives of young people
- Learn more about the range of support that youth work can offer locally to complement school-based provision
- Identify priority areas for collaboration
- Work together to track progress and evaluate the impact of youth work in these areas
- Gather insights about the benefits, challenges, barriers and enablers of working collaboratively
- Develop a shared approach to - and a clear framework for - joint planning and evaluation between youth work and schools in future, focussed on Scottish Attainment Challenge outcomes.

Supporting School Improvement Objectives

There is scope for participating schools to shape the process, and prioritise key areas that best align with their school improvement plans. The following Quality Indicators (How Good is Our School, 4th Edition, Education Scotland 2015) will be addressed through the collaborative enquiry process:

- **Self-evaluation for self-improvement (1.1)** – collaborative approaches to self-evaluation that engage all staff, pupils, parents and partners in improving the life and work of the school.
- **Leadership of change (1.3)** – implementing improvement and change where senior leaders create conditions to support creativity, innovation and enquiry.
- **Family learning (2.5)** – engaging families in learning and ensuring that the curriculum effectively promotes safeguarding and wellbeing.
- **Partnerships (2.7)** - developing and maintaining strong partnership approaches which improve outcomes for learners, and continued self-improvement for the school and community
- **Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion (3.1)** – the whole community has a shared understanding of wellbeing and children’s rights; all young people feel safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

Desired Outcomes

- Stronger relationships between youth workers, teachers and young people
- More confidence and capacity amongst youth workers and teachers to work collaboratively in future – and to develop and embed partnership working in the wider system
- More confidence and capacity to use data from a range of sources to track and measure progress in improving outcomes for young people.
- Clear improvements in participating young people’s engagement and attainment – and a better understanding of what works and why

Proposed Activity - Step-by-Step

	Plan	Do	Review	Plan
When	September 2020	Oct-Dec 2020	Jan-Feb 2021	March 2021
What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify objectives and roles for the project Build shared understanding of what is needed Map youth work opportunities and identify partnership programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify outcomes to be measured for each project Agree how these will be measured Undertake baseline research with young people Deliver programmes and track progress collaboratively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate impact data Review impact data collaboratively Reflect on process – make recommendations for future partnership working Co-design capacity building approach to build more confidence and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan partnership working, informed by insights, recommendations and resources developed through the collaborative enquiry process Communicate learning more widely
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mapping exercise by youth work organisations 1 hour meeting of school and youth work partners in each location to identify priorities Interviews / focus groups with young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-2 hour meeting with key contact in school and youth work organisations to plan evaluation strategy Youth work organisations plan and deliver interventions with young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School and youth work organisations gather data YouthLink Scotland collates and analyses data 1-2 hour meeting with all partners (including young people) to validate data and discuss recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEIC review meeting involving youth work and school teams from all locations to review learning and plan forward
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs analysis Map of youth work programmes in each location Clear plan of action and roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear framework for collaboratively measuring attainment outcomes Baseline and follow up data – both quantitative and qualitative Stories of change from young people that help to identify what worked and why 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact report for each location Combined impact report Recommendations for future partnership working A range of evidence that helps to demonstrate how youth work contributes to the attainment gap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear plan of action and roles for future partnership working Clear recommendations and plan for wider capacity building Resources to support wider capacity building