

SUPPORTING YOUTH WORK IN SCOTLAND

SPRING 2017

# THE LINK

BUILDING SKILLS, SHAPING YOUNG LIVES

ADDED VALUE  
FOR MODERN  
APPRENTICES

IMPACT OF  
GENDER ON  
CAREER CHOICES

THE HARD REALITY  
OF SOFT SKILLS

**YouthLink**  
Scotland  
The national agency for youth work

**sky** | ACADEMY



**“Hope sees the invisible,  
feels the intangible  
and achieves the impossible.”**

## A NOTE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

### YOUTH WORK IN NUMBERS



**656m**  
value to the  
economy



**380,000**  
young people  
involved



**13m**  
volunteer hours



**80,000**  
workforce

This edition of The Link comes out as we reach a significant moment in both Scottish and World affairs. Our country finds itself at a crossroads in terms of trade and in how our society might develop. In Scotland we have some stark choices to face with regard to the labour market and, linked to that, the health and wellbeing of the nation.

The days are largely past when people had one skillset and one job for life. There are still jobs like this, but nowadays you are as likely to be defined and to define yourself by who you are and what you know as much as by what you do for a living at any given time. Employers are telling us that the training around the systems and mechanics of a job are transferable, teachable skills, but that what they value are the other things that people can bring - vision, teamwork, time management, innovation, enthusiasm and resilience.

These so called attitudes and aptitudes are increasingly the defining difference, which form the core requirements for making our way in the world successfully and achieving our potential.

Youth work activities and programmes have a unique role to play in delivering these types of skills to young people of all abilities but perhaps in a particular way to those for whom the traditional academic route has failed or faltered. We need to build on the innovative employability programmes that are being run across Scotland.

We would like to see more schools engaging ever earlier with our sector to raise achievement and attainment. The voice of employers needs to be properly heard, they tell us that soft skills are more important to them than formal qualifications. More dialogue is required with the youth work sector to deliver what the job market requires of our young people and to ensure they are supported in their attainment at school.

This publication highlights some of the truly incredible results that youth workers, mentors and others have achieved to restore the confidence and trust of young people, who were potentially losing touch with mainstream society and employment opportunities.

It's important we provide encouragement and optimism alongside a positive attitude and mindset, that then will be rewarded with young people achieving their goals, believing in themselves and making positive choices for life and work.

**Jim Sweeney MBE**

CEO YouthLink Scotland/Co-Chair National Youth Work Strategy Reference group

**YouthLink**  
Scotland  
The national agency for youth work

YouthLink Scotland,  
Rosebery House,  
9 Haymarket Terrace,  
Edinburgh EH12 5EZ.

t: 0131 313 2488

e: [info@youthlinkscotland.org](mailto:info@youthlinkscotland.org)

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# PERSPECTIVE

**Jamie Hepburn MSP,**  
Minister for Employability and Training



**The Scottish Government places great value on the significant contribution that youth work and community learning and development makes to ensuring that all of our children and young people can flourish to build a strong, sustainable economy.**

We welcome the report from the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce chaired by Sir Ian Wood and fully share the Commission's ambitions for our young people.

I firmly believe that youth work has a very important and unique approach that provides opportunities in an informal setting for young people to develop skills that employers are calling out for: confidence, leadership and negotiation skills, learning to solve problems and, to work well with others.

Ultimately, youth work empowers young people, widens their horizons and builds their resilience and capacity to make the transition into further learning, employment and adulthood.

Scottish education needs to deliver excellence in terms of ensuring our children and young people acquire a broad range of skills and capacities at the highest levels. Delivering equity for all, helping young people to thrive and have the best opportunity to succeed regardless of social circumstances or additional needs.

The fundamental purpose of Curriculum for Excellence is to provide young people with a range of learning experiences to prepare them for learning, life and work. Youth work, makes a significant contribution to this.

Youth work supports flexible learning pathways for young people as part of their learning journey. The approaches and techniques used in youth work are particularly effective as early interventions to support those at risk of disengaging from education. Vulnerable young people are supported to sustain programmes of learning and work experience to assist them in their journey to a positive destination.

Our government has focused on a number of measures designed to help young people successfully make the transition from school and to gain skills for the workplace. We have, for example, a well-developed Modern Apprenticeship programme responding to employer needs.

Additionally, the 'Opportunities for All' scheme guarantees an offer of an education or training opportunity for all 16-19 year olds in Scotland not already in work, education or training.

Through our refreshed Youth Employment Strategy, we are in a very good position to assess existing provision and to budget for the future. The strategy aligns with the recommendations of Developing Scotland's Young Workforce to develop a set of proposals that will support this Government's ambition to be one of the top performing countries in Europe in terms of youth employment by 2020.

All of this is very important work. Across Scotland, young people depend on this continued support to meet their aspirations and we need to continue working together to make sure that we are making the most of the resources and opportunities that are available.





# POLICY

As the voice of the youth work sector in Scotland we want to ensure that the unique approach used by youth work practitioners and organisations in terms of the employability agenda is fully utilised and recognised over the next few years.

Skilling up our young workforce so they are employment-ready, is not an aspiration. It has serious implications for economic growth and in our ability as a nation to cope with an increasingly ageing population. The youth work sector has a significant role within this agenda as by the very nature of the youth work approach, young people gain essential skills for work and life that complements their formal education.

Youth work in Scotland engages with more than 380,000 young people every year. At its core, youth work is a learning experience, where young people have the opportunity to set and achieve personalised outcomes. Through youth work, young people are developing key employability skills, such as self-confidence, decision-making, communication skills, team working skills and a sense of personal responsibility.

The Scottish Government's Youth Employment Strategy. 'Developing the Young Workforce', was released in 2014 signalling increased efforts and funding to reduce rates of youth unemployment.

## Key Performance Indicators of Developing the Young Workforce

- Reduce level of youth unemployment
- Increase percentage of school leavers attaining vocational qualifications
- Increase the number of Modern Apprentices at level 3 and above
- Increase percentage of employers recruiting young people directly from education
- Increase positive destinations for looked after children

One of the targets of the strategy is to increase the percentage of school leavers attaining vocational qualifications. One of the ways in which young people are partners in their learning is through participating in awards and qualifications, for example Duke of Edinburgh's Awards and SCQF qualifications. For young people who are struggling to gain academic qualifications, this provides an avenue for their skills and knowledge to be recognised and credited. This in turn helps to solidify their self-confidence.

Since the establishment of the Awards Network in 2008, there has been a significant growth in participation and completion of youth awards: a 273% increase between 2009/10 and 2014/15. Last year 60,000 young people achieved a youth award supported by youth workers.

The positive impact of youth work is that it reduces the number of young people likely to end up in a negative destination which can be seen within a number of youth work led employability initiatives like The Prince's Trust and Activity Agreements.

**Allan Watt**, Director of The Prince's Trust Scotland:

*"Those facing the greatest challenges and with complex needs must not be forgotten and it is only by working together with partners from across the voluntary, public and private sectors that we can really start to unlock the potential of the most vulnerable young people and help them create brighter futures for themselves."*

Three in four of the young people The Prince's Trust support go into education, jobs and business.



77% of young people involved in an Activity Agreement moved on to employment, formal learning or further training.

## Youth Work Outcomes

Recent research for YouthLink Scotland has shown that a high majority of employers value soft skills as much as academic qualifications. All youth work contributes to supporting young people to develop awareness of their abilities, skills and confidence. The Youth Work Outcomes, developed in partnership between the voluntary and statutory youth work sectors, demonstrates youth work's contribution to the Scottish Government's ambition that children and young people have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.

Young people:

- Are confident, resilient and optimistic for the future
- Manage personal, social and formal relationships
- Create, describe and apply their learning and skills
- Participate safely and effectively in groups.

- Consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control
- Express their voice and demonstrate social commitment
- Broaden their perspective through new experiences and thinking

At the heart of Curriculum for Excellence is supporting young people to develop skills for learning, life and work. The four capacities are building blocks for young people's employability embedded across all curriculum areas and also within youth work.

## Challenging Barriers

Youth work can have a significant impact for young people facing barriers to employment, training or further study due to other factors like substance abuse, mental health problems or criminal behaviour. Using an interventionist approach, youth work supports young people who are facing the consequences of inequality and disadvantage.

This approach plays a crucial role in supporting young offenders in HMYOI Polmont to successfully integrate back into the community.

The programme with young offenders challenges attitudes linked with offending, increases their confidence and also engages them as partners in their learning.

*"Youth workers have made a significant impact on Polmont. One of the consistent messages in the SPS survey was an uplift in terms of health and wellbeing, with young people reporting they feel more confident, more engaged and better about themselves, which youth work has made a core contribution to."*

**Sue Brookes**, Governor of HMYOI Polmont.

## Challenging Inequalities

Youth work also supports young people who face social isolation or discrimination. For example, young people who attend an LGBT-specific youth group at some point in their lives are more likely to say they are 'very happy' with their lives compared with those who had not.

## Youth Work Sector

The youth work sector itself is also a driver of employability in Scotland. With over 70,000 adult volunteers, involvement in youth work helps develop transferable skills and increase wellbeing amongst the adult population.

The shared ambition of the Scottish Government, YouthLink Scotland and the wider youth work sector, expressed in the National Youth Work Strategy 2014-19, is to offer youth work opportunities for all young people in Scotland that are accessible, equitable and inclusive, means we need more skilled youth work practitioners in Scotland. There is the opportunity for young people to embark on a career in the sector through a Modern Apprenticeship in Youth Work. The MA in Youth Work provides a clear pathway for increasing the number of confident and qualified youth workers, many of whom will have volunteered as youth workers.





Many young people today lack the most basic employability skills, reducing their chances of success. Taking part in a voyage with Ocean Youth Trust Scotland can give them a boost which will increase their self-confidence and resilience, whilst gaining valuable qualifications.



## GETTING SKILLS AND YOUR SEA LEGS

Ocean Youth Trust Scotland want to share a positive vision with Scotland's youth. It's a vision that hopes young people can realise their true potential, live healthy and fulfilling lives, make a positive contribution to their community and progress into employment or further education.

Aiming to inspire young people through the challenge of adventure under sail, the Trust has been delivering residential voyages since 1999 and previously as the Ocean Youth Club, since 1961. This intensive holistic experience provides a powerful catalyst for change. As a result the young people taking part build their confidence, gain skills, and become inspired to broaden their aspirations for the future.

OYT Scotland works directly with young people, schools, youth groups, parents, local authorities and employers to open up the route from schools into employment or further education, which is closely linked to employment. There is a focus on time-keeping, reliability, socialising, perseverance, team work, and planning.

One mum told us that when she collected her daughter at the end of the voyage, she transformed into a

*"confident, settled, happy girl with a totally different outlook on life."*

With support from a variety of partners, OYT Scotland's programme is aimed at introducing skills relevant to the workplace. Vitally, the programme includes accredited learning and SQA Qualifications in Communication and Leadership. In 2016, out of the 552 young people on voyages during the season, 143 SQA Qualifications were awarded.

One young person from Falkirk commented after a voyage:

*"For me the qualifications I got from this were massive. I left school with very little. It makes me stand out from everyone to be able to talk about this. It's something completely different to talk about at interview."*

Group leaders and teachers perform a critical role in the voyages. They do this by helping to select and prepare the young people beforehand, supporting them during the voyage alongside sea-staff and after the voyage. This helps young people make the most of their experience by transferring the learning and personal development from the voyage onwards to their lives back on dry land.

Having taken part in a young carer's voyage, group leader Gemma saw the real difference OYT Scotland made:

*"It was a great experience to see young people really pushing themselves. This is definitely something that can be used back at home or in their future working lives."*

Each voyage is designed to challenge the participants in a safe, fun and supportive environment and is managed by the Skipper using a 'Plan – Do – Review' model to ensure the group will be progressively 'stretched'.

As the week progresses, the young people are encouraged and empowered to take on more responsibility and will be actively involved in the decision making process.

One young person from Fife stated:

*"This trip motivated me and helped me understand that if I work hard, I can succeed."*



# WILD WORKING

Scottish Outdoor Education Centres are using partnership to deliver employability skills for young people with additional needs, as Dave Spence, Chief Executive explains.



A group of young people with autism spectrum diagnoses are engaged in an innovative Transition to Work programme at Scottish Outdoor Education Centres (SOEC). The twin objectives are to explore the therapeutic value of the outdoors and to develop qualities and skills to enhance employability.

The young participants had for many years enjoyed regular activities and support with Lothian Autistic Society (LAS). However as they approach school leaving age, the level of support is due to reduce. Many mainstream services do not consider the need for support before embarking on transition work but 'one size does not fit all,' especially for young people with autism.

SOEC and LAS collaborated closely to develop an innovative programme with clear development outcomes as well as extending the opportunity for the group to get together regularly. They are part way through a pilot programme, funded by Scottish Natural Heritage, of 22 activity days over a 10-month period.

Initially they took part in adventure activities to foster team building and problem solving. Skills like self-management, team work, communication and risk awareness develop throughout the programme. Subsequent phases look to consolidate then embed the skills.

The results are impressive. The early responses from young participants included:

*"I didn't think I would like being in the outdoors but I do."*

Other feedback highlights the effects of greater confidence:

*"My 18-year-old daughter went on the bus by herself for the first time; I'm sure she wouldn't have done this without the confidence she gained from the Transition to Work project."*

There is also evidence that the young participants are reaching out into the world:

*"Alex... has even attended a college for study over the holidays. That would just have been unheard of prior to attending these sessions. He's also paired up with a business mentor, taking the initiative to email and arrange to meet him for a coffee. Again, this is all new territory but he did it all on his own because he feels comfortable about trying new things."*

*"Frazer has recently embarked on work experience at the Scottish Government... including working with the statisticians, helping in the mail room and with front desk security. All the skills he has learned on the project have been invaluable in giving him the confidence to cope with this huge step into the world of work."*

There has also been benefit for SOEC tutors and LAS staff and volunteers. Ann Brown, Chief Executive of LAS summed this up:

*"Working with the team at SOEC has become an incredibly positive experience. This has been so important to the young people we work with and also our staff, parents and carers and contributed to the overwhelming success of our project."*

This project exemplifies how partnership working is the key to the delivery of real benefits to help young people develop the skills they need in their future.

Scottish  
Outdoor  
Education  
Centres







# THE SELFISH VOLUNTEER

**Matthew Leopold**, Head of Brand Reputation – partnerships, sponsorship and education at British Gas, tell The Link why the skills he learnt through youth work were invaluable.

*"Hello Sir" says the salesman with his slicked back hair. "How would you like to give up your spare time?" He smiles, trying hard to put you at ease and adds; "Not just any time, I only want your valuable weekends and evenings."*

*"My weekends!" you exclaim; "You'd better pay well."*

*"Oh no sir" he clarifies; "We want your time for free."*

Thankfully, we don't promote volunteering like that but it is easy to understand why people do not volunteer.

I must confess I am biased, I am a compulsive volunteer. From a young age I discovered the selfish benefits of giving up my time. It felt amazing and I learned so much. I got to do new things and I met my best and closest friends. Volunteering was a bug. It got under my skin. I couldn't do enough of it. Volunteering should not be a chore - it does not have to be altruistic -

the volunteer gets just as much out of the experience. So why do the real benefits of volunteering get so little discussion?

Recognising the benefits makes our earlier sales pitch a lot more interesting.

*"Would Sir like to learn new skills? Become a better leader? A strong team player? Perhaps Sir would like to find self-worth and feel good about the difference he is making? Oh, and it's free."*

The soft skills learnt from volunteering and youth work are invaluable, and they are hard to develop in a work setting. I look after the British Gas Marketing graduate programme. We don't actively look for people with marketing backgrounds – we can train for that. Instead we look for people with the right attitude and work ethic. We look for evidence of youth work or volunteering as ways to develop these soft skills.

Schools have recognised the necessity for young people to learn soft skills such as leadership, empathy and communication. But of course, these cannot be effectively taught in the traditional school setting. Young people need to be autodidacts. They need to develop these skills over time through practise and experimentation.

The youth work sector is the crucial powerhouse which will grow and embed these skills. Get young people hooked on the selfish pleasure of helping themselves by helping others. Businesses are crying out for the skills they will develop, the young people will grow and communities will benefit. There is nothing to lose.

**There are so many ways to volunteer. Why not start by checking out #iwill Scotland. They have a huge database of opportunities for young people. Or, enrol to do the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. You won't regret it.**





When a young person's CV includes a Duke of Edinburgh's Award it marks them out from their peers. Employers see a DofE Award as a mark of excellence which demonstrates that the young person has key employability skills like commitment, teamwork and communication.

## ADDED VALUE FOR MODERN APPRENTICES

It is no surprise then that with increasing numbers of employers offering Modern Apprenticeships, more and more employers are also beginning to offer DofE to young employees as a means of developing skills in their young workforce.

West Dunbartonshire Council is one such employer, using the DofE to get involved in a meaningful way in the development of their young employees. The Council's Working4U service has been supporting MAs for a number of years, offering young people the opportunity to develop their employability skills and access a qualification while working.

The service decided to introduce the DofE Award to further enhance their existing youth work offering. The Council secured funding from the Jobs Growth Fund to employ a youth worker to take this initiative forward. Through a youth work approach, the MAs doing their DofE build self-confidence, challenge themselves, access training and plan their DofE activities in a non-formal setting, separate from their work environment.

By offering the DofE Award as part of their youth work approach to support MAs, both the Council as an employer and the young employees benefit.

As Peter Barry, Strategic Lead for Housing & Employability at West Dunbartonshire Council, explains;

*"There is no doubt that the DofE Award adds value to the qualifications and experiences our MAs gain. The council has many MAs going through their qualification, but we also place and fund MAs with other employers, particularly in the private sector. From our perspective, the DofE increases the personal and social skills, confidence, and creativity of MAs. They are likely to be more employable and more likely to succeed in the workplace."*

This perspective is one that is shared by MAs who have completed their DofE Award with the Council. Jordan Taylor, a council MA in Administration and Business, said:

*"For me, DofE was a chance to get out more and try new things. My confidence wasn't great when I started, but now I'm confident enough to speak about my experiences to new people."*

Jordan also credits his Bronze Award with helping him to progress to a Level 3 Modern Apprentice. He explained:

*"Having my Bronze Award led me to have experiences and skills that others didn't. I was asked about my DofE in my interview. DofE is that bit more experience to talk about."*

Jordan's DofE experience has clearly improved his employability prospects, but he has also really enjoyed the programme and its benefits beyond his work. By getting involved in the development of their young employees and giving them the chance to do their DofE, the Council is developing skills for both life and work in their young workforce. This has an enormous positive impact on improving the career prospects of their employees and also produces positive outcomes for the Council as an employer. Offering youth work programmes like the DofE to young employees is an approach which benefits all involved.



# CLOSING THE GENDER GAP SHOULD BE ROCKET SCIENCE

The programme aims to raise the aspirations of young women and increase their uptake of Modern Apprenticeships in gender segregated areas by supporting them to explore STEM careers and think about the application process.

Many young women mentioned their experiences in education, discussing gender-related barriers that they faced in school, college or university settings, and being discouraged from engaging in subjects of interest on the basis of gender.

*"At my school science lessons were really gendered; girls encouraged to do biology and boys to do chemistry and physics."*

*"I'm doing a male-dominated science degree and I've noticed that my lecturer really doesn't listen to me when I talk up, but nods, agrees and engages when my male classmates do the same."*

## Status of Young Women in Scotland 2015, YWCA Scotland

The programme was 'hands-on' giving the young women lots of opportunities to experience practical applications of STEM and collaborate with peers in new and innovative ways.

## HOW THE PROGRAMME WORKS

### Introduction to STEM and Modern Apprenticeships

To help the young women begin to



identify their strengths and consider careers that would interest them. To introduce Modern Apprenticeships, entrepreneurship and engineering as potential post-school destinations. This included talks and speed mentoring with Skills Development Scotland, Pick Protection and FemEngineers.

### STEM Immersion Day and International Day of the Girl

To explore the role of creativity in design and engineering and discuss teamwork, leadership and innovation. To begin to look at the role of gender.

### Field Trip – Glasgow Science Centre

To explore different fields of science at their own pace and interact with exhibits that demonstrated the application of science in everyday life.

### Role Models and Action Planning

To explore different routes into STEM careers and identify actions the young women can begin to take now. To engage with speakers and ask questions to better understand how they can start to plan for their future careers.

## Impact

Activities were a balanced mixture of talking, active listening, thinking, doing, writing, drawing, and reflecting. Whilst much of the programme consisted of group work, this was regularly broken up with individual reflection time and breaks.

*"I enjoyed the building challenges and learning about different STEM jobs."*

For most of the 50 young women that we worked with, this was the first time they had been given an opportunity to take part in such a programme,







## Gen Up is a programme designed to create opportunities for young women aged 14-18 living in Scotland to think critically about the impact of gender on their career choices and decisions.

*"Encourage girls to be confident in themselves."*

Throughout the week the Gen Up programme was supported by a wide range of organisations who helped the girls develop a better understanding about further education, entrepreneurship and work. Speakers from Skills Development Scotland, Pick Protection, University of Glasgow, City of Glasgow College, University of Edinburgh and The Cultural Enterprise all helped expand the girls' knowledge of STEM careers and what they actually entail.

Achievement and attainment was recognised and celebrated at all stages of the Gen Up programme. We ensured feedback was positive and constructive, recognising skills and strengths and linking achievements to the world of work, helping girls understand how the activities were relevant to different careers.

Gen Up was co-created with Gumption Girls, an Edinburgh-based social enterprise that aims to inspire girls to be confident, creative and resilient. The programme is available on our online learning platform e-Quality and is designed to be co-facilitated with teaching staff, young women role models, and industry experts.

If you'd like more information about Gen Up and working with us, please get in touch with Theresa Burns, Network Coordinator on [theresa@ywcascotland.org](mailto:theresa@ywcascotland.org)

explore their experiences of being a girl, and share their thoughts and feelings.

*"I enjoyed connecting with people in my year that I never normally talk to."*

*"I really enjoyed all of the things we participated in during the week. It made me feel ashamed that after many years of trying we have still not achieved equal rights for both males and females, and I am now a feminist, and shall continue to fight for rights."*

*"I learned how even today there are still problems in the work world today for women and how that needs to change. I enjoyed watching Emma Watson's [HeForShe] speech because it was so inspirational and it's made me feel so confident when speaking out loud and getting my point across. I also learned that there's no job that women can't do."*

*"This week made me feel good and I realised I'm more of a feminist than I thought. The Emma Watson video really inspired me – thank you!"*

Interestingly about half of the girls wanted to go to university and the other half to college, only one or two wanted to work or do a Modern Apprenticeship, mostly because they

hadn't heard of them before or been encouraged to think about different routes into a career beyond university or college.

The school staff were all very welcoming and interested in the Gen Up programme and what they could learn from it to better support their students going forward. This also meant a lot to the girls, who felt their views were being valued upon learning that their teachers wanted to hear about things from the girls' perspectives.

Some of the things the girls wanted to do or have changed include:

*"Let girls lead group projects instead of boys always leading."*

*"Inclusion in mixed sports games."*

*"To be able to do other technologies than home economics without being judged."*

*"For girls to do sciences other than Biology, typically considered a girl's science."*

*"For girls to be treated the same as boys in PE."*

*"Visits to colleges and universities."*

*"More workshops, presentations and one-to-one support."*

# WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO BUILD SKILLS

The Community Based Learning and Employability Hub in North Lanarkshire has worked hand in hand with young people since the Hub's inception in 2010.

The offer to young people is made through a local area partnership involving schools and Skills Development Scotland. This offer comes during an early intervention in which referrals and a transition programme are utilised, providing an informal taster that allows participants the chance to experience the Community Based Employability Hubs.

During this programme participants experience group work, employability tasters and interventions from the third sector. Through all this they receive short experiences of what the Community Based Employability Hub can offer. Meanwhile the in-house youth work team engages with participants, using a youth work approach, and making offers to join the Hub as a destination once they leave school.

During the period between leaving school and taking the next step, the youth work team jointly work with Skills Development Scotland staff and the Home School Partnership officers, based in local schools, engaging with transition and future participants. Families sometimes get a home visit to explain the design and purpose of the Hubs.

Promotion and information sharing comes via leaflets and the Activity Agreement website, but primarily it's down to staff engaging with participants, teachers and parents. This creates a line of communication which

enhances the relationships we build with future Hub participants.

The offer made is dependent on the various challenges participants face and as a team we support them one-to-one or through group work to overcome those challenges using an agreed person centred plan. The benefit of the Activity Agreement as a plan is that it can change quickly and, uniquely, always has the young person driving it. During transition there is close liaison with partners and school staff to develop a clear picture of future participants. This supports the team to offer the appropriate action plan.

During the introductory period, whilst these young people are initially part of the Community Based Employability Hub, partners are kept informed as to what employability and the labour market means to them. A common trap for young people is the assumption that there are plenty of job opportunities to suit their age and employment choices.

Partners from Skills Development Scotland and Routes to Work offer advice based on apprenticeships, educational opportunities and learning, but more importantly describe the journey toward these. This again acts to inform the team of the best way to support young people toward this goal. Not everyone will wish to go onto employment - for some education and training are seen as more viable options. In cases like

these, liaising with Skills

Development Scotland, New College Lanarkshire, and others, they try to find suitable options that will work for those young people.

As part of their development, visits to colleges and local training provision aim to increase awareness of travel, environment and expectations. This acts as a prime tool in moving participants closer to their desired outcomes as early interventions can happen without the loss of their places within the Community Based Employability Hub. Developing an awareness of what factors influence them is vital to their self-development. Participants are kept at the heart of this development – they are offered a clear vision of how they can work towards their goals.

From the start, the Hubs have always enjoyed the benefit of partners. These are wide ranging and also come from within North Lanarkshire Council. The partnerships with colleges, agencies and the third sector creates an offer like no other – giving great benefit from the shared information and communication within the area through local partnerships.

These partners, youth work, education, skills and youth employment, dovetail perfectly to provide an entirely client focussed offer. This puts young people at the centre, working towards goals and milestones which develop opportunities for all. This in turn supports the goals of the Scottish Government to create a strong economy, a stronger youth workforce and more opportunities.





# THE YOUTH WORK APPRENTICE



Modern Apprenticeships in Youth Work in North Ayrshire Council began in 2006 when Angela Morrell, Youth Services Manager, made a successful bid to the CPP to pilot four modern apprenticeships.

Fast forward 11 years and the service is on its eighth and ninth cohort of apprentices.

So far 34 apprentices have achieved their SVQ Level 3. The service has maintained a 94% pass rate and 18 have gone on to study either community development or youth work at university level. The majority have gone on to youth work jobs, become community builders and social workers. There has even been an actor/wrestler, Grado, who started off his working life as a youth work apprentice.

The Modern Apprenticeships have become a core part of the Youth Services delivery, providing young people with a quality training experience, and the opportunity to gain the SVQ Level 6 qualification in Youth Work.

"The list of the benefits is exhaustive," says Youth Work Manager 'Angela Morrell. "Having young people as part of our team provides the opportunity to sense check projects and ideas."

The training is all delivered in-house and there is now a team of qualified assessors and verifiers.

This approach benefits the staff's professional and continuous development. The practice of the team is informed and guided by the occupational standards of youth work staff within the North Ayrshire team were key players in the refresh of the Occupational Youth Work Standards.

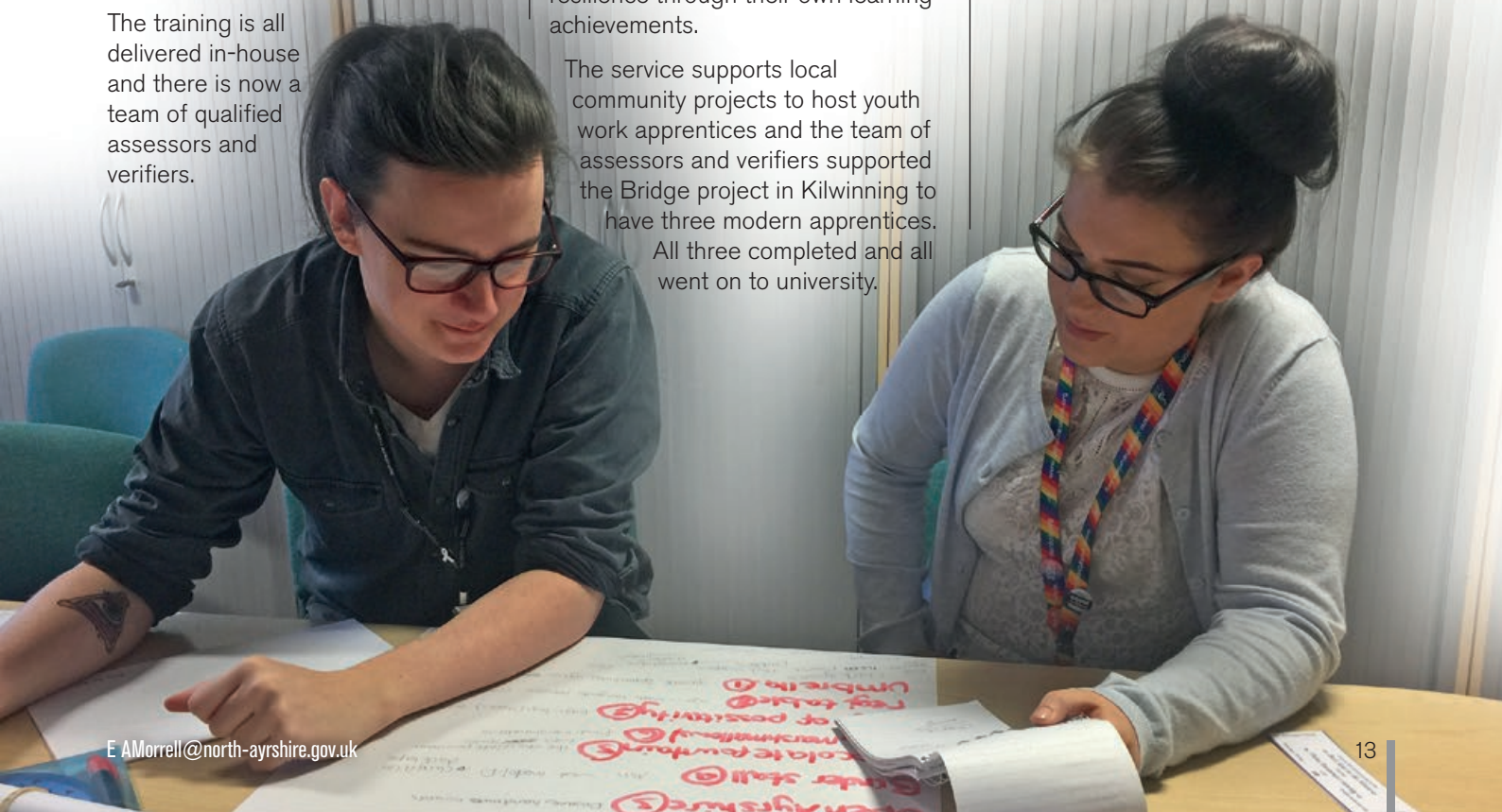
The apprenticeship programme also brings funding to the Youth Service. The SDS funding allocated when the apprentices achieve their qualification supports many of the programmes and activities of the team. The majority of young people who have gone on to university following their apprenticeships have stated that university and higher education was not initially part of their plans.

One of the benefits of the SVQ is that it supports the individual learning journey, it also supports the apprentices to develop skills as professionals and reflective practitioners. Learning via a hands-on approach is more practical, creating youth workers who have developed resilience through their own learning achievements.

The service supports local community projects to host youth work apprentices and the team of assessors and verifiers supported the Bridge project in Kilwinning to have three modern apprentices. All three completed and all went on to university.

One of the apprentices, Mhairi McFadyen, went to Glasgow University. Whilst studying in Glasgow she took the opportunity to take a placement in Swaziland. This spurred her on and she is currently preparing to start a wonderful worldwide project called World Race. The youth work apprenticeship was fundamental to her journey, providing her with a good framework and building her resilience.

In preparing for this exciting adventure, Mhairi has undertaken an extensive fundraising project and created a presentation of her plans. She recently came back to visit the team with whom she began as an apprentice youth worker. Her presentation that day highlighted the difference youth work made to her life. Mhairi is confident that for her, and many of the other youth work apprentices, youth work changes lives.





# JUST ADD BEAUTY, INNOVATION AND YOUTH



Nestled in some of Scotland's most beautiful scenery, the town of Callander is growing its own young workforce to make sure this vibrant community has the ingredients to remain so in the future.





Callander Youth Project Trust (CYPT) is establishing itself as a hub supporting small local businesses. CYPT has set itself the sustainability challenges of identifying local young talent and supporting them as they begin their careers. Support comes in the shape of a winning combination of training, qualification/certification, and pastoral care.

The town is a gateway to Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, and is home to many small businesses which depend on tourism and the visitors the area attracts. The town offers a mix of traditional shops and gift stores, hotels, restaurants and cafes.

Through a range of provision, mapped against the 'employability pipeline' such as Modern Apprenticeships. CYPT aims to build confidence, responsibility and skills before matching young people with local employers keen to recruit from a pool of trained, experienced young people.

Robert MacLeod, now 19, joined CYPT almost two years ago as a shy, reserved young man with low self-esteem and little confidence in himself. After engaging with CYPT on a Community Jobs Scotland placement, Robert

went from strength to strength, and progressed onto a Modern Apprenticeship in Hospitality Services which he completed in Summer 2016. During this time Robert demonstrated excellent customer service and organisation skills, and was promoted to Hospitality Supervisor before embarking on a Level 3 MA in Hospitality Supervision and Leadership.

When local family-owned butchers D Campbell & Son were looking for a young trainee to welcome into their business, contact with CYPT made perfect sense. "We knew we wanted to bring a young person into the shop and wanted someone reliable to help sustain the business into the future", said Colin Campbell. "Robert already had a great reputation in the community. We knew him to be a polite, respectful guy with an eye for detail." Robert jumped at the opportunity and, through a phased release, began work experience which has now led to a full-time appointment.

As well as providing paid work placements for young people such as Robert, CYPT engages directly with other employers wishing to recruit Modern Apprentices to provide

the underpinning qualifications and support. For businesses who wish to take on a young person in the community, an MA offers benefits to both the young person and the business, in terms of sustainability, employability skills and certified skills training.

Another local young person has benefited from the support of CYPT. Taylor Lauder, 20, worked in a variety of hospitality jobs before starting with the Waverley Hotel in Callander over six months ago. When she expressed an interest in developing her management skills at work, her employer was supportive.

"Taylor has natural leadership skills and is a great asset. In this line of work staff turnover can be high and it can be difficult to retain the best staff", said manager Gordon Halliday.

"Working in partnership with the Youth Project to put Taylor through her apprenticeship works on many levels. Taylor is empowered with experience, qualifications and extra responsibilities and in return we benefit from a loyal, engaged young person who is interested in a career, not just a job."

# WHEEL OF FORTUNE



There are many innovative projects helping young people get on the jobs ladder. One of these is LGBT Youth Scotland's bike building programme, where young people learn new skills, receive accreditation, and get support.

Seven young people attended LGBT Youth Scotland's Edinburgh youth space to take part in a bike building programme with Rural and Urban Training Scheme Ltd (RUTS). Young people took part in sessions over a six week period to boost their employability skills as they built a bike of their own.

Seven young people registered with the course, with six of them fulfilling the requirements and cycling on to pastures new.

After seeing information about LGBT Youth Scotland's RUTS bike building programme on Facebook, Callum, aged 23, went along to check it out. A few months on, Callum has a bike he made himself, and is on the road to new employment destinations.

Speaking to the Link magazine, Callum shares his journey and tells us what he learned:

*At first I was a bit worried that I wouldn't be able to commit the time, so went along to the first meeting to see what it was about.*

*The course was all focused on employability. We had six modules to complete, all geared towards responsibilities at work, how to apply for jobs, writing CVs, figuring out what skills we had, that kind of thing. We went along every Wednesday from 10am to 2pm for six weeks. There were six of us, and we would split in half and three of us would build the bikes whilst the others worked on other stuff then we would swap over.*

*The programme was absolutely brilliant, super fun, and I learned loads of stuff. It was a bonus that it turned out to be a lot better than I thought it would be. My favourite thing was*

*learning the practical skills needed to work with bikes. We went on two bike rides to check that the bikes were proficient enough. That was cool.*

*I think having something I had to go to every week helped in terms of my anxiety. Staff were very understanding of that. They were aware of our boundaries and what accommodations we would all need and they started from where we were at.*

*Annette was great. She set up volunteering opportunities for me as a follow on from the project. I'm now going to be a volunteer at the Tool Library in Edinburgh, which is super cool. It's a place where you can borrow tools and it has workshops and training. They partner a young person and a retired tradesman and they then teach you how to make stuff.*

*I'm currently on Employability Support Allowance so opportunities that are flexible are important for me.*

*In terms of challenges, the employability stuff was quite difficult, as we were trying to think of all the stuff we were good at. We all found that hard. Annette was good at getting us to think through what we had done before. She was really sincere so it made a difference and made it easier. Through doing this I began to think – yeah! I do have skills!*

*I learned some basic mechanical things to do with the bike. Because of that I've found myself fixing other things. Before I would have said: "I'm not a handy person", now if anything goes wrong with my car I*

*would feel confident and trust in what I'm doing a bit more.*

*It was a lot more on our level, meeting us where we were and going forward. I've found other stuff a bit too instructive, like, 'here is the thing, do the thing!' This way of working made it more fun.*

*I'm definitely a lot more hopeful about work. It's not something that is insurmountable and makes me panicky anymore. It seems more achievable. I understand now that it's okay to do one thing to get you going, you don't need to get a 40 hour a week job.*

*I would definitely recommend it to other young people as it was a brilliant experience. I thought it would be fun, but it turned out to be really great on so many different levels. I hope that a lot of other young people get a chance to take part in it.*

The course has been a success, not only in the group building their own bikes and completing workbooks to attain an SCQF qualification, but in the building of confidence, team work, and communication skills among the young participants.

Two of the group members went into employment, two have stayed in education (one of these secured a part-time job to complement school) and one other has shown a keen interest in volunteering with RUTS tool library. Each individual has achieved some success towards the goal that they set.

The course took place at LGBT Youth Scotland, with occasional workshops at Ocean Terminal. It was led by Annette Huckstep, Tim LeBruilly and Ross Williamson from RUTS and co-ordinated by Ann Marriott, Partnership Manager (East) at LGBT Youth Scotland.





# QUALIFICATIONS THAT REFLECT ALL OUR LEARNING



At the heart of what the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership (SCQFP) strives to achieve is a recognition that young people take a whole host of differing paths throughout their learning journey and to make them aware that the Framework is there to guide them. This absolutely reflects the Scottish Government's priority for equity and excellence for every young person in Scotland.

This year marks 15 years of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), Scotland's National Framework. Since its inception in 2001, the number and breadth of qualifications formally recognised on the Framework has continually increased. Today, over 800 non-mainstream qualifications and learning programmes are included on the Framework. This represents Scotland's young people gaining recognised awards for skills and experience gained outwith mainstream examinations.

A quick search of the SCQF Database, which contains details of all the qualifications contained on the Framework, reveals the breadth of activities for people of all ages and for which they can receive formally recognised credit. YouthLink Scotland's Developing Decision Making Skills and Participative Democracy Certificate are two examples of non-traditional pathways to gaining skills.

The number of qualifications on the Framework is testament to the desire amongst the many organisations that the SCQF Partnership has worked with over the years to develop and recognise the skills of those who engage with them. The Community Learning and Development (CLD) sector and youth work in particular, plays a vital role in providing young people with access to training and qualifications

that enable them to attain their goals. The SCQF Partnership has supported many youth organisations through the process of having their learning programmes credit rated. The outcome is that more people accessing youth work services gain a recognised qualification, which they previously may not have acquired.

On the SCQF website you can find stories of how young people have used the SCQF when making their learning choices, helping them make sense of the options open to them. Whether it's a journey to becoming a Modern Apprentice or attending a summer school in their preferred profession, learners tell us that gaining recognised skills gives them a confidence boost when many say they previously had low self-esteem.

Being aware of their achievement is just one of the many ways the SCQF Partnership is supporting the Scottish Government's Developing the Young Workforce strategy.

Whilst there have been positive steps made, we recognise that there is more to be done to engage employers in understanding and giving due recognition to, the varied qualifications being undertaken by young people. The SCQF Partnership will continue to support learning providers in having qualifications formally recognised and in particular will continue to work with organisations like YouthLink Scotland in raising awareness amongst young people of how the SCQF can help them navigate the qualifications maze.



# SOFT FOCUS HARD REALITY

Business is giving all of us involved in education, formal and informal, a clear message, value soft skills as you do academic qualifications. We look at surveys from three of the UK's industry leaders.

## CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey 2016

- By far the most important factor employers weigh up when recruiting school and college leavers is their attitude to work (89%) followed by their aptitude for work (66%); these rank well ahead of formal qualifications (23%).
- School and college is not equipping all young people with what they need to succeed: around half of businesses are not satisfied with school leavers' work experience (56%) and their skills in communication (50%), analysis (50%) and self-management (48%).

*"By far the most important 'skills' factor centres on attitudes and aptitudes such as ability to present well. The majority of employers have concerns in these areas, whereas less than a quarter worry about formal qualifications. These soft skills have hard outcomes. Some say it is not the role of schools to provide these skills. So whose role is it? And to what extent should we shape our qualifications to reflect these skills? That's a debate we need to have."*

Josh Hardie, Deputy Director General

## Scottish Gas Survey, August 2016

Eight in 10 employers in Scotland believe job-seekers should focus on soft skills just as much as their grades.

- Yet 61% of young people think businesses only care about their academic grades.

- Three in five bosses look for volunteering experience as evidence of soft skills and 92% say a business can get great results from employees who have volunteered.

Matthew Leopold of Scottish Gas says job candidates lose out through a lack of soft skills:

*"Whilst grades and exams are important and will boost opportunities for young people, at Scottish Gas we are committed to promoting the importance of developing soft skills. We actively seek young people that have volunteered or can show that they have developed their soft skills. We challenge our employees to do the same. All of our engineering apprentices achieve their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award, during which they spend time volunteering in the community. We find that this helps our employees better relate to customers and improve service."*

## McDonald's UK Survey - January 2015

- McDonald's UK employs around 100,000 people in the UK.
- Today, soft skills are worth over £88 billion in Gross Value Added to the UK economy each year, underpinning around 6.5% of the economy as a whole.
- Estimate that over half a million (535,000) UK workers will be significantly held back by soft skills deficits by 2020.
- The annual overall expected loss of production due to expected soft skills deficits is anticipated to

amount to just under £8.4 billion per year by 2020 - £659 million for Scotland.

*"Deficiencies in the UK's current stock of soft skills impose severe penalties on our economy, affecting all sectors and regions of the UK. These skills deficits are not just a minor irritant for employers: they can cause major problems for business and result in diminished productivity, competitiveness and profitability."*

*"If the current weaknesses in the UK's soft skills base are not addressed, we face an economic penalty that will impact on sectors, businesses, individuals and society as a whole. To tackle this, individuals, businesses, education institutions, and policy-makers should take action to recognise and promote soft skills."*

SOUNDBITE - Hugh Aitken, Director, CBI Scotland

On what business needs:

*"Business is saying they need more focus on soft skills than academic results, what more can you do, what more can you say. The customer is asking for a different curriculum but the delivery is not happening at the moment and business needs to be heard."*

On the youth work sector:

*"I don't think the work there is being raised to the right level and not enough people know about it. I do believe many individual organisations are doing a lot of good work but it's not joined up. We need to have an integrated approach and bring them all together, put all the great ideas on the table and put it into an integrated plan."*

On formal education:

*"You only get what you measure, and if you are only going to measure academic results, that is what you will get. I maybe wrong but I am not aware of any curriculum that is teaching workplace readiness. If we can get that capability into the curriculum then that seed will grow and develop. I don't expect education to come up with the answer on their own, so business need to step up and we are going to do that, we would like to see education, business and government working together to deliver the solution that employers need."*



## What are soft skills?

- Self-management
- Problem solving
- Communication and leadership skills
- Team working
- Positive attitude
- Emotional intelligence
- Determination
- Planning and organising

## Why do they matter?

In a nutshell, if you can't deal with customers, work as a team or turn up on time then it doesn't matter whether you have a degree or not! It makes it harder to find and keep a job, it impacts on organisations large and small, through reduced productivity and it hampers our efforts as a nation to build a creative and vibrant economy for the future.

## Where does the youth work sector fit?

Youth work in Scotland engages with

more than 380,000 young people every year. At its core, youth work is a learning experience, and where young people have the opportunity to set and achieve personalised outcomes. Young people, through youth work are developing key employability skills, such as self-confidence, decision-making, communication skills, team working skills and a sense of personal responsibility.





# YOUNG SCOT DEVELOP DIGITAL CAREERS

**Providing young people with opportunities to develop their skills, digital literacy and helping them to build their capacity to realise their digital rights is at the heart of Young Scot's strategic aims.**

As an organisation, Young Scot are committed to supporting the Scottish Government's Youth Employment Agenda and understand the need for digital content skills across all workforce sectors. Alongside Skills Development Scotland and the BBC they designed a creative digital modern apprenticeship framework to help organisations employ a promising apprentice and develop the digital capabilities of their organisation and the apprentice.

In practice, the programme offers young people, primarily aged 16-19, who have a passion for digital media, a first step in their a digital career and promotes the options to progress from school to employment out with the traditional routes of full-time, college or university.

In addition to essential core skills for the world of work, the programme supports young people to develop professional

creative and digital media skills in areas such as digital media, digital design, the recording and production of visual and audio materials, digital marketing as well as social media and communications.

The role of the employer is important for the success of the programme. Young Scot work as partners throughout the year to provide support by providing line-manager training and guidance on embedding young people within the workplace. They have seen this improve the experience for apprentices and employers, helping realise the full benefits of employing Modern Apprentices.

Young Scot supports all MAs to achieve a Diploma in Creative and Digital Media at SVQ Level 3 (SCQF Level 7) in partnership with Glasgow Kelvin College and supported by Skills Development Scotland.

Over the years it has been fantastic to see the impact of the programme. Nearly all the MA's enrolled with Young Scot have gone on to positive destinations. Some have studied, others have found employment elsewhere, but Young Scot are delighted to see organisations creating roles to retain their apprentices.

The Young Scot Modern Apprenticeship programme continues to grow and offer opportunities to get involved. If you are interested in employing a Digital Creative Modern Apprentice visit [www.youngscot.net](http://www.youngscot.net)

This approach is securing and sustaining the engagement of some of the hardest to reach young people in the area – building the foundations of what employers want whilst helping young people discover what it is they want for themselves.



# HARVESTING POTENTIAL IN RURAL SCOTLAND

Cultivating Futures is a dedicated programme offering agricultural and rural training to rural youth in Scotland. It encompasses access to affordable practical training, business and efficiency workshops, their own leadership programme and an online information hub where job vacancies are advertised.

For members of the Scottish Association of Young Farmers' Clubs (SAYFC), all aged between 14 and 30, training and skills development is a crucial part of their personal journeys. More than three years ago, SAYFC started establishing more opportunities, allowing members to access additional training and support them with their future employment. To date this has included sheep shearing courses, cow signals, cattle trimming, lameness workshops and health and safety training.

The success of these initiatives combined with a grant from the Scottish Government's Agricultural and Rural Affairs Department has put SAYFC in a position to launch Cultivating Futures.

The practical training works with partners to offer relevant courses that are required for health and safety, and important to their own skills development. This includes Forklift Training, Sprayer Tests, ATV Handling and Chainsaws to name just a few.

Within the business and efficiency category, rural youth can gain knowledge in a wide range of topics such as budgeting, managing cash flows, writing a business plan and understanding the value of good nutrition management which helps improve productivity and more.

SAYFC is not just for those from a farming background, and as Scotland's largest rural youth organisation it is important to offer further education in non-agricultural topics. A range of courses such as first aid, risk assessment and office bearer training provide them with the necessary skills to lead a team, take control of a situation, organise an event or run a meeting. The association is member-led and as such members get a taste of managing their own clubs, which in turn will help them to manage their own teams or businesses within the workplace.

These opportunities provide valuable support to rural youth through the SAYFC social network, offering them the chance to learn in a fun and welcoming environment. They are encouraged to work together and independently to gain new skills and experiences that will enhance their employability and progression without drawing attention to the educational benefits. With SAYFC research establishing that one in six of their members felt the Association contributed to them securing employment, their on-going training is sure to help reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021 as set out in the Youth Employment Strategy.





Regardless of where young people are on the attainment spectrum, we all need to demonstrate that 'something extra' to stand out from the crowd. Steven Greig, Deputy Chief Executive of Youth Scotland talks about the need to be youth work aware.

# AMAZING THINGS

Amazing things happen every day in youth work and we know that #youthworkchangeslives! The young people that we support to achieve amazing things need to be able to demonstrate the learning, achievement and skills gained through their youth work experience.

Skills that are key to successful employment: Hugh Aitken, Director, CBI Scotland:

*"Business is clear – we need an education system which develops rigorous, rounded and grounded young people. This means a system which focuses as much on the development of key attitudes and attributes – such as confidence, resilience, enterprise, ambition – as on academic progression and attainment."*

The 2015 Improving Schools in Scotland: an OECD report, tells us that, whilst the 2013 Scottish unemployment rate for all ages stood at 7.1%, the rate among the 16-24 age group stood at 20.6%! It is clear from this, and from the Developing Scotland's Young Workforce strategy that young people are disadvantaged in the employment market:

*"Fundamentally, this is about ensuring a work relevant educational experience for our young people. It is about all of us valuing and understanding what a rich blend of learning, including vocational education, can offer. It is about employers playing an active role, both shaping and benefiting from Scotland's education system by*

*helping to create the talent pool they need and recruiting young employees."*

## Developing the Young Workforce, 2014, Scottish Government

We know that youth work delivers the skills that employers are seeking, but a critical part of this process is ensuring that young people, are aware that they've gained those skills and that they have a means of communicating, if not evidencing, their achievement of those skills to prospective employers.

UK Youth commissioned research on the impact of Youth Achievement Awards with the University of Teeside, who found that:

- Young people reported improved life and employability skills with them feeling more confident, showing commitment and dedication to the challenges provided to them and increasing their ability to concentrate and work with others.
- Young people reported higher aspirations and more motivation in education and work.
- Very importantly, young people feel proud of their achievements and value the accreditation they achieve for their work.

So, we are clear about what youth work can deliver, we understand the need for young people to be conscious of the employability skills that they've gained, and we know

that these skills match the needs of employers.

The Awards Network is working on a new strategy that will deliver a new website, an updated version of Amazing Things and an Awards Aware Charter mark for individuals and organisations to demonstrate their understanding of the value of youth work. We have also agreed a new Associate Membership structure that will welcome local awards and nominated awards into membership.

Help us capture the Amazing Things that Scotland's youth work personnel deliver by registering your awards with the Awards Network, and signing up as an organisation and as an individual to demonstrate that you are Awards Aware.





# SCOUTING FOR SKILLS

One area that is often over looked when discussing the skills gap in Scotland is the role that non-formal education providers, such as the Scouts, have to play.



For more than a century, Scouting has delivered non-formal education to young people and helps them to fulfil their potential. Preparing Scouts for their future, whether that is higher education or employment, is at the heart of the movement.

You may not associate Scouting with employability skills, but every activity, a climbing badge, leading an expedition, taking part in a Scout Gang Show or helping to run a meeting for younger Scouts, helps develop team-work, communication and problem solving. Research from Demos in 2014 revealed that being a Scout helps develop leadership, resilience and problem-solving skills, whilst demonstrating commitment.

Scouts are building their employability skills, by joining they commit to attend regularly, and by taking their Promise they show integrity and values.

As Scouts progress through the sections they learn about their own abilities, working with peers and self-motivation as they complete interest and activity badges. Some Scouts will

also get the opportunity to appear on stage in a Scout Gang Show where they will learn about working with people of different ages. While they are having fun, our Scouts don't necessarily realise they are learning all these skills!

Scouting is also about learning by doing – growing and developing by teaching others. For example, our Young Leaders help to run our Beaver, Cub and Scout sections. Young Leaders are encouraged to take responsibility for running part of the meeting programme such as a game or an activity. Being put in charge of a group of excitable 8-year-old Cub Scouts means having to be confident, able to communicate and flexible and adaptable should things not go to plan.

Young Leaders also can learn a lot about motivating others, especially in challenging conditions, i.e. when it's pouring rain at a weekend camp! This opportunity to take responsibility is rewarding, confidence boosting and a great way to learn about working with

other people – all essential for the workplace.

Lee Riley, 17, an Explorer Scout believes that Scouting will help him in his future career:

*"Looking forward, I know that the skills I have learnt in Scouting will help in lots of everyday situations. Being given the chance to lead younger Scouts has given me a sense of confidence and taught me essential leadership skills. From completing expeditions with my friends I've developed a tough and determined mind-set, after coping with hiking in the pouring rain and living off pasta for three days, any task seems achievable."*

The Scout Movement is a youth-led organisation and prides itself in giving Scouts ownership of their activities and the freedom to make their own decisions. This independence helps to build their resilience and their sense of responsibility.

Scouts aren't just prepared for camping, they are prepared for life.





# TAKING BACK CONTROL



YCSA provide holistic support through a variety of in-house services to ensure young people have maximum and effective support. The main focus of the organisation's work is to engage those young people deemed 'hard to reach', at risk of social exclusion and on the fringes of society.

Our intensive individual support forms the basis of much of the work we do at YCSA. Interventions are tailored to individual needs and are sensitive to young people's culture, religion, faith and family structures. Development workers provide intensive one to one support for young people accessing the service, working with them to create a development plan adhering to the SMART principles of goal setting. This intensive support allows us to map areas of need, interests, strengths and skill sets enabling us to build effective and engaging group

support programmes around the needs of young people.

YCSA operates three main programme strands in addition to providing support in counselling, violence against women and girls, and a volunteer's service. Our programmes deal with various vulnerabilities such as social isolation, lack of communication skills or employment and education prospects, anti-social behaviour and offending.

Our Ctrl Alt Delete programme seeks to reduce poverty and social isolation through supporting young people to take control of their lives, identify barriers to themselves and their communities, make adjustments and find alternatives towards positive destinations. By empowering young people, through a person-centred approach, in education, employment and social contexts we provide the framework for them to become valued members of society. Through our work in this programme we recognised that 'traditional' employability projects are not effective for us and do not provide the best form of support for young people accessing our support, we therefore set up Pro:Motion as an employability and personal development project with a difference.

Young people we support often draw comparisons between employment programmes and school, stating that the formal nature of them reminds them of a time in their life which they may have experienced negatively. Therefore we identified

this may not be the best method of supporting transitions from difficult education or life experiences to employment. Pro:Motion takes a youth work approach, supporting the personal and social development of participants. In doing so they are able to accept and embrace responsibilities required for this transition with these aims:

- Develop the skills, attitude and resilience required for education and employment.
- Improve aspirations, confidence and social skills.
- Improve skills and opportunities to access employment, training or volunteering.
- Provide a voice and platform for young people to have a positive impact on community and society.

Over the course of eight weeks, young people come together to create a social campaign to tackle stigma, labelling and discrimination based on YCSA's values and on our #Justlikeyou campaign. This creative process allows the participants to explore different ways of overcoming challenges associated with discrimination. Involving undertaking market research, designing and making a product, creating an ad campaign, and presenting it to a panel alongside exploratory workshops in identity, conflict resolution, decision making and goal setting, the project aims to give the participants the skills and aspirations needed to achieve positive opportunities in training,





**Youth Community Support Agency (YCSA) is a leading BME charity with 20 years of experience which continues to be at the forefront of community engagement with young people aged 10 to 25-years-old from ethnic minority backgrounds across Glasgow. Their mission is to make sure young people are empowered to take control of their own destiny.**

employment and business.

Our approach utilises strong partnerships with other organisations to draw on a wealth of skillsets to support young people. In between workshops we provide opportunities for organisations to have discussions with the participants about further opportunities, such as training, apprenticeships, social enterprise, volunteering, health and well-being, providing an increased awareness of opportunities available to them.

In working with MakLab in Glasgow they developed campaign ideas to combat issues they faced, improve social capital, empowerment and inclusion. They developed strong branding images and messages which they printed onto decals, t-shirts, tote bags and badges using the slogans "we all bleed the same way, we are all the same inside", "let's go equal!" and "stand up to bullying".

The next stage was to work alongside our talented volunteers to translate these ideas to a filmed ad campaign involving storyboarding, camera angles, location and shoot planning, and filming and production roles. The resulting film and materials will then to be shown to a panel of young people and community leaders from the third and public sectors striving for social change and through the facilitating of a focus group, plan the legacy for the project.

Through participating in the project we see many benefits for the young people:

- Improved communication, employment and creative skills
- Increased confidence, trust, aspirations and community engagement
- Reduced social isolation, discrimination and anti-social behaviour
- Raised skills in employment, education and social contexts having an overall positive impact on mental well being

Although the project is still in progress some of these benefits have already developed. One young person living with Asperger's syndrome spoke openly about his communication and social interaction difficulties. His

self-identified difficulties in making friends had an extremely negative impact on his life. Since beginning the project he has found his voice and feels able to communicate with the others, expressing how he feels to the group. He has been able to express himself through the drama elements and develop the tools necessary to have meaningful and beneficial social interactions. He has a clearer idea of his aspirations and will be pursuing an apprenticeship after the project through our partnership with Opportunities for All.

In finding how their strengths equate to skills required for employability, they have become more positive about their chances for the future.



# A SENSE OF SELF



**With only one in four registered blind and partially sighted people of working age in employment, RNIB Scotland is making key interventions in the lives of young people through its lottery-funded Looking to the Future project.**

A difficult time for young people can be the transition from education, at any level. However, for someone with sight-loss, there are different challenges that can stem from low self-esteem, low expectations and social isolation.

Looking to the Future has now worked with more than 100 young people on a one-to-one basis, proving to not only them, but colleges, universities and employers that most barriers can be easily overcome.

Despite that, 92 per cent of employers said that they find it either 'difficult' or 'impossible' to employ someone who is blind or partially sighted. By working with Transitions Officers on the project, young people are taught valuable skills and supported in obtaining work experience. Interview skills and confidence-building is also a crucial part of this, so when a young person with sight-loss does go for a job, they can demonstrate and educate the employer that they are not 'difficult' or 'impossible' to employ.

Through Looking to the Future, and other projects that promote similar ideals across the country, RNIB Scotland is committed to empowering young people and promoting self-determination. The project works alongside other services, such as education, to provide events, residential weekends and workshops for young people, where they can express themselves and connect with others who have similar experiences and interests.

In October 2016, Looking to the Future invited young people and their parents to an event at the University of Stirling. The focus of this day was to provide information, have an open discussion and increase optimism in an interactive and enjoyable way.

Dr Karen Wolffe, an employability expert from the United States, also ran a focus group with the parents and really drove home the message that parents can quite often put up barriers for their children by being overprotective.

This year, Looking to the Future is aiming to tackle the lack of social opportunities faced by young people with sight-loss. Isolation can be hugely detrimental to their confidence and ability to find work. While the focus will still be on regular one-to-one support, the project wants to connect young people and will be running events across the country throughout 2017.

Looking to the Future will also be reaching more young people than ever, as previously support could only be provided in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeenshire. That is no longer the case. Through electronic learning, accessible information, events in different areas and contact with a Transition Officer, young people with sight-loss aged 15 to 25 can now access support no matter where they live in Scotland.



**Supporting people  
with sight loss**



# SAYING #IWILL OPENS DOORS TO THE WORLD OF WORK



Those involved in the planning and delivery of Activity Agreements recognise the benefits of volunteering for both the individual involved and the community. They strive to offer meaningful volunteering opportunities for young people who are traditionally less likely to volunteer. Through these opportunities young people across Scotland are developing essential employability and core skills while gaining experience of the world of work.

Activity Agreements are programmes of tailored learning and activity which support those young people furthest from the labour market to prepare for formal learning, training and employment. They are delivered through local authority partnerships across all 32 council areas in Scotland. Each young person is supported by a personal mentor called a Trusted Professional during their involvement.

## CASE STUDY

Jodie and Lisa began volunteering as part of their Activity Agreement with Perth and Kinross Council. They are both young mums. As part of their individualised programmes of learning and activity both young women identified that they needed support, from other young mums, to remain engaged.

Activity Agreement staff at @Scott Street in Perth worked alongside Gowans Family Centre to help them form a group where young women dealing with the same life issues

could come together for support. Jodie and Lisa took a lead role in establishing and running the group, bringing in partner providers to deliver sessions such as positive parenting and healthy choices and offering peer support around issues such as confidence and separation anxiety.

Perth and Kinross Council is one of 21 local authorities who have made pledges to the #iwill Scotland campaign; to continue to promote and increase awareness of the benefits of volunteering among 16 to 19-year-olds participating in or progressing from an Activity Agreement.

Jodie and Lisa received one-to-one support from their Activity Agreement mentor, who helped them recognise and articulate the employability skills and attitudes they were developing. Through volunteering, Jodie and Lisa were able to demonstrate experience of the world of work and articulate their skills in communication, self-management, decision making and more. This helped the young women

secure positive destinations following their Activity Agreement – Lisa gained employment and Jodie went on to college to study childcare.

The #iwill campaign is a movement to encourage and empower all young people to have the opportunity to make a difference through activities such as volunteering, fundraising, campaigning and mentoring. Through meaningful involvement young people not only make a difference to their community or the environment, but benefit themselves through gaining 'soft' skills such as confidence, resilience and teamwork.

**2,301** young people participated in an Activity Agreement in 2016/17

**77%** of leavers progressed to employment, further learning or training



Scotland's party leaders come together for #iwill to support young people



**Self-management**



**Problem solving**

# **YOUTH WORK BUILDS THE SKILLS EMPLOYERS NEED**



**Communication and  
leadership skills**



**Resilience**



**Positive attitude**



**Team working**



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