

SUPPORTING YOUTH WORK IN SCOTLAND

AUTUMN 2017

THE LINK

WITH YOUTH IN MIND Positive mental health and wellbeing

**Scotland's
Chief Medical
Officer talks
about the
vital role of
youth work**

**Youth action
changes mental
health policy**

**Hip hop gives a
voice to isolation**

YouthLink
Scotland
The national agency for youth work

#youthworkchangeslives





Catherine Calderwood, Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, believes that youth work can play an important role in the positive mental health and wellbeing of Scotland's young people.



As Chief Medical Officer, I know that in driving forward improvements to ensure a health service fit to meet the challenges of the future, we must promote health and wellbeing as a means of preventing illness. Supporting children and young people to develop the tools to optimise their own mental and physical wellbeing is an important investment in the future.

The Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027 describes an ambitious ten year vision with prevention and early intervention as one of its five key themes. It has 20 ambitions and 40 actions that apply across the population, and many of these are targeted at children and young people.

While we have improved Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), we are determined to go further. Demand for this specialism is continuing to increase and services could work together more effectively, or to intervene early. We need to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people. Sometimes CAMHS is the right route, and at other times, an alternative would be better. We will look at the whole system, recognising the importance of specialist services but also the importance of early interventions at a community level.

We will ensure that wellbeing is embedded across services and that staff are confident to support a child or young person with their mental wellbeing. It is vital to prevent the development of mental health problems and to step in promptly if they do develop.

YOUTH WORK OPPORTUNITIES

Mental health and wellbeing need to be central in our new public health priorities and we want to prioritise the physical health of people with

mental health problems. We want to emphasise the importance of physical activity and healthy socialising in improving the mental wellbeing of young people.

Youth work provides many opportunities to advance these ambitions. We know that many of its components contribute to positive mental health and wellbeing. Physical activity and a daily routine help mental functioning whilst work can provide a sense of purpose and belonging that enhances self-esteem and personal resilience.

Opportunities for face-to-face socialising are important in creating connections, developing friendships and a sense of self. This is particularly important in our modern world of social media and virtual interaction.

The state of our mental and physical health affects us all. Understanding what is personally nurturing and protective allows us all to flourish. Youth work can provide the place for that self-development, setting young people on a healthier and happier future trajectory.

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It is clear that youth mental health in Scotland is at a tipping point. We only need to look at the waiting lists

for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. Over the last decade, the issue has been exacerbated by the rise of social media, online bullying and increased academic and economic pressures on young people and families. In particular, it seems to be prevalent in times of transition, from childhood to adolescence and adolescence to adulthood. These are exploratory and uncertain times, where our young people are at their most uncertain and vulnerable. It is also clear that youth work, with other educational interfaces, is at the front line of providing support and advice. The relationships that are built between youth worker and young person mean that young

people feel they can unload and speak about their feelings and issues. Making significant improvements to the mental health and wellbeing of our young people will not just take government policy intervention and resource, it will require a new approach, one that utilises the effective practice and programmes delivered by the youth work sector and other practitioners, in partnership with government, the NHS, schools and the third sector.

Let us all work together to help our young people grow and develop into healthy and happy adults

Jim Sweeney MBE, Chief Executive, YouthLink Scotland

Equipped for a bright future



David Keenan recalls his journey from emotional despair to personal and academic support, helped by his involvement in youth work.

It was sometime around February 2013 that I sat in my room crying into my hands. A horrible sensation of unease crept up my back and my lungs and chest felt heavy, bearing the weight of the emotional torrent that I was experiencing. That night I had just ran out of my job in a call centre in a panic. I felt that I could burst at any moment and couldn't stand being in that office any longer. I had felt like this for some time. Every day was as miserable as the next. I knew that something wasn't right, I knew that I had to get help.

At school I was merely a numb, empty shell of a person who couldn't help but look glum. Everyone from teachers to classmates commented on my unhappy demeanour. Home wasn't a happy place for me either. My dad, with whom I am now estranged, has his own mental health issues which I can empathise with. He took his anger out on us, and made us as miserable as him. That I could not empathise with.

His drinking and fits of rage created an unnerving atmosphere to say the least. My relationship with my father is, in part, the root of my woes. Home wasn't a place where I could find solace: it was there that I would hide in my room night after night whilst my thoughts tormented me.

That night in February, I reached out for help. I sent a message to a youth worker who I knew from being a member of the Dundee Youth Council. His name was Allan Howieson. He agreed to meet me in school for a chat and that was when I opened up to someone for the first time and started the journey towards getting better.

Allan accompanied me to my appointments with the GP, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and The Corner Youth Service. He met with me on a regular basis, and his support was invaluable in getting me through that tumultuous time.

Working with Allan and being a youth volunteer was vital for me in coping with my depression and anxiety. It helped me look towards the future with a sense of optimism. If I hadn't been involved with youth work before, I would never have got help. I did well in school, excelling in humanities subjects. I was reasonably well behaved, I wasn't seen as a problem and therefore, I could have slipped

through the net quite easily. But I didn't.

Being involved with youth work nurtured my communication and employability skills - it gave me the space to get away from home and school and to just be myself. It changed my life, and I still feel the benefits four years later.

When I reached out to Allan in February 2013, I was 17 years old and didn't have sight of the future. That year I was well enough to start my undergraduate degree in Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Stirling. I am now 22 and have just moved back home to Dundee.

I spent four years living in Stirling, studying for three. I took a year out in 2016 as I was elected President of the Students' Union. I spent that year leading work on student rent prices and raising awareness of sexual violence and misconduct. Both pieces of work won national awards. Today, as I write this article, it is the first day of my fourth year at university. On that February night I never thought I would make it this far, but I did. I made it because I had youth work helping me through the toughest of times. I made it because youth work equipped me for the future.

Youth work is key to Mental health policy

“Our generation’s epidemic.”

This is how Scottish Youth Parliament described the crisis in young people’s mental health in their recent awareness campaign. It is a crisis and we are yet to find a set of co-ordinated solutions. There is a harrowing cost to not getting this right, as the individual experiences of young people demonstrate. Poor mental health affects attainment and the ability to form positive relationships, increases isolation and can destroy a young person’s happiness, as well as threaten their future opportunities. Failing to get it right means fewer young people from this generation will play a meaningful role in their communities and the economy.

What is the problem?

“The Scottish Government estimate two thirds of people who would benefit from treatment for a mental illness are not being currently supported, while mental health illness can reduce life expectancy by up to 20 years.”¹

Mental health has become a priority for our young people and youth work is well placed to respond.

Research has shown that the adolescent brain is more prone to developing mental health problems, with 75% of mental health conditions onset before the age of 24.² This physiological susceptibility to negative emotions and peer pressure means that it is crucial that young people have spaces that support risk-taking. Youth work offers an avenue for this as it is asset-orientated and starts from where young people are. By engaging with youth work, young people become resilient and optimistic for the future, consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control. Youth workers are in the unique position of working

within long-term, holistic, trusting relationships with young people.

YouthLink Scotland’s Scottish Parliament Election 2016 Manifesto called for a national review of young people’s mental health services and support, to include youth work’s contribution to early intervention and prevention.

The youth work sector understands that mental health problems and support are experienced differently by different demographics. Research by the Mental Health Foundation has shown that social characteristics, such as gender, disability, age, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation and family status influence both the rates and the way in which mental health problems are presented, as well as access to services.³ The Prince’s Trust found that young women are significantly more likely to face symptoms of mental ill health than young men.⁴ We also know that young people in residential care, those in prison and young asylum seekers have different needs and, as a result of their circumstances, will have access to a different set of services.

The central ambition of the National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019 is that all young people, in every part of Scotland, should have access to high-quality and effective youth work practice.⁵ Working towards this ambition will likely alleviate pressure on primary care services and reduce the number of crisis interventions for young people.

Continued funding of youth work, including investment in CPD for youth workers, could contribute to the provision of preventative mental health work. We want to see mental health services that suit the needs of young people, that are easy to access, and that change and develop within the context of the changing society

we live in. There is also potential for more informal community-based projects that can help to improve resilience to stress and mental illness, delivered with a youth work approach.

What is the current Scottish Government policy?

In spring 2017, Scottish Government published a new 10-year Mental Health Strategy which was informed by 600 responses to a public consultation. With a financial commitment of £300 million in the first five years of the strategy, the Scottish Government have committed to deliver 40 actions⁶ within the lifetime of the Strategy, and of particular interest to the youth work sector are:

- Review Personal and Social Education (PSE), the role of pastoral guidance in local authority schools, and services for counselling for children and young people.
- Roll out improved mental health training for those who support young people in educational settings.
- Commission the development of a matrix of evidence-based interventions to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Work with partners to develop systems and multi-agency pathways that work in a co-ordinated way to support children’s mental health and wellbeing.
- Work with employers on how they can act to protect and improve mental health, and support employees experiencing poor mental health.



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Early Intervention and Prevention: Scottish Government Ambitions

- Every child and young person to have appropriate access to emotional and mental well-being support in school.
- Appropriate, evidence-based, parenting programmes should be available across Scotland.
- Evidence-based interventions to address behavioural and emotional issues in children and young people should be available across Scotland.
- Mental health support and treatment for young people involved in offending who have mental health problems should be available across Scotland.
- Mental health training for non-mental health staff should be available across health and social care services.
- Training in first aid approaches for mental health should become as common as physical first aid.

(Scottish Government Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027)

Where might we be in 10 years' time?

YouthLink Scotland hopes that in 10 years' time, mental health will be considered as important as physical health. That young people will feel no stigma in getting help when they are unwell. And that as a society, we look after our mental health in the same way we are encouraged to look after our physical health. In 10 years, mental health services should be woven throughout government departments, priorities and strategies in a meaningful and functional way. A multi-agency approach should be taken with recognition given to the many services that contribute to prevention and intervention work, and resources should be allocated accordingly. The approach should be holistic, person-centred, wellbeing focused, have regular in-built service evaluation with users, funded efficiently. Youth work should be key in promoting positive mental wellbeing and providing early intervention support to young people in need.



¹<https://beta.gov.scot/news/new-mental-health-strategy/>

² Mental Health Foundation, *Poverty and mental health: A review to inform the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Anti-Poverty Strategy*, 2016, p. 23

³ Mental Health Foundation, *Poverty and mental health: A review to inform the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Anti-Poverty Strategy*, 2016, p. 9

⁴ The Prince's Trust Macquarie, *Youth Index 2014*, <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/news-views/youth-index-2014>

⁵ Scottish Government/Education Scotland/YouthLink Scotland, *National Youth Work Strategy 2014-19*

⁶ Scottish Government, *Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027*, 2017, p4-6

Childhood trauma and mental health

In May 2017, the Scottish Government held a screening of the documentary 'Resilience'. It tells the story of two doctors in the United States in the 1990s who stumbled into one of the biggest medical discoveries of a generation.

Drs Anda and Felitti undertook a large-scale study of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), such as abuse, neglect, parental conflict, parental mental illness, and parental substance abuse. They found that ACEs are much more common than often assumed, and they're strongly linked to mental and physical health problems, difficulties in school, and being a perpetrator or victim of violence.

The film shares latest evidence on how early adversity affects the structure and function of children's developing brains, impacting on their health and behaviour. Without intervention, this can lead to a host of negative outcomes in adulthood.

'Resilience' shows how services and communities in the US are using ACEs evidence to better support children and parents, with significant improvements in outcomes and financial savings.

This Scottish Government screening of 'Resilience' was part of a Scotland-wide tour of the film organised by two small organisations, Connected Baby and ReAttachment, in conjunction with NHS Health Scotland.

Sara Dodds, who organised the Scottish Government screening, said:

"Although hard-hitting, the film is ultimately a positive, hopeful message. A focus on ACEs is not just about looking at negative experiences in childhood but also the protective factors in people's lives. 'Resilience'

shows how health services, schools, communities and others can support children's resilience and prevent ACEs by supporting parents who experienced adversity themselves."

Louise Scott, from Education Analytical Services, who attended the screening said:

"What the film demonstrated to me was that ACEs are everywhere and many of us are likely to have experienced at least one. So no matter what work we do, whether looking at targeted or universal services, child or adult age groups, it needs to be informed by an understanding of the impact of childhood trauma. Only then will we have a society that can support the most vulnerable amongst us."

What are Adverse Childhood Experiences?

Adverse Childhood Experiences include:

- being the victim of abuse (physical, sexual and/or emotional) or neglect (physical and emotional)
- growing up in a household with adults experiencing alcohol and drug use problems, mental health conditions, domestic violence or criminal behavior resulting in incarceration.

The original US study found that ACEs were common, with almost two-thirds of participants experiencing at

Preventing ACEs in future generations could reduce levels of:



Heroin/crack cocaine use (lifetime) by 66%



Incarceration (lifetime) by 65%



Violence perpetration (past year) by 60%



Violence victimisation (past year) by 57%



Cannabis use (lifetime) by 42%



Unintended teen pregnancy by 41%



High-risk drinking (current) by 35%



Early sex (before age 16) by 31%



Smoking tobacco or e-cigarettes (current) by 24%



Poor diet (current; <2 fruit & veg portions daily) by 16%



- risky health behaviours (e.g. people who have experienced four or more ACEs were almost four times more likely to smoke and to drink heavily compared to people with no ACEs)
- premature mortality (e.g. men who had experienced two or more ACEs had a 57% increased risk of death than men who had experienced no ACEs)
- suicide (e.g. increased suicide risk has been shown to be linked to the presence of childhood adversity by age seven)
- being a perpetrator of crime (e.g. people who have experienced four or more ACEs were almost nine times more likely to be incarcerated compared to people with no ACEs)
- being a victim of crime (e.g. people with ACEs have been found to be at greater risk of intimate partner violence)
- education/employment (e.g. those with higher ACEs have been found to be at greater risk of poorer educational and employment outcomes)

Scottish context

There are a wide range of policies and practices implemented in Scotland to prevent adversity in childhood and mitigate their impacts. However, there have been calls for a greater focus on ACEs across all policies and services, both those with a focus on children and adults.

A Scottish ACEs Hub has recently been established by NHS Health Scotland to bring people together from different sectors – including representation from Scottish Government – to look at how Scotland can better prevent ACEs and mitigate their impact. Scottish Government also has an ACEs Network, which brings together people from different policy areas to learn about ACEs and discuss policy responses.



least one ACE and more than one in 5 experiencing three or more ACEs.

There have been no Scottish ACE surveys to date but it is reasonable to assume, however, that prevalence would be similar to England or Wales.

In a representative English survey, almost 50% reported experiencing at least one ACE and over 8% reported experiencing four or more.

In the Welsh survey, almost 50% of people reported experiencing at least one ACE and 14% reported experiencing four or more:

- 23% had experienced verbal abuse
- 17% had experienced physical abuse
- 10% had experienced sexual abuse
- 20% had experienced parental separation
- 16% domestic violence
- 14% has a parent with a mental illness
- 14% parental alcohol abuse
- 5% parental drug use
- 5% had a parent in prison

Although these studies found ACEs were reported across the whole population, having high numbers of ACEs was found to be related to deprivation, with higher proportions of

people in the most deprived quintile reporting four or more ACEs.

Impact of ACEs

ACEs are experiences during the first 18 years of life, but the evidence demonstrates that ACEs exert an influence throughout life. Consideration of ACEs is crucial to thinking about how to improve the lives of children and young people, to support better transitions into adulthood, and achieve good outcomes for all adults.

Impacts in adulthood

ACEs lead to a range of poorer health (physical and mental) and life outcomes (education, employment and crime). ACEs have been found to be associated with:

- poorer mental wellbeing (e.g. risk of low life satisfaction and low mental wellbeing have been shown to increase with the number of ACEs experienced)
- mental illness (e.g. the role of ACEs such as abuse and neglect appear to have a strong effect on the development of Borderline Personality Disorder)
- physical illness (e.g. strong relationship between number of ACEs and the risk of developing disease and major illness)

A youth work vision without barriers

Delivering youth work within a custodial environment is challenging, but what contribution can it make to young people's mental health and learning? Barnardo's Scotland talks about the value of a youth work approach.

HMP Young Offender's Institution in Polmont is Scotland's national custodial provision for young people in custody aged 16-21 years, who are awaiting trial or serving a custodial sentence.

Barnardo's Scotland has been the main service provider of youth work within the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) since 2010, with its main aim to:

Support the development of young men and women aged 16-21 who are in custody - to enhance their social skills and personal development and support their reintegration back into the community upon release (Barnardo's Scotland 2013).

Young people in custody are some of the most disadvantaged in Scotland. Most have been impacted by Adverse Childhood Experiences, and have faced multiple challenges in their short lives. These challenges will continue to have a major impact on their lives, their offending behaviour and our communities unless we begin

to work with the root causes of their behaviour.

Initial research from SPS indicates the pre-existing vulnerabilities these young people face include:

Bereavement - 90% have experienced the death of a family member with 77% of these traumatic bereavements including murder and suicide.

Violence/Domestic Abuse are common - 62% have had more than five arrests, 42% have been physically attacked or badly beaten.

Learning Difficulties, Brain Injury and School Exclusion also play a large part - 42% have been suspended from school more than four times. 36% are Looked After and have been removed from their family of origin.

Risk-Taking Behaviour - 42% have had a parent in prison, and 40% had their first drink before the age of 12.

Suffice to say, these young people have complex needs, all of which impacts on their mental health.

Is youth work and the approach we use best placed to support this group of young people who have very complex and challenging needs?

Barnardo's Scotland response would be 'yes', the youth work approach has a valuable contribution to make in both directly supporting young people in custody and, as they are

released back into our communities, supporting the organisations who work with these young people. Using this informal learning approach and targeted support improves the confidence and resilience of these young people, which in turn, improves their view of themselves, which ultimately improves their mental health and their ability to lead a more fulfilling, positive life.

In recent years youth work has also been recognised as an effective method of engaging, both inside and outside of a custodial setting, with young people who offend.

However, despite being recognised as a key stakeholder within current youth policy, youth work still has difficulty in being recognised as contributing to positive outcomes for these young people.

The delivery of youth work within the prison has shown how effective the approach is in engaging this group of hard to reach young people into learning.

But the question is not if youth work can do this. The real question is whether, within this current financial climate, youth work has the capacity to target this group of young people and are other services willing to recognise the value of the youth work approach?



Fun, laughter and resilience!



For the past four years **YMCA Edinburgh** has been supporting volunteers to provide individual mentoring to 30 vulnerable children and young people across Edinburgh, through the Plusone Programme.

Over the last six months they have started to recruit and train volunteers to provide 20 individual, open-ended, mentoring relationships to children and young people who are 'looked after'¹ at home, through the national intandem mentoring programme, funded by the Scottish Government.

Now, thanks to Cashback for Communities funding, YMCA Edinburgh are going to be able to offer groupwork to all of these children and young people. As well as a wide range of general youth club activities, they will offer two structured activities: Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) for children and young people, and Laughter Yoga for children and young people.

There is promising evidence that children and young people, as well

as adults, who participate in either of these activities develop increased resilience. It helps them to cope with physiological, psychosocial and behavioural conditions and other challenges they face in life.

The children and young people mentored by YMCA Edinburgh have all experienced significant levels of adversity which, without support to develop resilience, could very likely have a life-long impact, as shown by the Adverse Childhood Experiences study (ACE). This study first linked specific adverse childhood experience, such as verbal, mental and physical abuse, being exposed to alcoholism, drug use and domestic violence at home, with health harming behaviours and long-term health outcomes.

ACE research has now been carried out in different communities across the world including in England and Wales. This research continues to demonstrate a clear link between ACE, health harming behaviours and long-term physical and mental health.

In Scotland, the 'Polishing the Diamonds' Report, published by the Scottish Public Health Network in 2016, suggests that: Resilience has been defined as a 'positive adaptive response in the face of significant adversity.' It is thought to transform 'toxic stress' into 'tolerable stress.'

Children who end up doing well despite adversity have usually had at least one stable committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver or other adult. This seems to buffer them from development disruption and builds skills such as the ability to plan, monitor and regulate behaviour and adapt to changing circumstances.

At YMCA Edinburgh they are looking forward to seeing whether providing the experience of mindfulness and/or laughter yoga, in addition to one-to-one mentoring, further supports the capacity of those they are working with to develop their resilience and achieve their full potential. And, of course, there is the prospect of having lots of fun and laughter!

¹'Looked after at home', subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order (CSO) while continuing to live in their usual place of residence with parent(s) or legal guardian.



A partnership of the medical and holistic

The positive influence of Duke of Edinburgh's Award and Junior Awards Scheme for Schools (JASS), in partnership with NHS Lothian is achieving better mental health outcomes for young people.

Friends of the Award (FOTA) is a registered charity who aim to provide every young person in Edinburgh and the Lothians the opportunity to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) and Junior Award Scheme for Schools (JASS).

DofE and JASS are certified learning programmes designed to promote wider achievement across all four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence. They increase pupils' confidence, communication skills and ability to work in a team. That enables young people to become motivated learners, determined to succeed and contribute to their society. As open and flexible awards, JASS and DofE are achievable by all young people.

JASS

FOTA designed JASS to support the transition from primary into secondary education for 10 to 14-year-olds. We support schools to deliver JASS, developing the whole individual by offering recognition in four areas: physical activity (Get Active, Stay Active), personal interests (My Interests), working for the

community or environment (Me and My World) and an outdoor challenge (Adventure). Participants move from Bronze to Silver and then to Gold, with increasing levels of commitment, learning, and challenge.

DofE

DofE is available for 14 to 25-year-olds through school or one of our projects, which extend access to DofE to young people who wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity. These include our Youth Development Project, Midlothian Schools Project and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Project.

DofE in CAMHS

The CAMHS Project has worked in partnership with NHS Lothian since 2006 to support young people in their recovery from, or management of, mental health conditions. This project provides evidence for the clear benefits of these programmes on young people's mental health and well-being. We provide flexible support to engage in activities in the community. Activities fall under four headings: volunteering, physical, skill and going on expedition. Patients are supported to engage and progress through Bronze, Silver and Gold awards at their own pace, gaining a certificate for each section they complete.

"Working towards the Award is hugely beneficial for the young people. It provides not only the opportunity to explore and develop both new and existing areas of interest, but to do so in a focused and structured way. Participating in activities enables young people to develop skills in a very natural way whilst building confidence and self-esteem. Being able to engage with an organisation outwith mental health services is supporting engagement with the local community. This can be challenging for young people experiencing mental ill health, who are so vulnerable to social isolation. The formal recognition of the Award also evidences achievements that they can use towards future education and employment applications. I feel that engaging with the Award has been an invaluable contribution in the ongoing recovery of many of the young people who have taken part."

Julie, an OT for CAMHS

"I definitely feel a lot more confident from doing DofE. A year ago I wouldn't talk to people other than nodding or shaking my head. This has made a huge difference for me. It kind of forces you to do things you didn't think you could do."

Kim (CAMHS patient), who completed her Bronze Award and is starting Silver





Promoting respect, challenging bullying

According to anti-bullying charity, **respectme**, youth workers are in a particularly unique position to create change. As adults who are often not seen as traditional authority figures, they can be in a position to identify bullying behaviour and be the person that a child or young person decides to disclose bullying behaviour to.

In 2014 respectme carried out research into bullying in Scotland and found that among the 8000 young people who were involved, 30% had been bullied in the last year. This tells us that, while there are many examples where bullying is being effectively addressed, the lives of too many young people are still being undermined by the detrimental impact of bullying.

The impact of bullying on young people

Bullying can have both long and short-term effects on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. Being bullied can be traumatic for those involved and will impact on people in different ways. Having an understanding of these potential impacts helps all adults to be better equipped to address bullying and to support the person being bullied.

For children and young people who have been bullied, the fear and anticipation of further bullying can affect their ability to be themselves and interact with others in a healthy way. They may change their behaviour by dressing differently, or doing things that go against the grain of who they are and what they believe, in order to fit in.

They may be frightened to go out with friends or participate in activities, feeling that to withdraw from the situation is the best prevention. Or they may resist bullying by becoming aggressive and violent towards others, lashing out to prevent people from getting too close, or from finding themselves in a situation where they're being bullied again.

Fundamentally, children and young people often feel that bullying has 'taken something away from them', what we define as their 'agency' – their confidence, self-esteem and sense of control of their lives. When bullying strips agency away, there can be significant implications for the mental health and wellbeing of young people - manifesting in mental health problems like self-harm, eating disorders and in some cases, suicide.

Responding to bullying – the role of youth workers

The child-centred approaches at the heart of youth work practice are essential to building confidence and resilience in young people and fostering cultures of respect in the way young people relate to each other. It is in these environments that bullying cannot thrive. The challenge lies in how we work with young people to acknowledge what has been happening and to help them regain their sense of self, balance and control.

There isn't any single approach when responding to bullying, and what works for one child or situation, may not work for another. Children and young people value choices. If you are unsure of how to respond or are not sure what will work, explore the options. Ask them what they think would happen if you follow a certain course of action, and explore alternatives. The more they talk to you, the more they will feel listened to and included.

As Scotland's anti-bullying service, we provide a range of free resources and training for all with a role to play in children and young people's lives including parents and carers.

Youth work organisation, Youth Community Support Agency, are tackling social isolation by empowering young people from black and minority ethnic communities in Glasgow through the power of theatre and music.

Hip hop giving voice to isolation and loneliness



Step-K

“Have you ever been bullied to submission? No one fully wished to listen.

And you feel like you’re the only kid’s that living in the solar system prison and no one else is there?”

These are the opening lines of Step K’s latest track ‘Bully Song’, written and recorded as part of the Youth Community Support Agency’s (YCSA) REPRESENT Media Workshops. It gives an insight into the loneliness and isolation the teenager from Slovakia has experienced growing up in Govanhill, Glasgow.

“Let me tell you for the first four years in school, never had a friend you see

Every single person freaking hated and rejected me,

They waited and they heckled me, blamed and disrespected me,

Teachers always made them sit next to me.

This is the kind of thing constantly ruins lives

It’s an emotion you never see with human eyes,

And you disguise yourself, trying to act fine,

But depressed inside, saying yes to suicide.”

In the two years we have worked with Step K at YCSA, he has never spoken to us about his mental health. He has only ever broached the subject through his music. When he first started coming he was disengaged from school and bored. In group work settings he was shy and reserved. Then he started writing and performing rap in an environment he trusted.

Step K’s confidence grew, his literacy improved and he started figuring out what he wanted to say. Suddenly, he had permission to express his emotions and thoughts in a way that felt empowering. He was granted time to better understand his experiences and was encouraged to share them with others in his own style.

And that’s why creative arts in youth work are so important. They allow

teenagers and young adults to be angry, frustrated, sad, confused, dejected – emotions that adults often misinterpret and young people suppress. More than that, creative arts invite these emotions in, give them space to be explored and offer a positive channel for them. This prevents more serious mental illness and the potential for anti-social behaviour related to poor mental health.

REPRESENT Media has become particularly important for young men from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds, where issues of mental health are often shrouded in stigma or simply not talked about. In a relaxed environment, they learn song writing, performance, recording and production.

By voluntarily engaging in something they really care about, they build relationships, develop trust and figure out tools and techniques to support their mental wellbeing. They are accepted fully, their individuality is celebrated and they are treated with respect. The transformative potential of this approach can be seen clearly

in the second half of Step K's song:

*"But that's the wrong decision.
Fight for who you are no matter the
position."*

*Quit hating women.
While you're at it, quit hating people.
Make the world better, treat everyone
equal."*

*Just trying to help people who get
hated and heckled."*

*Tell someone if you get bullied it will
help.
You're perfect the way you are.
Believe in yourself."*

For Step K, writing rap music is his way of communicating with others about things that are difficult. It allows him to feel confident, to be listened to and to offer support to others. And that's why youth work matters - it is uniquely placed to support young people to figure out who they are in a way that feels right to them.

Hip hop artist and producer Ashtronmik, who developed the REPRESENT Media workshops at YCSA, recently talked to BBC The Social about the power of Hip Hop in youth work. When reflecting on the power of youth work he says:

"In my opinion youth work works best when there is no authority over the young people and they can be free to behave as who they really are. What I have found to be effective is when the youth worker can set a positive example for the young people to follow voluntarily."

"Hip-hop culture and music has always provided the right climate for this to be true, especially because everyone involved has a similar mindset and a respect for lyrical and musical skill. It breaks down barriers between races, nationalities, religions etc and allows you to honestly speak about real issues that affect you every day without the usual stigma."

This holistic, youth-led, responsive approach is reflected through all aspects of our work at YCSA. Whether it is photography or making a documentary, family support sessions or free counselling - everything we do is guided by the following key principles:

Trust: We build trust with the young people by providing consistency,

listening to them and taking their ideas forward thus giving them agency over their circumstances.

Challenge: We create opportunities for young people they wouldn't have otherwise so that they can challenge themselves and discover what they are capable of.

Equality: Equality is not treating everyone the same, it is treating everyone as an individual with strengths, skills, needs and difficulties. We accept each other and young people for who they are; we are interested in their experiences, we acknowledge their contributions and we listen to them.

Potential: We believe in the potential of every young person, volunteer and staff member and support them to understand and pursue it in a way that is relevant to them.

Support: Staff support each other and young people through mindfulness sessions and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy techniques, guided by our counsellor. We offer a safe space for young people to come to where they can be themselves, be listened to and given tools to overcome any difficulties they may face.

Empower: We create activities for young people based on their interests, we support their passions and we look for opportunities for them to develop them further. The young person is put at the centre of decisions and actions that affect them.

Responsibility: We support young people to develop resilience, self-awareness and positive attitudes and behaviours so they are able to respond to the challenges they face.

What makes this different to other spaces in young people's lives such as school or at home?

We asked Step K:

"At YCSA there are people who I truly trust. I am not shy there and I can do what I want. I think my confidence has got high. So far I have had the chance to do my first ever music video, make my own music and talk to different people with more confidence in myself."

That's how youth work changes lives.



Step-K and M-staff



Resilience Girlguiding

Mental health isn't always an easy topic to talk about. That's why Girlguiding Scotland has been supporting its young members to take the lead and get talking with Think Resilient – an innovative peer education programme to tackle stigma and promote wellbeing.

Since launching Think Resilient last year, Girlguiding Scotland's network of Peer Educators has helped more than 500 girls to talk about positive mental wellbeing. Specially trained Peer Educators, members aged 14 to 25, have been running Think Resilient sessions with Brownie, Guide and Senior Section units across Scotland.

Following the success of the programme's first year, Girlguiding Scotland hopes to help even more girls talk about mental health in the year ahead.

Developed in partnership with mental health charity Young Minds, Think Resilient aims to help girls aged 10 and over to boost their mental

wellbeing, find positive ways to deal with day to day pressures and encourage them to speak up.

Research by Girlguiding has highlighted mental health as a top concern for girls, with 69% of girls aged 7 to 21 saying they feel they are not good enough, while over half of girls in the same age group said they would not seek help because they are not comfortable talking about their feelings.

Mhairi MacKay, aged 23, from Midlothian, the Lead Volunteer for Peer Education across the UK, as well a leader with her local Brownie unit, shares why she thinks the peer-led approach is so successful:

“Peer Education empowers and develops young women to run thought-provoking and fun activities, helping Brownies, Guides and members of the Senior Section to explore how they can deal with challenging situations in life better, using resilience-building techniques.”

Katie-Rebecca Whitham, aged 21, a Guide Leader, Senior Section Advisor and Peer Educator in Dundee, said:

“I think it's incredibly important to give girls a safe space to talk about important issues like mental health. From personal experience, I know how hard it can be to need help but feel alone and that's why I feel that Think Resilient is so important, to make sure the girls know that it's okay to talk about worries and problems.”

Think Resilient gives girls the tools to build up resilience and learn healthy ways to cope with everyday pressures. It also reminds girls that they're not alone, that mental health is an important topic to be able to talk about and that it's essential to ask for help if they're struggling.”

Peer education is just one of the ways Girlguiding Scotland supports girls and young women to use their voice and grow in confidence. The varied programme for girls aged 5 to 25 includes a wide range of activities, from outdoor adventure to social action, advocacy to international travel.





Understanding difference

Dyslexia is a learning 'difference', which means that the brain can approach things in a different way to other people. Dyslexia Scotland believes that for young people affected by dyslexia, frustration and low self-esteem can lead to a range of problems.

Dyslexia can affect the way young people communicate and it is different for everyone. Unidentified or unsupported, dyslexia in young people can result in low self-esteem, stress, behavioural problems, poor mental health and underachievement. This can manifest as a range of emotions:

Anger - from frustration that they, and others, do not understand dyslexia.

Negativity - they feel their efforts make no difference and it is only luck if they succeed. Self-esteem is low and they always predict the worst. They feel that others judge them negatively and compare themselves less favourably with peers and siblings.

Anxiety - their experience of failure leads them to think they will fail again.

Hopelessness - 'why should I bother?' thoughts, possibly leading to giving up.

Depression - anger turns itself inwards. People may feel alone because they are not understood. Some people may isolate themselves because of their low self-esteem and feelings of not being 'good enough'. Switching off and giving up leads to further negative thinking.

What are the effects of these feelings?

Some young people may experience high levels of stress, behavioural problems and poor mental health:

- Children in particular may be bullied or picked on by others
- Low self-esteem leads to lack of courage to try new ways round problems
- Some may not be able to reach their potential without appropriate support and different ways of working
- Having to work harder than others do to achieve the same things may lead to becoming overtired

Young people seeking employment or who are in the workplace may not have told colleagues or managers that they have dyslexia and will feel stressed about being 'found out'.

Some might do more work than others, or attempt to hide the things they find difficult. They may try to compensate for these things by doing more things in other areas in which they are stronger.

Dyslexia Scotland is working both nationally and at community-based level to reach the one in 10 young people in Scotland with dyslexia. The organisation is helping them to understand and manage their learning difference, promoting the positive skills that many people with dyslexia have, and enabling them to reach their potential.

Dyslexia Scotland is leading the way with a world-first dyslexia website for young people launching later this year. The resource will provide young people with age-relevant information and support on dyslexia, and peer-led guidance by Young Ambassadors on strategies to help young people succeed, increase their resilience and mitigate against the frustrations and anxiety that can come from feeling isolated and misunderstood.

Tackling the issue from other angles, our redesigned Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit for educators, along with free online professional development modules are helping to ensure that Scotland's learning establishments are delivering inclusive practice, enabling young people with dyslexia to thrive and participate in learning.

Of course many young people will struggle with dyslexia, or may not be aware how it's affecting their mental health and wellbeing. Youth workers can play a vital role in recognising and supporting this. Dyslexia Scotland provides services and resources for practitioners including an Education Conference, a national helpline and free downloadable fact sheets.

Dyslexia Scotland would welcome the opportunity to connect more with colleagues in the youth work sector, to work together in helping Scotland's one in 10 dyslexic young people become more confident, resilient and optimistic for their future.

Giving voice to our mental health



LGBT Youth Scotland's **'Mind Our Health'** campaign was developed by the team of youth activists on our Mental Health Youth Commission. The aim of the campaign was to research the impact of mental health issues on LGBT young people. It challenged healthcare professionals to better understand the experiences of young LGBT people accessing services. Zee, one of the young people involved in the campaign development, shared some insights from the Commission:

"There are a lot of other charities and youth organisations focusing on mental health, and so our work in the Commission has helped to get the LGBT+ voice and experience on mental health heard and acknowledged by the wider public."

Our Life in Scotland research found that as many as 40% of LGBT young people consider themselves to have a mental health problem. The Commission's research showed this was most often the result of young peoples' experiences of prejudice, discrimination, or pressures to conform to gender norms.

The Commission wanted to tackle some of the most prevalent misconceptions, including the fact that healthcare professionals often mistakenly believe that it is young people's LGBT+ identities that cause mental health issues, as opposed to the discrimination that they face from others because of their LGBT+ identity negatively impacting their mental health.

Support with rights

Another key issue their research identified was a lack of knowledge among young people about their rights, when accessing support services which, as a result, leaves them unsure whether the service that they are accessing is treating them fairly. Zee explained:

"With our campaign work we wanted to educate young people and practitioners alike, to ensure that LGBT+ young people feel safe and confident accessing help."

The campaign took a targeted approach, with three clearly-defined phases, each focusing on a different aspect of the issues identified during the research stage.

The Commission began by designing eight eye-catching infographics, to highlight the most striking findings, that would be easily shareable on social media. These also appeared prominently on placards carried by young people at the Edinburgh and Glasgow Pride marches.

Phase two produced a glossy fold-out leaflet which succinctly explains the five key rights that young people have when accessing support, for example:

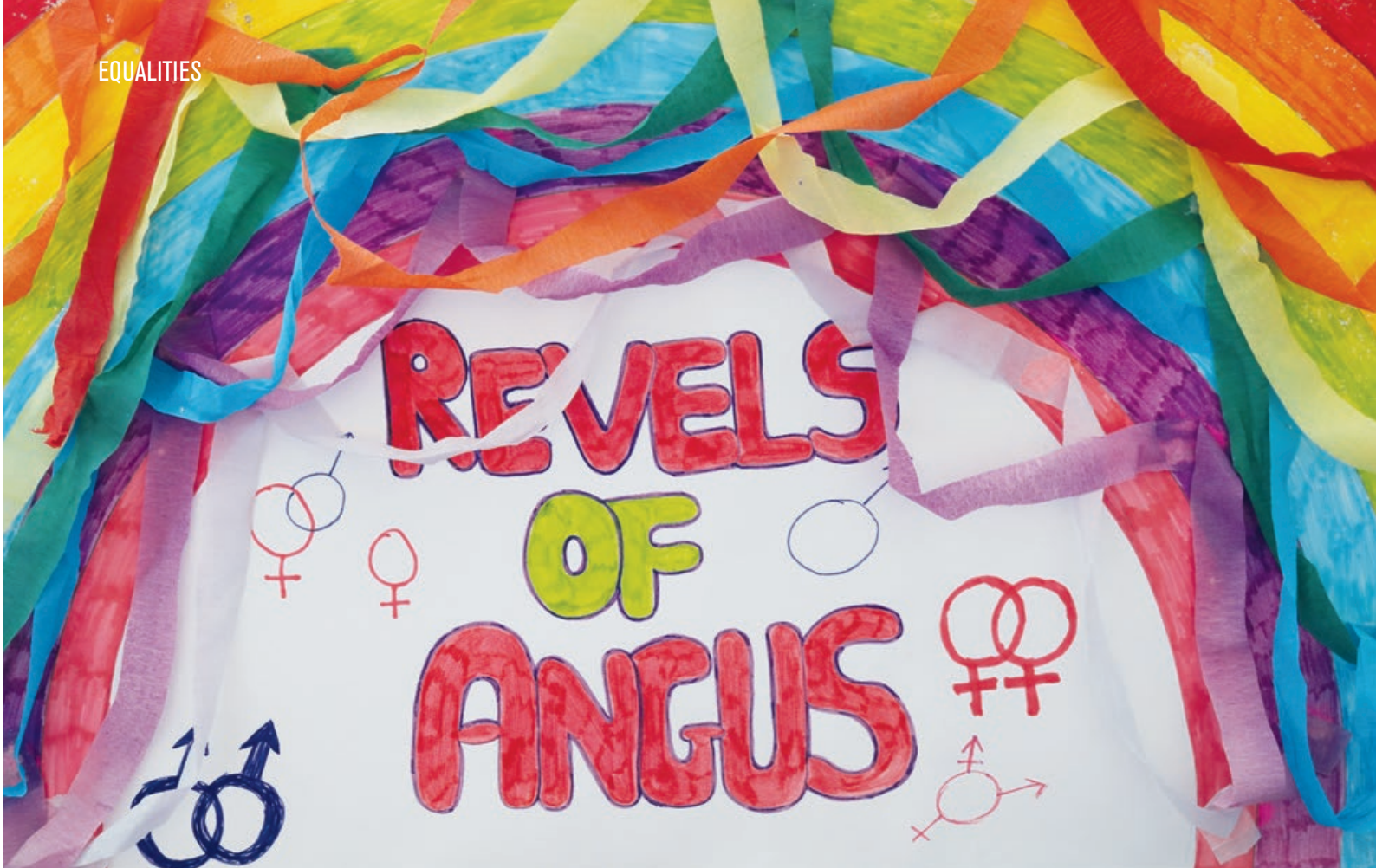
'You have the right to be treated as an individual, with dignity and respect, and the name and pronoun you use should always be respected.'

While some of these rights are taken for granted by older people, it is these grey areas that often present the biggest obstacles in the path of a young person seeking support.

The final phase, unfolding now, is an exciting drive to engage with decision-makers and health organisations.

Zee is ambitious about the kind of impact they hope to make: *"I hope that from the hard work our Commission put in, mental health practitioners and services will become more inclusive and supportive for LGBT+ young people and that young people feel more confident accessing these services as they will know their rights and be sure that practitioners won't dismiss their problems."*





Revelling in an inclusive approach

Angus Council's Communities staff and Dundee and Angus College staff are working in partnership to run a weekly group called Revels of Angus, writes Communities Officer, Pauline Rettie.

The group is youth led and provides young people with a safe space to explore equality and LGBT issues.

The exploration of identity as a group and individuals is a common thread that runs through all that the group do. Staff and young people have planned specific activities to further allow this exploration, such as designing and creating masks which show how young people express themselves to others and how others perceive them. The work will be displayed at the college for students, staff and visitors to see and is titled 'The masks we all wear'.

A safe environment has been created where we can help and support young people to explore sexuality and gender in a non-judgemental way.

This is about acceptance and the understanding that there is more than one element that makes up gender, which in itself is fluid in nature.

Young people have shared their 'coming out' stories and experiences with one another. One young person accepted the opportunity to have their story published in a booklet produced by Dundee and Angus College. They gave a reading of their piece to the group when the booklet was printed.

The group have planned a gender expression and reversal night where gender can be left at the door. Clothing and accessories, along with make-up and hair styling equipment will be available for young people to experiment within a safe, supportive environment. Although we have done this on a small scale before, young people are now feeling confident enough to dedicate a whole evening to this.

Specialist input has been planned to cover topics including positive and

negative relationships, self-care and how to come out and we continue to work closely with the group to plan the content of these sessions.

Young people have run two open nights to raise awareness of LGBT issues and share their achievements. Coming out stories and group definitions of common LGBT terms were displayed on the wall. Young people led art and craft activities, and spoke to guests about the group and their experiences.

Guests had the opportunity to talk to specialist staff who have supported the group and attended the event to promote their work, including Terence Higgins Trust and Mermaids UK. Another open night will be held in early 2018 and a bigger event is being planned for Summer 2018.



Leaving nothing to chance

Chiara Marin, Senior Development Officer at Fast Forward, says that youth gambling is the overlooked risk-taking behaviour amongst our young people.

Gambling is so normalised in today's culture that we tend to think everyone does it, what's the problem?' Yet, gambling is addictive and can become problematic.

When considering why it is important to include gambling in programmes addressing risk-taking behaviours, we need to remember that problem gambling can lead to debt, alcohol and drug abuse, homelessness, relationship and family breakdowns, mental health problems, anti-social behaviour and criminal activity.

A study carried out by NatCen for the Gambling Commission found that in Scotland 68% of adults participated in some form of gambling in 2015. For Scotland, the main study was conducted in 2006 by Moodie and Finnigan in Glasgow and North Lanarkshire. They surveyed a total of 2,043 youngsters aged 11-16. The prevalence of problem gambling found in this study was 9%, with a further 15.1% deemed to be at-risk gamblers.

Fast Forward works to address gambling in order to support and promote young people's health and wellbeing. A survey carried out with practitioners interested in our training programme, found that 16% of respondents working with 11 to 15 year-olds and 41% of those working with 16 to 25 year-olds had been in a situation where they needed to provide support regarding problematic gambling.

Yet, these practitioners also stated that their knowledge on the topic was only basic and poor (85%), that they didn't feel confident in providing appropriate support (74%) and that they had very limited experience in providing gambling education inputs (87%).



To address this gap, in 2016 Fast Forward secured funding with GambleAware to run the Youth Problem Gambling Initiative (YPGI) across Scotland. The project consists of two parts: providing training and developing a new educational resource.

During the past 18 months, we engaged with more than 250 practitioners across 27 local authorities, providing unique CPD opportunities for teachers, youth workers and CLD workers, as well as police officers and practitioners from employability and support services.

Our training empowers practitioners to acquire the tools and knowledge to prevent the onset of 'at-risk' gambling behaviour among the young people they work with, increasing the availability of information and support.

All our training attendees received our Gambling Education Toolkit.

The Gambling Education Toolkit is a new resource offering information, activities and resources to address gambling and problem gambling, with a harm reduction approach. Its materials promote an engaging and interactive approach, and can be adapted and used in a variety of formal and informal settings. The toolkit is now available for free on our website.





fast forward

GAMBLING EDUCATION TOOLKIT



For youth workers, teachers, and other
practitioners working with young people.



Information, support,
resources and much more.

To address the topic of gambling and
problem gambling with young people,

Now available online

www.fastforward.org.uk/gamblingtoolkit



For further information:
admin@fastforward.org.uk

BeGambleAware.org[®]

Keeping attainment in mind

To close the educational attainment gap, we need to empower children and young people to be partners in their own learning, to achieve better mental, physical and emotional outcomes. We need to look beyond the classroom to build a resilient, engaged and confident youth population.

Children in Scotland and YouthLink Scotland are working in partnership to influence change in youth mental health policy.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ▶ Educational attainment is intrinsically linked to physical, mental and emotional wellbeing
- ▶ Children and young people from the most deprived backgrounds are four times more likely to experience mental health issues than their wealthier counterparts, which can lead to poorer attainment
- ▶ One in five children will experience mental health issues before the age of 11
- ▶ Three children in every classroom have a diagnosable mental health disorder
- ▶ Nearly 80,000 children and young people suffer from severe depression

- ▶ Over 30,000 children and young people were seen by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) last year

How we approach education has to change.

We will not close the attainment gap if we don't prevent children and young people from disengaging from school.

As schools determine how best to spend additional attainment money, it is crucial there is a real focus on mental wellbeing, and for the views of children and young people to be part of this process.

This approach is key to supporting them to transition from primary into secondary, to re-engage in school, or to move on to alternative forms of learning or employment.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

Early intervention and prevention is key. Commissioning high-quality, effective children's services is a safeguard for children, young people and their families, as well as cost-effective preventative spending.

Adopt a rights-based approach in education. Children and young people know their own needs best. Strong participation structures promote positive health and wellbeing, and help to develop appropriate and accessible services.

Establish the right strategic arrangements and flexible funding for a more integrated approach. Providing holistic support can be challenging because provision spans a wide range of agencies and settings. Partnership working is key to improving mental health.

Increase the information about services available to young people. 74% of young people don't know what mental health support is available. This needs to be addressed at national and local level – pulling all information together in one place.

Equip parents, families, schools and communities to promote good mental health. A clear difference has to be made between adult and youth mental health provision, at both local and national level.

Adopt a whole education approach. Provide properly funded, joined-up, individually tailored support both in and out of the classroom. Youth work intervention and specialised support should be adopted as an integral part of a child's education. These should actively include those with additional support needs.

YouthLink
Scotland
The national agency for youth work

Children in Scotland
Bringing voices together



Youth mental health and attainment in practice

The Corner, Dundee

The Corner youth project offers individual mental health support to young people on a range of issues, both practical and emotional. The holistic approach, based around youth work principles, has proved to be successful in removing the stigma often attached to sexual and mental health.

Recently the Corner, in partnership with Dundee City Council, recruited eight health and wellbeing workers through the Scottish Attainment Challenge Fund. Each of these support workers will work with a different secondary school, supporting young people in S1 and S2 with anxiety issues, to improve attainment and attendance.

The Corner was established by a partnership between NHS Tayside and Dundee City Council, in response to the need for a broad-based health service for young people.

Bellshill YMCA

Youth worker, Laura Campbell was Scotland's National Youth Worker of the Year 2017, a title she received for her work in improving the mental health and attainment of young people in North Lanarkshire.

Laura, of Bellshill YMCA, manages three youth work projects, all with a focus on getting young people back to learning and achieving, including: Plusone Mentoring, which supports young people to get involved in positive activities; the Befriending Project which works with youngsters experiencing social isolation; and the Early and Effective Intervention project.

For Laura, it is that targeted, one-to-one support that makes the difference:

"For me it is about each individual young person. It's not about talking, it's about really listening, that is how you turn someone's life around and value them."

There is clear evidence this youth work approach is making a lasting, and positive impact, as one young person explains:

"I was out late, not going to school often, and was being aggressive at home. My school attendance levels were at 23%. This was having a big impact on my achievements at school and I struggled to keep up with the workload. In the space of four months working with Laura, my attendance went up to 98%."

w: www.thecorner.co.uk

w: www.northberwickyouthcafe.co.uk

w: www.ymcascotland.org

North Berwick Youth Project

In 2015, a report by North Berwick High School highlighted inadequate youth mental health provision, long waiting lists for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and an overstretched school counsellor. Guidance staff identified 158 children out of 881 with significant mental health difficulties.

In response to this, the North Berwick Area Children and Youth Network developed a mental health pathway in a bid to improve outcomes for young people.

Last year East Lothian Council announced £100,000 for the North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership to raise attainment and achievement. Part of this money funded a six-week Guided Self Help course, delivered at North Berwick High School by youth workers.

The course, developed by CAMHS, enables young people to use problem-solving strategies. It's an early intervention approach, which uses an evidence based tool - the YP Core. In a pilot in Midlothian, young people typically started with a score of 28 to 32 and went down to 12 (0 is the best and 40 the worst).

Aye Mind: a digital approach to youth mental health



Mental health problems affect about one in 10 children and young people. They include depression, anxiety and conduct disorder, and are often a direct response to what is happening in their lives. Aye Mind is on a mission to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people, by making better use of digital and social media.

Aye Mind was originally known as Project 99 in its first phase. We worked with young people aged 13 to 21 and our partners, Snook, Young Scot and the Mental Health Foundation, to create and share a wide range of resources through the Aye Mind website.

After being awarded European funding, a second phase took place with a stronger emphasis on co-production, with young people taking a strong lead in the development of website content. As the lead agency NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde staff involved in the project felt that young people would be key to its success. Partners involved had strong youth work links and this was one of the strengths of the project.

Heather Sloan, Health Improvement Lead at NHSGGC said:

"We wanted young people to be at the heart of the project. Young people are the experts in their own lives and we were keen that they were equal partners and not just a 'tick box exercise.' We ran a series of coproduction workshops with a wide range of young people from across the Glasgow and Clyde area. The 'buzz' in these sessions was fantastic and the young people shared their stories and experiences of mental health through gif making sessions. The insights and learning from the sessions were invaluable - In fact the young people went beyond what was planned and came up with their own manifesto – that was an added bonus!"

Aye Mind Gif Making sessions demonstrated fun simple ways to engage young people in creating mental wellbeing messages and images that they can share with their peers. Whilst these sessions were based around wellbeing, they could also be used for any discussion topic.

In preparation for these sessions, we ensured that all staff were trained in Young People's Scottish Mental Health First Aid to enable them to support any young person who had any issues when talking about their mental health.

The young people we worked with said that they need those who support them in education and youth work settings to be aware of the lives they lead online. Indeed young people told us that they don't see a distinction between online and offline activity. With this in mind, we developed a digital toolkit for those who work with young people, to boost their ability to promote youth wellbeing and to enable youth workers, policy makers, planners and service providers to be more prepared to engage with young people in supporting their mental health and in drawing on digital communication technology.

Throughout the process, a wide-ranging set of learning, recommendations and prototype ideas have been developed. Young people have been at the centre of this innovative project which includes:

- ▶ Support Worker Toolkit
- ▶ Youth-facing material (including animated gif work created by young people)
- ▶ Comprehensive digital asset database (curating over 60 resources)
- ▶ A dedicated Aye Mind youth mental wellbeing platform hosted by Young Scot

To find out more, please visit the website to explore how social media and digital approaches can support positive mental wellbeing visit www.ayemind.com

THE AYE MIND MANIFESTO

Aye Mind is a European Union-funded innovation programme. Its mission is to explore and develop a suite of digital resources with and for young people, aimed at promoting their mental health and wellbeing. This Manifesto digests our collective learning into a set of key points for action, that we offer to any group or agency interested in progressing work on youth wellbeing.

- 1.** Make young people's mental health and wellbeing a priority – build comprehensive, joined-up responses
- 2.** Consider digital technologies as part of a wider mix of resources available, rather than as a magic wand or the latest fad
- 3.** Actively involve young people in learning about needs and experiences, and in the design, development and refinement of new approaches
- 4.** Focus on youth rights dimensions, digital inclusion and the needs of those with additional risks and challenges
- 5.** Build confidence, skills and knowledge of all those who support young people to understand, use and refine digital technologies for wellbeing
- 6.** Create organisational cultures and environments that support safe, productive use of technologies for and with young people



Cool2talk working across boundaries

Digital interventions, collaboration and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young people

Adolescence is a time of significant development. Changes in relationships, responsibilities and environments often result in young people requiring information, advice and support for their health and wellbeing.

The way that young people use technology has changed rapidly and this, combined with the ability to provide a safe space online, gives us an opportunity to develop innovative services to support the mental health and wellbeing of young people.

Evidence shows that online support provides more choice about how young people engage with services. It provides a level of anonymity that transcends class, gender and race to create a neutral environment where young people can make a positive, informed choice about using a service, rather than by referral. Online services are demand-led, young people are in control and agents of their own change.

The Service

Cool2talk is an online platform which provides young people with a safe space to ask questions about any

aspect of their health and wellbeing. They receive a bespoke, informed response within 24 hours, 365 days a year; it also provides information about services and access to short-term online counselling. Cool2talk empowers young people to improve their mental health by taking ownership over their wellbeing and building resilience by providing a supportive, reassuring service where advice-seeking is encouraged.

Overall, emotional health accounts for about 30% of the questions posted on cool2talk. The questions young people post highlight the often complex and confusing situations they can find themselves in and the multi-faceted nature of the vulnerability of the young people we support. Emotional health runs across the lives of young people and this is demonstrated by the variety of questions that young people post. By being responsive, we can be smarter at addressing the wider needs and aspects of young people's lives.

Feedback from young people shows that the site is providing a necessary service:

"Thanks for your help, cool2talk. I recently asked about how to cope with my anxiety, depression and self harm. Your help was fantastic and it felt great to have people to rely on when times got too tough. I am very thankful to have this service."

Collaborative working

Cool2talk was developed by NHS Tayside in 2007 and has recently extended to the Western Isles, Argyll and Bute, and Dumfries and Galloway. Working together to provide a service for young people reduces cost and opens doors for collaboration across wide geographical areas.

These new areas have experienced improved networking and relationships between services required to provide cool2talk, including mental health services, sexual health services and services provided by the third sector. The unique set-up of cool2talk in each area means that the service can be structured flexibly whilst ensuring the highest possible standards are met.



CONTACTS

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Image: Freepik



Music for your mental health

“What in the world is not the way you want it to be?”

Ask this question to a room full of game young people and you'd better be ready with a flipchart and pens! And when it comes to mental health, young people have a lot of opinions on what needs to change.

The beginning

This is how the Soundminds project started back in 2009. We asked a group of young people if they would like to challenge the stigma around mental health. The answer was yes. The stage was the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival. The venue was Motherwell Concert Hall.

The event was a huge success, with around 400 young people in attendance. The steering group provided a wide range of entertainment from local bands to graffiti walls. And since then, young people from Reeltime Music have put on events as part of the festival every year. Every year it gets better – and every year people talk more about mental health as a result. Most recently, the group have held popular events in the heart of Motherwell town centre.

So what?

If you're involved in youth work long enough, someone will ask you the 'So what?' question. What has putting on a music event got to do with mental health? Quite a lot in fact.

Opportunities to develop skills and strengths

Soundminds is an opportunity for

young people to use what they are good at for the benefit of others. Local bands entertain crowds with their musical skills. Steering group members get to learn about event management. Others enjoy interviewing audiences on their views of mental health issues. It goes on and on: opportunities to



design activities, create social media campaigns, make videos, run surveys...

Opportunities to be creative

As a community music organisation, we believe in creativity. Fresh thinking is at the heart of the event each year. It could be delivering 'drawing your emotions' sessions in schools. Or it could be coming up with fun activities which draw the public into the events, like dressing up as a ninja turtle! All of these ultimately raise awareness of the stigma around mental health.

Opportunities to find meaning and purpose

When you care about changing something and you start to take

Shame around mental health can only exist when no-one talks about it. The young people from the Soundminds group in North Lanarkshire are doing their bit to change this. They're not only talking about it: they're shouting and singing about it. And youth work practice is at the heart of their efforts.

action, it brings a sense of meaning and purpose. One of our steering group young people put it like this:

“Soundminds is important to me because it gets across important messages about mental health that people need to hear.”

“Getting the public's views on mental health during our events is one of the most inspiring things about the project.”

But still you might say, “So what?” How does this actually change anything around the stigma related to mental health? Since 2009, we estimate that audiences of up to 1,500 people have been part of our awareness-raising efforts. Add to that countless more via our social media campaigns.

Those audiences benefit from increased awareness of the support services available to them. They are also aware of more positive attitudes to mental health conditions. And let's not forget the young volunteers who are doing all this good work. They themselves have an increased understanding of mental health and wellbeing which will serve them well in the future.

See me— don't dismiss me!

Young people who are struggling with their mental health can find it difficult to talk – and we may find it difficult to talk to them.

When you're struggling with your mental health, you can find it difficult to do what you would normally do, everything can feel so much harder and feelings of isolation can be overwhelming. Despite all the work that has been done to tackle the stigma around mental health, for many of us the idea of saying that we're struggling with our mental health can be daunting.

Sometimes, when we do say something, it can just be dismissed. This is especially true for young people, how many times have young people been told 'you're too young to have depression' or 'it's a phase you'll grow out of it'.

Phrases like this are often not meant to be harmful, but they stop young people from talking about how they are feeling. Research shows that it can take over a year for young people to build up the confidence to ask for support again. We need to feel confident to speak about how we are feeling, to stop problems getting worse.

If you don't think you will be taken seriously, then why would you bother to tell someone how you are feeling in the first place?

On the other side of this coin, there are people who can see someone is struggling, or know that something isn't right, but they are so worried about saying the wrong thing or making it worse, they just don't say anything. People end up feeling alone and isolated when they are struggling, not knowing if they should tell anyone, or even who they should tell.

A See Me survey of 885 young people aged 15 to 25, found that only 37% said they would tell someone if they were finding it difficult to cope with their mental health, compared to 78% who would tell someone if they were physically ill.

One See Me volunteer, Jenny, didn't feel like she could tell anyone when she first started to struggle with her mental health:

"When I first started experiencing mental health problems I didn't understand how I was feeling, so I didn't have anyone to reach out to. I was just focussed on pulling through and passing exams as I didn't want to come across as a burden.

"But as I started to get older, post school exam time, I felt a lot more comfortable opening up to my family and also friends. They helped a lot.

"For young people I would say, don't be afraid to speak out. But also think carefully and choose a good person to open up to, someone you trust and someone you think will listen. I found that one good person at university and it genuinely helped me."

It's okay not to be okay, but if you are struggling - don't go through it alone. Finding someone you trust to speak to is so important, and if you don't find the right person straight away - keep trying. If you're an adult and you are worried about a young person in your life, speak to them - ask them if they are okay, really listen and let them know that you are there for them.

Whatever you are going through – you are not alone. Check out www.itsokay.tv and see what people all over Scotland are feeling and, if you want, say what you're feeling.

See Me
End mental health
discrimination



Learning through mental health



Now, more than ever, we need to nurture our young people to help ensure their mental health is in as good a condition as their physical health. Just because we can't see the ailment, doesn't mean that it isn't there and in need of attention.

- 20% of adolescents may experience a mental health problem in any given year
- 50% of mental health problems are established by age 14 and 75% by age 24

- 10% of children and young people (aged 5-16 years) have a clinically diagnosable mental problem, yet 70% of children and adolescents who experience mental health problems have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age

Youth workers do so much to contribute to young people's mental health and wellbeing, and can make a real difference to a young person's life, just by engaging with them. At the Scottish Credit and Qualifications

Framework (SCQF) Partnership we are keen to ensure that young people fulfil their personal, social and economic potential and that all their achievements, both academic and otherwise, are formally recognised. Organisations can have their learning programmes credit rated, which is the mechanism to formally allocate SCQF levels and credits to their learning and have that learning placed on Scotland's national qualifications framework – the SCQF, thus allowing young people to progress more easily

through their learning journey. Two organisations that have had their programmes for young people credit rated are Fuse Youth Café Glasgow and DirectDevitt.

Fuse Youth Café

Fuse Youth Café Glasgow is a charity working in the east of Glasgow. The project provides a range of youth work programmes for local young people. Its Anti-Bullying/Stop Motion Animation Programme aims to give academic recognition to young people participating in an anti-bullying programme. The programme's objectives are to equip learners with a deeper understanding of bullying combined with some practical skills and experience in stop motion animation. The programme, targeted at secondary school pupils, was credit rated by Glasgow Kelvin College at SCQF Level 4 with 2 credit points. It helps young people understand what bullying is and how it can affect individuals and their families.

The programme includes activities around mental health experiences such as anxiety and depression. Michelle Haggerty, Attainment Co-ordinator at Fuse explains:

"Sessions have highlighted some of the terrible bullying young people have experienced which they demonstrated through their animations. The theory sessions support participants in learning the basics about bullying, so that they can recognise it happening to themselves or others. The theory sessions finish on a more positive note where we look at recovery and coping mechanisms."

DirectDevittCIC

Anna Devitt founded DirectDevitt Comedy & Management Productions (CIC) using her own personal experience and research to create a learning environment where all can achieve.

The Learning Programme

The qualification is designed to instil confidence in participants while using comedy as a creative tool. The award also covers employability skills, self-development, mental health understanding and entrepreneurial skills. The target audience is young people aged 14 and over, who are not in mainstream education and want more practical based learning. The programme was credit rated by SQA's Credit Rating Service at SCQF Level 6 with 9 SCQF credit points.

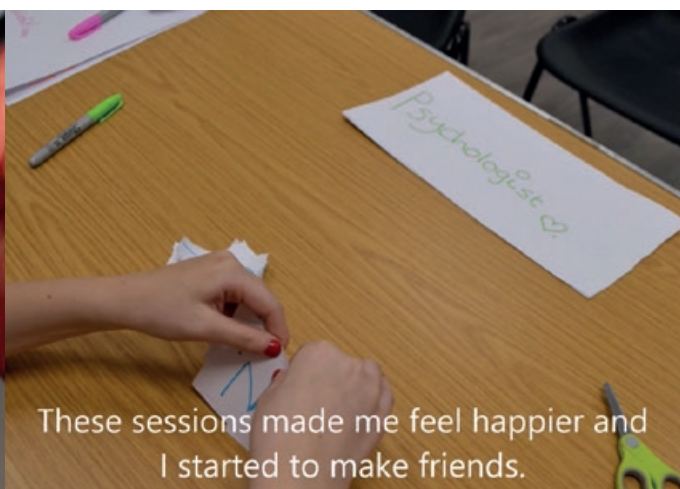
How does the programme address mental health issues experienced by young people?

Addressing mental health issues is a big part of the programme, as Anna explains:

"Poor mental health is one of the biggest barriers today for young people, but it is also very stigmatised. We want a society where everyone can have access to a job role, however we don't put any provisions in place for those with mental health issues. We have disabled access, we understand that people with learning barriers may need access to technologies or different coloured paper. But when we are presented with someone whose anxiety took them an extra two hours to get out of the house they don't hear

– 'That's great you made it – maybe tomorrow will be better...' Chances are they get penalised for being late for work/college/uni'... There really is no wrong path to take you where you want to go, but the younger we start encouraging people to be creative and think of positive things they want to experience, the better equipped they will be to secure good jobs. By delivering the Comedy & Confidence programme to young people we hope to instil in them the skills to maintain a positive mindset and step by step guide to loving you!"

To date, DirectDevitt has delivered this course to over 2,000 young people, working with a variety of organisations, such as The Prince's Trust, Youth Scotland, HMYOI Polmont, Glasgow City College, Jobs & Business Glasgow and the Royal Bank of Scotland. The company's social aims and impact are demonstrated through participant feedback, with 98% of people reporting an increase in confidence and an understanding of comedy as a resilient coping method.





It's ok to speak your mind

Almost two years ago, the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) took to a vote to choose which national campaign to focus their attention on for the next 18 months. Karen Keith, Communications Officer for SYP looks at the legacy of that campaign.

Members voted overwhelmingly in favour of young people's mental health, with specific focus on raising awareness of mental health, empowering young people to talk positively about mental health, and calls for accessible, high-quality mental health services and information for all of Scotland's young people.

In the months since that initial vote, much has been achieved by the young people of SYP to address what Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) have come to call 'our generation's epidemic'.

The campaign, Speak Your Mind, was informed through an initial consultation undertaken by MSYPs in which over 72,000 responses from young people in Scotland were

received. Worryingly, the consultation revealed that 74% of respondents who believed themselves to have a mental health problem did not know where to go to access advice and/or support.

Also, 29% of 18 to 26-year-old respondents did not find public information about mental health to be young person-friendly, compared to 15% of 12 to 17-year-olds.

The final report, appropriately titled 'Our generation's epidemic', was one of the largest research reports specifically looking at young people's mental health in Scotland. The research included 1,483 responses from young people aged 12 to 25, and captured their experience and awareness of mental health services and information.

Spurred on by the report's findings, MSYPs from across Scotland got to work in their own communities, meeting with councillors, organising mental health week events, visiting schools and youth groups to talk about mental health, and working with their local NHS Boards.

Going one step further, former MSYP Courtney Gemmell, was inspired to undertake work in her local authority of North Ayrshire which led to her creating a localised mental health toolkit. This toolkit included interactive workshops, support and information

for staff working with young people, and information for young people. She also secured £6,000 funding to make this possible, and has been working with youth services in the area to develop it.

Speak Your Mind's activities proved invaluable in enabling SYP to make a number of recommendations to the Scottish Government ahead of the publication of its ten-year Mental Health Strategy earlier this year. SYP was especially pleased to see a commitment from the government to review Personal and Social Education (PSE), and to review counselling services, which was a key recommendation from 'Our generation's epidemic'.

The success of Speak Your Mind can be best summed up in the words of one young person who took part in a training session delivered by SYP:

"I've been scared to talk to anyone about how I've been feeling, but I think the stats showed that it's OK to not feel OK sometimes, so I'm getting some help now."



Speak Your Mind event at Holyrood's Festival of Politics, with Chair Amy Lee Fraioli MSYP, Thomas McEachan MSYP, actor Greg McHugh, and Dr Trevor Lakey

Courtney's mental health mission

Working in partnership with North Ayrshire Council, Courtney Gemmell, a member of the Scottish Youth Parliament, has launched a toolkit designed to help 11 to 18 year-olds find information and support to help maintain good mental health.

The possibilities are endless when you pair dedicated young people with a passionate team determined to make a positive difference to their lives.

And nowhere is that more apparent than in North Ayrshire.

The success of the partnership between the Council's Youth Services Team and the area's MSYPs is no secret.

But one special project in particular is set to change the lives of many young people in North Ayrshire – the Mental Health Toolkit.

The toolkit itself is set to launch later this year and will become a lifeline resource in schools, youth centres, children units, colleges and the wider community.

It details information and support available to youngsters aged 11 to 18 on how to help tackle poor mental health, but also how to maintain a healthy mind. It also gives all-important guidance to staff delivering services to young people on how

to spot trigger signs and approach a person they believe may be struggling.

But the toolkit is not just words on a page, in fact the whole purpose of the toolkit was for it to be as interactive as possible. And to achieve this, a number of workshops have been built into the resource covering topics such as self-confidence and body image, relationship and family breakdowns, bullying, depression and anxiety and peer pressure.

The need for such a resource came to fruition following the appointment of local young woman Courtney Gemmell to the Scottish Youth Parliament. During her time as an MSYP, Courtney made mental health her mission. Thanks to her passion to make a difference, and with support of our Youth Services Team, ensuring Courtney's mission was made a reality, any young person seeking support for mental health issues will be able to use the toolkit to get just that.

Donna Anderson, youth information worker, was by Courtney's side every step of the way:

"We're all extremely proud of Courtney in all that she's achieved. She's one determined young lady and it's thanks to her commitment to improving the mental health support available to her peers that's allowed this fantastic and worthwhile resource to be produced. We are positive that this toolkit will serve as a lasting legacy of her passion and hard work."

Speaking about her toolkit, Courtney said:

"When I became a MSYP, I decided that I would use the platform to try and make positive change for young people living in North Ayrshire. Through consulting with over 1,000 of my peers, I quickly discovered that mental health was an area that required much more support. And I've taken it from there. I hope that my work on this will help change people's lives, even if it helps just one person, that to me is a job well done."





Choices for life - be smart peer mentoring internet safety programme

A new Police Scotland-led training programme designed to raise awareness amongst young people about online safety.

Choices for Life is a Scottish Government-funded, Police Scotland-led initiative in partnership with Young Scot, originally aimed at raising awareness amongst young people aged 11 to 18 about the dangers of smoking, alcohol and drugs. Be Smart launched in January 2017, integrating advice about online safety into the Choices for Life programme.

Be Smart Peer Mentoring Internet Safety was designed in conjunction with global cyber security company Trend Micro, ensuring visual content is appealing and impacts on its young audience. The programme addresses key online vulnerabilities affecting young people such as Reputation, Responsibility and Safety. The training has been delivered to pupils at a number of secondary schools and community groups across Scotland, empowering young people to make informed decisions in the digital world and enhancing their resilience to the risks associated with the internet. The training encompasses three videos, produced by Police Scotland Youth Volunteers, which ask young people to consider and discuss online behaviour. The peer mentoring learning format asks young people to split into groups, discussing the issues in a 'world café' workshop environment. The concept encourages active listening, open discussion and debate, and also asks young people to think about their own behaviour, and how they can positively influence the online activities of their peers.

Train-the-trainer sessions are delivered to various youth groups and clubs by Police Scotland Safer Communities staff and local community-based officers, ensuring

the content and delivery style are at a level that resonates with a young audience.

Following the launch of the programme, Deputy Chief Constable Johnny Gwynne said:

"With cybercrime developing as an increasing threat to communities, programmes like Be Smart are crucial to educate children and young people, from a young age, that they must take steps to keep themselves as safe in the online virtual world as they would in the real world."

Minister for Childcare and Early Years, Mark McDonald MSP said:

"The Choices for Life Be Smart programme is an excellent way to encourage young people to think carefully about the way they behave online to ensure they get the most

out of what the internet has to offer but, most importantly, to ensure they remain safe and supported at all times."

Police Scotland is always looking for opportunities to develop how we can work with new and existing partners, reaching as wide an audience as possible and increasing public awareness. We continue to work with community-based groups and larger organisations such as YouthLink Scotland, Young Scot, Youth Scotland, Children in Need, YMCA, Education Scotland and many more. Our objective is to develop a network of peer mentors within communities, who are equipped with the skills to 'start the conversation' and influence young people in making positive choices when online.



Youth mental health – the inequality gap

than elsewhere in Europe. Whilst Scottish 11 year-olds perform as well as, or better, than their international peers on a wide range health and wellbeing indicators, Scottish 15 year-olds fare less well. For example, Scottish 11 year-olds are less likely than the typical European 11 year-old to experience psychosomatic health complaints or schoolwork pressure. Scottish 15 year-olds, however, are more likely than their same-age peers in Europe to experience these issues.

Deterioration in Mental Wellbeing

As the HBSC Study in Scotland has been conducted seven times since 1990, it is well placed to examine trends over time in Scottish adolescent health and well-being.

In 2002, 38% of 15 year-old girls in Scotland reported experiencing two or more psychosomatic health complaints at least once a week, this figure rose to 54% in 2014.

The breadth of topics covered by the HBSC survey also allows identification of factors that are associated with emergent trends in wellbeing, such as body image, bullying and schoolwork pressure. Recent analyses have also indicated that the relationship between some of these factors and mental wellbeing may have changed over time. For instance, feeling that one's body is too fat appears to have a larger impact on psychosomatic health complaints in recent years than was the case in the past three decades. International analyses also indicate that this changing role of body image is particularly steep in Scotland compared to other European countries.



University of
St Andrews



The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study is an international research project led by the Child and Adolescent Health Research Unit at St Andrew's University. The study examines the health, wellbeing and social context of adolescents aged 11 to 15 years-old in over 40 countries in Europe and North America. Scotland has participated in seven HBSC cycles since 1990, with surveys taking place once every four years. The Scottish arm of the HBSC study is funded by NHS Health Scotland, with the next survey to be conducted in early 2018.

Recent findings relating to mental wellbeing can be summarised into three broad themes, as follows:

Social Inequalities

Socio-economic position is measured in the HBSC study using a composite measure of household material wealth. For example, it includes questions about household vehicle ownership and overseas holidays. This scale allows us to look at how family affluence affects young people's health and wellbeing.

Like in many economically developed countries a socio-economic gradient is observed for many aspects of health and well-being, with those from less affluent families more likely to exhibit poorer outcomes and harmful behaviours than those from more affluent families.

However, health inequalities observed in Scotland tend to be wider than those seen in many of the other countries in Europe and North America.

Scottish boys from the least affluent families are over 15% more likely than the most affluent to report multiple weekly psychosomatic health complaints.

The age differential

A general theme that emerges across the international HBSC data is that adolescents become more likely to report poorer health outcomes and engagement in risky behaviours between the ages of 11 and 15. However, it appears that these age-related declines in health and well-being in Scotland are steeper

Tackling health inequalities supports *Good* mental health for **ALL**

For more information see
www.healthscotland.scot/mental-health



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