

The Link

DELIVERING EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY

Youth Work and School Partnerships
– improving attainment and achievement
for our young people.



“ The power of youth is the common wealth for the entire world. The faces of young people are the faces of our past, our present and our future. No segment in the society can match with the power, idealism, enthusiasm and courage of the young people. ”

Kailash Satyarthi,
Indian Child Rights Activist



Foreword

A word from YouthLink Scotland's Chief Executive, Tim Frew.

As a youth worker, I, alongside thousands of my colleagues, can give countless examples of the life-changing nature of youth work on young people. Some 20 years ago, I was working as a youth worker based in a high school in Clackmannanshire. The school, Alva Academy, was ahead of its time, offering an 'alternative curriculum' programme with many partners involved. I will never forget sitting in a classroom after school hours, with young people who had chosen to do the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. They were in the middle of completing their volunteering section with the Police when one of the Depute Head Teachers walked in. He was surprised and somewhat perplexed to see pupils he had excluded from school, in one of his classrooms, passionately engaged in learning and on the road to achieving an Award. Before a hashtag was a thing, this was the epitome of #YouthWorkChangesLives.

Two decades on, and with the Curriculum for Excellence firmly in place, we have moved beyond the notion of an 'alternative curriculum'

towards a curriculum that embraces flexibility and choice, but there is so much more to do to overcome the many barriers young people face, and to close the poverty-related attainment gap.

We are pleased that the Scottish Government's Scottish Attainment Challenge Policy Unit has funded YouthLink Scotland on a three-year programme to understand the impact and build the capacity of youth work and schools, to close the attainment gap. As a sector, we are keen to work alongside Head Teachers to address this challenge, finding local solutions that remove obstacles to young people's achievement.

Youth work has and will continue to play a key role in supporting all young people to be successful learners, whether that learning takes place in or out of school, evenings, weekends or during the school holidays. Youth work has always had a young-person centred approach and is committed to working in partnership with schools to ensure that young people achieve their full potential and

promote lifelong and life rich learning opportunities.

The breadth and diversity of that offer, some of which is featured in this magazine, is outstanding. Outdoor learning, holiday-based provision, STEM and digital work, non-formal accredited awards, health and wellbeing support, family learning and home-school partnerships, access and transition programmes, apprenticeships and employability programmes, and so much more.

Collaboration is the key word and it's not just around programmes or activities, it's around building respect for differing pedagogies and approaches. As the late Colin Mair former CEO of the Improvement Service said: "young people who struggle with standard, classroom teacher-led models are unlikely to be greatly empowered by more of the same." So let's learn from one another on what works best in and outside of the classroom to ensure that all our young people reach their full potential and have fun along the way.

Youth Work and the Scottish Attainment Challenge

**Collaborating to help close the attainment gap.
Building stronger connections between schools
and youth work organisations.**



The overall programme was first launched by the First Minister in 2015. It drives improvement activity in literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing to close the poverty-related attainment gap. This work is supported by the Attainment Scotland Fund, including Pupil Equity Funding, which is allocated directly to schools to support a broad range of initiatives.

Youth work plays various roles, which are contributing to closing the poverty-related attainment gap:

- Improving attendance and attainment
- Lowering exclusions
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Increasing employability and positive sustained leaver destinations.

The Youth Work and Schools Partnership programme supports school and youth work leaders to work together effectively to plan, deliver and evaluate improvements in education throughout Scotland.

This three year programme, delivered by YouthLink Scotland, received £324,00 funding from Scottish Government, as part of the wider Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC).

The Scottish Government's ambition is for excellence and equity in education, where every child and young person is able to fulfil their potential. The youth work sector shares this vision and is helping to deliver it.

The National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan provides a national approach and direction for delivery, focusing on four priorities:

- Closing the attainment gap
- Raising attainment for all
- Improving young people's health and wellbeing
- Improving employability skills and positive sustained destinations.¹

The SAC aims to raise the attainment of children and young people living in deprived areas, in order to close the equity gap, ensuring everyone is encouraged to be the best they can be.²



Deputy First Minister John Swinney launched the programme during a visit to Bellshill Academy:

"We want to give every child the opportunity to fulfil their full potential in life and that means that our work on closing the attainment gap cannot start and end at the school gates."

"Youth work makes a significant contribution to the lives of children and young people through increased educational attainment, enhanced employability and health and wellbeing. This programme will help deliver our vision for excellence and equity for all by allowing more young people to experience the benefits of youth work and the opportunities it can bring."

However, its role and contribution within the wider education landscape is, perhaps, less understood.

The National Youth Work Strategy (2014-2019), sets out the national policy ambitions for the sector and defines youth work's role in improving the life chances of young people.

As a rights-based³ practice, youth work is inclusive and non-discriminatory. It empowers young people and provides learning opportunities, which nurture the interests and personality of the individual. Youth work practice enables young people to develop positive relationships with their peers and with adults by providing safe spaces.

The strategy also defines youth work's role and contribution to a wide range of Scottish Government policy, including the delivery of the three supporting pillars of the Scottish education system: Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child), and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW).

Youth work is part of the learning community, supporting all young

people to reach their potential. It develops a broad range of skills and so complements and enhances curriculum options for young people.

For many young people, youth workers are the trusted adults they choose to approach for person-centred support when making decisions about their learning pathways. Youth work ensures breadth, personalisation and choice within the post-15 education and skills system, including flexible and valued pathways for all young people.

The National Youth Work Outcomes explain youth work's contribution to delivering both excellence and equity in education. These encompass the four CfE capacities and are being used to support joint evaluation with schools, evidencing improvement through Pupil Equity Funding, measuring wider improvement as part of the National Improvement Framework and as part of school self-evaluation. The framework acknowledges that all parts of the system have a role to play, where everyone's contribution is valued and improving children and young people's outcomes is at the heart of practice.⁴

There are many strong examples of youth work and schools working collaboratively, understanding and respecting the opportunities and skills each party brings to young people's learning and development. The increasing focus on wider learning and achievement, improving mental health and developing skills for the future, provides an opportunity to hear more from and value young people's learning through youth work, both in schools and in the wider community.

Youth work professionals have an important contribution to make to support school improvement planning, alongside Regional Improvement Collaboratives. They provide an opportunity to strengthen understanding between the different component parts of the education system on the value of youth work to improvement priorities.

It's only when we incorporate all the component parts of the education system, recognising and valuing everyone's contribution, that we can we truly say we are improving young people's outcomes and placing achievement at the heart of everything we do.



1. National Improvement Framework Improvement Plan 2. Scottish Attainment Challenge 3. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 4. National Improvement Framework Improvement Plan

Profile: Bellshill Academy



Head Teacher, Jodie McGraw explains why youth work is an essential part of her education armoury in the fight to put the squeeze on the poverty-related attainment gap.

At Bellshill Academy building collaborative practice has helped to improve outcomes for our young people and their families. We are committed to improvement in attainment, wider achievement, attendance and leaver destinations; as well as in the wellbeing, engagement and resilience of our pupils. Youth work is an essential part of this.

In developing a shared vision and ethos, planning curriculum, self-evaluating and using data to target and deliver interventions; partnership with parents, pupils and partners has been our commitment.

We have a Home School Partnership Officer (HSPO) who works collaboratively with teaching staff, partners and parents to close the attainment gap.

There are five key strands to our home school partnership, ensuring we take a holistic approach to empowering and improving learning and resilience for our most disadvantaged young people:

- Transition
- Family learning
- Wider achievement
- Pupil support
- Groupwork

How it works in practice – from Primary to Secondary

Transition - Easter School

Young people are supported at key transition points, starting in Primary 6, with a targeted Easter School. This is delivered jointly with the HSPO at Bellshill Academy, to build confidence and friendships.

Transition - Summer Programme

At the end of primary school, all Primary 7 children are invited to our summer programme. This is delivered in collaboration with a range of partners including the community-based CLD youth work team, other youth work partners, teaching staff and senior pupils.

The senior pupils are supported during the academic year to achieve the 'First Steps to Youth Work' qualification, providing the opportunity to volunteer during the P7 summer programme. Reeltime Music, a local community-based organisation, deliver a media workshop as part of the programme.

All young people participating in the summer programme have the opportunity to achieve a Dynamic Youth Award, which is completed when they start S1. Last year 68 pupils achieved an Award.

Transition - Nurture Group

Once in S1, pupils in need of continued support are referred to the Nurture Group. This small group environment allows the HSPO and the PT Nurture to provide pupil support, helping to build friendships, learn emotional regulation and offering a safe, calming space. Pupils attending the Nurture Group are also part of the school's Buddying Programme, delivered by trained senior pupils.

Pupil Support

Other youth work partners are also key to the delivery of our pupil support. Bellshill and Mossend YMCA provide one-to-one support for pupils through their mentoring and befriending programmes. They also support young people's health and wellbeing, skills development and learning in the wider community.

Family learning - improving parental involvement

Family learning is an important element of closing the gap for us. We want parents to feel welcome in and supported by our school. Home visits are carried out on a regular basis to the most vulnerable and most hard to reach families. This is done in partnership with Health, Social work, Voluntary Organisations, SDS and the Pupil Support team. Home visiting allows relationship building outwith the school environment, encouraging parents into the school to attend our family learning opportunities. Family learning programmes include youth mental health. This is delivered jointly with our CLD schools' worker. We also bring families together to cook and eat, which is co-delivered with one of our Home Economics teachers.

Wider achievement

From the moment our pupils arrive at school, wider achievement is celebrated and encouraged.

The HSPO delivers a range of youth work awards, including the Princes Trust's Achieve Programme. Young people can also take DoFE as a curriculum choice. We work closely with the YMCA, to provide opportunity for some of our DoFE participants to volunteer in their Aspire Mentoring programme.

As a school we can clearly see the value and impact of wider achievement and it's not all about SCQF credits. We worked with SDS to track leavers who had achieved a DoFE Award over two years, all had sustained positive leaver destinations. Young people themselves can see the impact too – they often talk about the value of the experience and can articulate their improved resilience and skills.

Groupwork

Coming together as a group is an important element of our youth work and schools programme. We use groupwork to support pupils. One of our initiatives includes our boys 'Positive Choices' group, where alongside improving attendance and engagement, they learn how to manage their emotional wellbeing.

The 'Seasons for Growth' group supports young people through loss and bereavement. As a school we are committed to ensuring all our pupils achieve good health and wellbeing and feel safe, included and supported.

It is important for us that we are a LGBT inclusive school. Each department focuses on celebrating LGBT education within their subject area. We run a LGBT group in school and young people also attend the YMCA's group out of school. The impact on young people's mental health has been astounding. Young people are now more confident, happy and achieving.

The results

We use data with both our teaching staff and partners to identify gaps, target interventions and measure impact. For example, we identify young people at risk of exclusion and the YMCA delivers one-to-one support. Our data shows that our exclusion rate has now dropped to one of the lowest in the authority.

Our quest for improvement is continuous and at the beginning of closing the gap. Pupils tell us they have improved health and wellbeing, are more motivated and engaged. Parents are part of our school, learning and gaining the confidence and knowledge to support their children.

Overall, there is increased attainment and improved sustained leaver destinations. Collaborative practice is what works.

The hard data speaks for itself

Denise Crawford, Head Teacher of Inverclyde Academy introduces us to the educationalist she couldn't do without and tells us of the impact of her youth work and schools partnership.

In Inverclyde Academy we have been working with the CLD Youth Work team to close the attainment gap. The school is situated in an area of deprivation, with a high percentage of our pupils living in poverty. Pupil Equity Funding has enabled us to employ a full time CLD Youth Worker, Paul Ross. Paul has a specific remit to raise the attendance and attainment of a targeted cohort of young people.

Young people affected by poverty face additional challenges to engaging in learning and achieving their full potential. As a result of our partnership with youth work, young people are re-engaging through meaningful, tailored learning opportunities, gaining accreditation and recognition of wider achievement. This has had a huge impact on the attainment of our young people. Pupils are now leaving school with at least 5 SQA National Awards at N4, N5, and N6, as well as National Progression Awards, and they are gaining valuable skills and experiences through the DofE Award. Paul has truly changed the future for these young people.

One young person who has been working with Paul won the SQA Young Person of the Year award. This young man is care experienced and was a school refuser before engaging in youth work. Due to the influence of Paul he is now looking forward to a positive outcome and has been offered an apprenticeship for next year. These are life changing improvements.

The hard data speaks for itself! Exclusions are reduced, attendance is increased and engagement is off the scale. Pupils are now engaged in education right up to Sixth Year. We are closing the gap through our youth work and schools partnership.

The success of our partnership with CLD is not simply down to the learning opportunities it provides for our young people. It's about the youth worker. There's just something about the skills and qualities of a youth worker that works. Paul brings enthusiasm, dedication and passion to disengaged young people and ultimately gives them a brighter path to walk down in the future.

We simply couldn't do without him.





Across Inverclyde, the CLD Youth Work team deliver a range of programmes to young people both within and outwith the formal school setting. Paul is just one of a dedicated team of CLD Youth Workers who work with young people to develop their skills and give them the support, experience and confidence to achieve their potential.

Paul Ross, Youth Worker, Inverclyde Academy sets out the practice behind the partnership

Community Learning & Development offers a range of informal learning and support in Inverclyde Academy, to raise attendance and attainment; including early engagement, wider achievement and parental engagement.

I work with pupils during their transition from primary school. As part of this I encourage peer learning, with young people delivering activities for the P7 pupils.

Early engagement helps build relationships, confidence and coping skills; supporting the younger pupils to engage with school alongside positive role models.

Opportunities are developed in consultation with young people, using their interests as a starting point. Young people work towards an appropriate SCQF level qualification, embedding informal and interactive approaches to meet the learning outcomes. This has involved a variety of different programmes, including: supporting S1 pupils to develop essential skills such as working with others; developing S2

pupils' knowledge around health and wellbeing and healthier choices, and in S3 and upwards focusing on community empowerment and positive pathways to senior phase. My health and wellbeing work with S2 pupils builds on what is offered in PSE classes and the S1 Award, and provides further support for pupils who feel they need it. Pupils also work towards a Dynamic Youth Award.

Learning opportunities are also offered outside of the school day. Young people attend school and community-based options in partnership with supporting teachers and youth work staff. This has allowed for further accreditation to be offered around the John Muir Award. This example builds on work that is undertaken in partnership with Finlaystone Country Estate, where the young people work with the Countryside Ranger Team to undertake conservation activities. It has been found that this creates a positive sense of self, with young people feeling happier, more resilient and increases mental health.

Building on from activities offered in S2, pupils nearer the senior phase years are offered the chance to engage in community projects; achieving SQA Awards in Volunteering, Self and Work and Community Achievement.

In consultation with pupils we have had successful projects around:

- Intergenerational Learning (board games, garden furniture projects)
- Peer Learning projects (bicycle maintenance, sport and fitness and team building projects)
- Community Involvement (supporting local garden projects).

These opportunities allow for participants to develop essential skills, such as communication, which will support their transition to college, employment and training. Pupils are also provided with the pathway to participate in their Bronze DofE Award.

I also support the school with parental engagement, establishing strong relationships with parents. This encourages them to engage with the school and support their child's learning. These relationships have been important to help them understand the value of different learning options and pathways, such as wider achievement and community-based opportunities.

Collaborating with a range of partners, including the school, primary schools, community organisations, and most importantly young people, allows me to support young people through and into sustainable pathways.



Opinion

Neil Hendry, Head Teacher at Lochside Academy in Aberdeen on why schools should look to youth work to build skills and improve destinations for pupils.



Over the past 15 years, I have been fortunate to see first-hand how youth work in schools offers significant opportunities for young people in education. Part of the success of any youth work in schools partnership, is the genuine two-way collaboration with schools and youth work staff. At Lochside Academy, our youth work and schools partnership sits on the remit of one of our Deputy Head Teachers, allowing the school to support both the strategic and day-to-day business of our youth work offer.

The Youth Work and Schools (YWS) team also have a permanent base, giving them a sense of belonging and ensuring pupils know where to find staff when needed. We strive to give the Youth Work in Schools team the opportunity to work from P6/7 (supporting transition into Academy) to S6 (developing leadership opportunities).

They provide an informal learning approach to meet the needs of groups and individuals. Youth workers plan and deliver fun, interactive activities, building on the skills, knowledge and interests of our young people and supporting them to reflect

on their own personal learning and achievements.

The team offer Accredited Learning through Dynamic Youth Awards (SCQF 3) which helps young people to build a portfolio, demonstrating their personal achievements and goals. This is delivered to a small group of S1/2 pupils over lunchtime and on a one-to-one basis for senior pupils, as requested, to add to their formal qualifications for transitioning to further education.

Since Lochside Academy opened in August 2018, 46 young people have taken part in one-to-one sessions to support interpersonal skills and knowledge, confidence, self-esteem and resilience. Targeted individuals have the opportunity to address specific issues e.g. social skills, self-awareness, actions and consequences and confidence to cook. Our young people are offered four-week sessions with the option to continue after each four week block.

As part of the transition to Lochside Academy, senior students volunteer in cooking and STEM workshops for the P7s at the Youth Work in Schools Summer Activities for young people.

One of our senior pupils gained a Saltire Award for his work last year. The Youth Work in Schools team also supports senior pupils undertaking volunteering opportunities to develop leadership skills by running art groups in feeder primary schools. The team works with targeted groups from the feeder primary schools to further support their transition to secondary school. This involves the young people participating in a ten week programme to develop their confidence in readiness of their move to secondary school.

I would recommend any school to consider what Youth Work in Schools can bring to your community. The approach of a Youth Work in Schools team will offer a very different set of skills in engaging with young people in your school. The relationships which are formed with the YWS team are very different to those formed with other professionals working in your school. A strong Youth Work in Schools strategy in any school will provide learning opportunities for young people so that they can develop their full potential and reach positive destinations.

Youth Awards

Raising Attainment and Recognising Achievement

Jim Duffy, Secretary, the Awards Network, sets out the added value Youth Awards bring to a young person's educational journey, and ultimately to their attainment and future life direction.

Youth work is a vibrant and vital component of our educational landscape, engaging over 380,000 young people across Scotland and contributing alongside schools and others to the learning and skills development of our young people. Youth work organisations often recognise such achievements through youth work awards. The Awards Network, established in 2008 to promote the awareness and uptake of youth work awards, has a vision that 'Awards are widely valued and recognised as critical evidence of every young person's learning and achievement'.

Year of Young People 2018 (YOYP) provided a fantastic opportunity to highlight such achievements and the contribution that young people make to their communities and wider society.

But what of the longer term legacy? During a debate to mark YOYP, the Scottish Parliament acknowledged the work of the Awards Network and unanimously called on the Scottish Government:

'to work with educational bodies, employers and young people themselves to build on the work of the Network to ensure that youth awards are recognised to be as valuable as traditional qualifications, as a legacy for Scotland's Year of Young People.'

Policy developments

- The 15-to-24 Learner Journey Review (May 2018) has established a commitment that every learner will have an online account to record attributes, skills and qualifications in a way that helps them better plan their learner journey into work. *'Our approach will recognise wider achievements and informal learning, so that all young people have the opportunity to develop a personal statement and clearly articulate the skills gained and achievements made whilst in school'*
- The National Group on Recognising Wider Learning and Achievement has been established, bringing together school, youth work, SQA, SDS and other stakeholders to identify and share good practice
- The #SQAfutures report which gathered views of young people on changes required of our education system, highlighted the need for youth awards to be delivered alongside traditional subjects and the need to raise awareness of youth work awards. The report also recommended that extra-curricular activities should be better recognised by employers, universities, and other opportunity providers, as equally important to academic qualifications.



Case Study

Youth Awards

– West Calder High School

For one school in West Lothian, Youth Achievement Awards are completing the circle of education, enhancing academic achievement and supporting young people to climb to the summit of their learning.

The school offers Youth Achievement Awards as a subject choice, demonstrating a commitment to pupils' personal development and the importance of transferable skills.

"Adopting this model, where pupils are taking increased responsibility not just for their own learning but for planning and leading activities within their school community, is developing a range of skills that are essential for their future learning and employment. Staff have noticed a real increase in pupil's self-confidence as they progress through their award. One pupil who was previously reserved addressed a whole school assembly at her own request, something that she would never have done prior to doing her award." Assistant Head of House.

West Calder High School successfully submitted 23 Gold (SCQF Level 6) and 13 Platinum (SCQF Level 7) Youth Achievement Awards in June 2018.

What was the impact?

97% said, as a result of the YAA, they have a more positive view of themselves and are much better at working with others, and 100% of pupils reported being much better at solving problems and making decisions.

All of these are serving to position youth work awards at the heart of wider learning and achievement.

Innovative partnerships between school and youth work are helping to break down barriers between formal and non-formal learning, with youth work awards being harnessed in a range of settings.

There is growing acknowledgement within the formal education sector around the potential of youth awards to support critical skills aiding employability. An increasing number of schools are now offering these awards as learner journey options, often in partnership with youth work organisations.

CBI Scotland Director, Tracy Black points to the value of 'soft skills' such as communication, interpersonal and timekeeping skills developed through volunteering, a key component of most youth awards:

"Whilst academic qualifications are highly important, employers tell us that it's the right attitude and aptitude skills that young people bring to the workplace that are critical".

Youth work awards are not just promoting and facilitating achievement. A growing body of evidence highlights how youth award

achievements can motivate young people to re-engage in learning. An increasing number of youth work awards are recognised on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), offering opportunities to secure a recognised qualification.

This can be particularly crucial to closing the attainment gap for young people who are less likely to achieve through formal routes. An added attraction for schools is that such awards can also deliver Insight tariff points too.

However, tariff points alone should not be the driver for which, if any, youth awards might be valued and/or incorporated within a school offer. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Queen's Scout and similar awards are held in high regard by employers and the wider community for the skills they develop but are not credit-rated. Awards such as the John Muir Award or the Girlguiding Young Leader Award are similarly not on the SCQF but can provide critical evidence to support attainment of other credit-rated awards.

What is important is that young people have the opportunity to access a curriculum that comprises of a mix of formal and non-formal learning, that is suited to their interests, and designed to meet

the needs of their learner journey. It would be disappointing to learn that appropriate opportunities were denied to young people simply because they were felt by some not to deliver a sufficiency of tariff points.

Significant strides are being made in recognising the value of youth work awards. Yet challenges remain. Many young people do not have opportunities to access these awards or to have their achievements recognised, valued and celebrated.

A Review of Youth Awards in Scotland outlined a range of key strengths, but also noted that: 'A lack of detailed knowledge and awareness of the full range of awards available, particularly in schools, is leading to missed opportunities'. To ensure that young people do not miss out, more schools, organisations and individuals – teachers, youth workers, employers, parents and young people themselves – need to grow their awareness and review their practice with respect to the use and recognition of youth awards. A good starting point would be to visit the Awards Network's website and sign up as Awards Aware at www.awardsnetwork.org/ awardaware.

Staff at West Calder High School have recognised that pupils are often involved in much more than their academic studies, actively participating in a varied non-formal curriculum and contributing to the wider school community.

Youth Scotland's Youth Achievement Awards (YAA) have provided a way to capture wider achievement and enable pupils to recognise and evidence their skills development.

The plan-do-review structure of the award has helped pupils to think about what they hoped to achieve through becoming involved in activities and reflect on their success. The approach has helped with their academic studies as it encourages critical thinking, planning and reviewing.

S5 pupil, Emma, undertook her Gold YAA by planning and leading activities for a primary school transition group at a residential centre over

the summer. She also planned and organised an activity day and led sports and teamwork sessions in one of West Calder High School's feeder primaries.

By working towards her own qualification, Emma also supported younger pupils to attain their Dynamic Youth Awards. Talking about her experience she said:

"I feel that my confidence at the start was not the best. I was not really talking to the kids that much and would let everyone else lead. I feel that my confidence now is much better. I am talking to them more and feel more confident speaking to people."

Youth Achievement Awards are Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) credit rated and Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) customised awards. The school can count these towards their attainment statistics and gain 'Insight' tariff points.

Case Study

Youth Awards

– The Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Scotland

Jim Gill, Deputy Head Teacher at Craigie High School in Dundee is one of many educators in Scotland who believe wider achievement makes that difference for pupils who are struggling with formal education.



“DofE is about how we engage with young people to help them get more experience and do things that they never thought they could do before. We have a huge number of young people who potentially have real barriers to experiencing different things, so if we can provide that for them it’s incredible.”

Over the last five years, the number of local authority schools with an active Duke of Edinburgh's Award group has risen from 62% to 87%. A significant number of these schools have been within communities from the lowest 30% deciles.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Scotland (DofE) is committed to 'Closing the Achievement Gap' and the organisation has been working with local authority partners, to identify areas of the country where participation has been low and to address these gaps in provision.

DofE Scotland has worked closely with specific donors who have invested £600,000 in the last four years. These funders are committed to supporting the DofE, to bring alive their ambition of reaching all young people that want to take part in the programme.

The DofE believes passionately in the benefits the programme can bring to young people, and the role it can play in supporting young people to make a successful transition from school into further, higher education or the world of work.

Bronze, Silver and Gold Award holder David achieved his DofE Awards with Auchenharvie Academy in North Ayrshire. Since leaving school, David has become a Modern Apprentice with the Council:

“I wasn't doing the best in school, so I was offered the chance to do my DofE Award to keep me interested. Compared to sitting inside in a French class it was great. If I hadn't had the opportunity to do my DofE I probably wouldn't have stayed in school. I was grateful for the experience.”

Impact of DofE for young people with barriers – Glenwood High School in Fife

Glenwood High value their partnership with DofE and the confidence, team work, resilience, problem solving and improved wellbeing that students undertaking a DofE Award achieve.

They believe the results for pupils are clear, making the journey through an Award positively impacts on literacy and numeracy through contextualised learning.

DofE provides a recognised framework which allows students to demonstrate their skills and experiences in applications and interviews for college, higher education, apprenticeships and employment. The school used Scottish Attainment Challenge funding to purchase equipment and fund places on DofE to remove barriers to participation.

The results

80% of young people said DofE allowed them to reflect on learning and gain an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses.

DofE increased confidence and improved mental health. 96% said it gave them a sense of achievement and 81% increased their motivation.

To find out more and support young people from all backgrounds to achieve their DofE Award, get in touch: Scotland@DofE.org.

Case Study



East Ayrshire

Yipworld, based in Cumnock, East Ayrshire, are an essential bridge to learning for young people in the local community, helping them to increase wellbeing, develop a range of personal and social skills as well as develop skills for learning, life and work. All fantastic youth work outcomes for young people! They are working in partnership with St Joseph's Academy, St Patrick's Primary and Auchlineck Academy to help close the poverty-related attainment gap.

How did the school and youth work partnership happen?

When the local schools were facing barriers to learning in the form of attendance and class engagement, it's perhaps not surprising that a partnership between Yipworld and the schools developed. The school leaders identified that they wanted to improve attendance and classroom engagement, improve employability skills and increase pupil support, in particular social and emotional development – all drivers they believed would help to close the attainment gap.

Yipworld, already an established youth drop-in centre with a local reputation for supporting young

people's learning and wellbeing, was asked to provide targeted workshops focused on helping young people develop employability skills and achieve SCQF level alternative qualifications. They now work in several schools in the local community delivering a range of interventions and support in response to barriers to learning that the school staff identified. This has included life and employment skills workshops and providing one-to-one student support.

What was the impact?

There has been a really positive impact on the young people involved. Youth workers have noted improved wellbeing, confidence and aspirations, development of

skills for learning, life and work and reduced feelings of social isolation. Additionally, teachers have reported that students have been more engaged in classroom activities.

"They have provided outstanding support to some of our most vulnerable young people, many of whom are at risk of disengaging from education and not moving on to positive and sustainable destinations when they leave school." Martin Robertson, Head Teacher, Auchinleck Academy.



Youth Work

a guide for schools

This guide sits alongside other resources intended to inform decision making on the use of Pupil Equity Funding and approaches within wider school improvement planning for excellence and equity in education.

YouthLink
Scotland
The national agency for youth work

What is youth work?

Youth work is:

- One strand of Community Learning and Development¹
- Part of the learning community, contributing to delivery of Curriculum for Excellence
- A recognised education practice that facilitates the personal, social and educational development of young people – promoting inclusion, equity and young people's interests and wellbeing

Youth work in Scotland is underpinned by three key principles, as set out in the Nature and Purpose of Youth Work:

- Young people choose to participate
- The work builds from where young people are
- The young person and youth worker are partners in the learning process

Some of the features which distinguish youth work from other professions that work with young people:

- Having a dedicated focus on young people
- Specialising in personal, social and educational development
- Being inclusive without being based on a singular interest, skill or capacity

What does it do?

The key purpose of youth work is to 'enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential'².

Youth work delivers person-centred informal learning and development, working with the young person as a whole, within their family and community. As a rights-based practice,

youth work offers opportunities for all young people, whilst making a unique contribution to those who are vulnerable.

Youth workers engage with children and young people through age and stage appropriate learning and activity. They use a diverse range of engagement tools and vehicles for learning to respond to the needs and priorities of children, young people, families and communities. This includes both universal youth work and targeted interventions.

Youth work's position within the wider school community puts youth workers in a unique place to build relationships with young people across school, home and community settings. This allows youth work to create links between school and community, to engage families and deliver family learning. Parental engagement and family learning are important aspects of youth work, particularly around transition points and when supporting young people through targeted interventions.

What does youth work offer schools?

Youth work is valuable for all children and young people, helping them to develop a broad range of skills, capacities and achievements to allow them to succeed. It complements and enhances delivery of the formal curriculum and should be an integral part of the learning experience for all pupils; raising attainment for all.

Scottish Attainment Challenge

As part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, youth work focuses on improving outcomes for children and young people who need it most. This includes addressing barriers to learning and offering flexible and tailored options and pathways for young people to develop and recognise skills and achievements. These improve attendance, engagement, attainment, health and wellbeing and school leaver destinations. Additionally, they support schools to focus on key approaches identified within the Interventions for Equity framework, in particular:

- Promoting a high quality learning experience
- Targeted approaches to literacy and numeracy
- Differentiated support
- Social and emotional wellbeing
- Partnership
- Promoting healthy lifestyles
- Employability and skills development
- Engaging beyond school



5 reasons to collaborate with youth work

Youth workers complement and enhance the formal curriculum and support for pupils, working collaboratively with teachers:

1. Providing a range of learning options for your pupils, including youth work awards to recognise wider achievement
2. Supporting your school improvement priorities through delivering tailored interventions for equity
3. Providing capacity to respond to areas of need within your school
4. Contributing to school improvement planning and self-evaluation, including evidencing progress towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap; and
5. Supporting you with parental engagement, connecting families and communities in school education and delivering family learning.

Support and further information

In many schools across Scotland, teachers and youth workers are collaborating to close the attainment gap. These partnerships bring complementing professional skills, knowledge and approaches together to enable schools to target and focus effort on those who need it most. Practice examples can be found at www.youthlinkscotland.org/programmes/closing-the-attainment-gap/

YouthLink Scotland is working in partnership with The Scottish Government Scottish Attainment Challenge Policy Unit and Education Scotland to further support collaboration between schools and youth work. The Youth Work & Schools Partnership Programme is helping schools to develop partnership with youth work and increase evidence of what works.



5 ways youth work is closing the gap

1. Overcoming barriers to learning

The National Improvement Framework (NIF) acknowledges that supporting children and young people with their broader needs is an essential element to raise attainment and close the poverty-related attainment gap.

Social and emotional wellbeing

Youth workers are particularly skilled in engaging and supporting the hardest to reach. They use a trauma informed approach and range of engagement and learning tools through which young people increase their social and emotional wellbeing. This includes those that focus on early intervention and prevention, promoting healthy lifestyles, building resilience and tackling health inequalities.



Learning loss and holiday hunger

Youth work also addresses barriers to learning through breakfast clubs, after school provision and school holiday programmes. School holiday programmes counter disproportionate learning loss in literacy and numeracy, and help address the broader needs of families impacted by 'holiday hunger'.

Learning in health and wellbeing

Youth work also offers a range of activities and learning options to complement formal learning in health and wellbeing; ensuring children and young people develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes which they need for mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. This may include providing support and information services in a confidential space within the school, co-delivering PSE lessons, outdoor learning, group work, pupil support and youth work awards.

2. Parental engagement and family learning

Parental engagement is an important element of closing the attainment gap. Family learning, as distinct from parental engagement, is an important aspect of youth work, particularly around periods of transition and in delivering targeted interventions.

3. Youth participation and pupil voice

Youth work supports the National Improvement Framework focus on empowerment, supporting children and young people to participate in their own learning and in the life and work of their school and wider community.

Youth workers support young people in their community or within school to have their voice heard, for example through a youth voice or participation group. This can encourage engagement with learning and contributes to raising attainment.

4. Wider learning and achievement

Youth work plays a central role in ensuring all young people have opportunity to undertake wider learning and achievement, both within school and in the wider community.

Wider achievement plays an important role in a young person's learner journey and in closing the attainment gap. Youth work awards provide opportunities to recognise young people's achievements, complementing formal learning and increasing attainment. Recognising wider achievement is important for all young people, but can be particularly crucial to closing the attainment gap for young people who are less likely to achieve through formal routes. Working towards a youth work award can increase attendance, engagement and attainment.

5. Employability and skills development

Youth work contributes to Developing the Young Workforce, helping young people develop employability skills and progress to positive and sustained post-school destinations. This can include specific employability programmes, volunteering, peer mentoring and enterprise projects. In addition, employers are increasingly recognising the value of youth work and youth work awards in developing and demonstrating young people's skills and achievements.

For advice or support regarding the role of youth work within your school community please contact Marielle Bruce, Youth Work & Schools Partnerships Manager on mbruce@youthlinkscotland.org | tel: 01 31 313 2488

Case Study

Aberdeenshire

Charting a course for positive futures, the Gear Up 2 Go project is working with schools in Portlethen to help young people make positive transitions to employment, training, and further education.

The Gear Up 2 Go project has been delivered at Portlethen Academy since 2012, thanks to funding from Enerquip. Pupils in S4, S5, and S6 take part in workshops focused on career skills including; CV writing, interviewing, and job searching. Young people also benefit from college and workplace visits and training activities provided by local employers. The programme puts an emphasis on building young people's aspirations for a positive future, increasing confidence and providing tailored support to plan their next steps.

How did the school and youth work partnership happen?

Ensuring positive destinations for school leavers has been a longstanding concern, shared by various stakeholders in the local area.

Young people have seen a decrease in jobs available in Aberdeenshire and, at the same time, greater competition for training programmes

and places in further education. For some young people, this has caused anxieties about finding their pathway to a successful future. Gear Up 2 Go strives to remedy this.

Local employers, for their part, have raised concerns about a lack of work readiness among young people, and schools in Aberdeenshire, alongside those nationwide, have had to become ever more innovative in assisting pupils to gain the right skills for work.

The initial Gear Up 2 Go programme was a targeted intervention programme. It was developed through a partnership between the Portlethen Youth Work team (part of CLD), Portlethen Academy, Skills Development Scotland, local employers, training providers, and further education institutions.

After eight years of delivering the programme, the wider Work with Young People team within

Aberdeenshire Community Learning and Development is now replicating the project at other secondary schools across the local area.

What was the impact?

The impact on young people's engagement and destinations has been extremely positive. Last year, 100% of participants in the programme either chose to continue at school or went on to employment, education, or training. In addition, youth workers, teachers, and young people themselves have observed strong improvements in participants' employability skills, mental wellbeing, and attainment at school.

"Gear Up 2 Go is consistently one of our most important initiatives. The project is transformative for young people's self-esteem and future opportunities." Depute Head Teacher, Portlethen Academy

Who are youth workers?

There are 80,000 youth work practitioners across Scotland, supporting and engaging nearly 400,000 children and young people every week. The practitioner role is underpinned by the national occupational standards, values, ethics, and competences of the CLD Standards Council

Youth work is a relationship-based practice. This has been identified by young people as a key element of the sector's success in engaging and delivering outcomes with them.

The role of the youth worker as a trusted adult for vulnerable children and young people was highlighted by NHS Health Scotland, as important in preventing and responding to Adverse Childhood Experiences; playing a significant role in re-engaging children and young people in learning.

Youth Work Outcomes

Youth work helps young people to develop across each of the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence. These capacities are embedded within the National Youth Work Outcomes.

The outcomes and indicators help young people to recognise and articulate their skills and capacities. This includes those that can be more difficult to teach in the classroom – including confidence, resilience, and life skills.

The National Youth Work Outcomes are also used to evidence impact and self-evaluate for continued improvement. This can be particularly valuable to help schools measure the impact of interventions on health and wellbeing, attainment, attendance, engagement and participation, and to understand what works.

Youth Work Outcomes

1. Young people are confident, resilient and optimistic for the future
2. Young people manage personal, social and formal relationships
3. Young people create, describe and apply their learning and skills
4. Young people participate safely and effectively in groups
5. Young people consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control
6. Young people express their voice and demonstrate social commitment
7. Young people broaden their perspectives through new experiences and thinking

Feature Interview

Sarah Paterson, Head of Public Affairs for the national youth work agency speaks to Education Scotland's Chief Executive about the place of youth work within schools and wider education, and why the sector has a pivotal role to play in closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Gayle Gorman is Education Scotland's first female leader, taking up her post 18 months ago, at a time when the country's largest teaching union had labelled the executive agency, a 'damaged brand'. It would be fair to say that her tenure began in the midst of difficult times for education but where there are challenges, there are also opportunities.

What is striking about Ms Gorman is the candid approach she takes to these challenges. She is very honest about the complexities of the current situation within education and the need for a more cohesive and strategic system to tackle the inequities faced by children and young people.

In terms of her leadership style, she describes this in one word *"collaborative"*, and believes it is only by collective leadership that we will improve outcomes for Scotland's young people. As part of that drive for a sharper strategic overview, she has overseen a move to a more 'on the ground' structure for Education Scotland.

ES has now moved to a regional delivery model, with the aim of supporting improvement and capacity building at local, regional and national level. CLD staff are now part of Regional Teams. Each team is headed up by a Senior Regional Advisor. These six teams are based on the geographies of the Regional Collaboratives.

And it is through this revised structure that Gayle Gorman hopes to cement the role of youth work as a key component of the education system.

"It's really important through these new structures within Education Scotland, we learn collectively and make sure that youth work has a voice at the

table, which often it does not.... Youth work cuts across all our programmes and we have a distinct CLD team, who work across all the various activities to do with youth work and they are much more embedded and will continue to be so, in terms of the way we work."

Crucial to her vision going forward, and working towards closing the poverty-related attainment gap, is an emphasis on looking at education in the round.

"What's key is that it's not just about schools, settings and teachers, and that's why Education Scotland's strapline is: 'With Scotland's Educators, For Scotland's Learners'. Children are part of communities, we live in families, they work in lots of different ways, they experience lots of different things, and as councils and schools now work in a much more holistic way, it's important the national system reflects that as well."

"If we fundamentally believe in GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child), then we can't look at education in a vacuum inside a school, because young people don't inhabit that world in isolation. So it's important for us that we look to have a wider scope. It's about youth work, informal learning, and formal learning. It's about various situations, it's about the location that works for young people, that works for that community, that family, rather than just looking through a narrow lens."

"Looking at some of the lifelong learning approaches, like the learner journey review, it's about trying to get that wider perspective. I think there is greater recognition of the impact of youth work but also a greater focus, and I welcome that. It's really needed within the system and makes such a difference to outcomes for young people."

As a youth work sector, we are all too aware of the life enriching and often life changing nature of youth work for many young people. When it comes to political rhetoric, every political party talks about the positive impact youth work has on mental health, skills for work, attainment and achievement, so how do we integrate this into our education system when it's clear so many decision makers believe in the efficacy of youth work practice?

"You're right, that's something we all believe in, I think anyone in education, fundamentally believes in. For me, we have seen a significant shift, the catalyst being the funding through the Pupil Equity Fund. We are seeing schools taking a different view around how they can best support families, as well as learners. Many schools are looking at youth work provision from both the public and the third sector as one of the options they are spending that funding on."

"By involving youth work within their offer, they are seeing the impact, and that is causing a further shift, which has been heartening to see. There are lots of individual testimonials and we are starting to see a real focus in the Regional Improvement Collaborative plans, also in individual schools, and associated school group plans, where sometimes they are pulling their resources to then have a big youth work approach."

Gayle Gorman certainly has experience of the transformative power of youth work and schools partnerships, during her time as Director of Education and Children's Services with Aberdeen City Council, in Cambridgeshire County Council where she was Director of Learning, and earlier in her career in education.

"Youth work in schools does improve attainment, I have first-hand experience of that through a number of Local Authorities I've worked in. Where we've looked at targeted programmes, we've had youth workers embedded in some secondary schools and they've been able to re-engage young people back into education

and bring their families back into positive relationships as well. To see that and then to see the young people come through and achieve youth accreditation and qualifications, have a very positive outlook, and go onto further learning as well, is hugely significant. I know from my own experience the impact and positive life outcomes it gives young people."

There are many positive developments in the area of youth work and schools partnerships, the examples in this publication only really scratch the surface but we know that, just as there are significant challenges for the formal education sector, there are also significant challenges for the youth work sector. On this issue, Education Scotland's Chief Executive is realistic about the landscape for youth work, both historically, and moving forward.

"If we're honest, sometimes youth work hasn't had a place at the table, and it's been something of an 'add on', rather than being in with the bricks of education and part of the discussion. So, I think we must not be naïve, although there has been a shift, this is still an issue. There are always challenges we face in terms of finance, and ensuring we hang onto the core local authority teams across the country, and continue to support third sector youth work organisations."

"The skills and expertise the youth work sector hold, let alone community knowledge and relationships, are really significant. There is a challenge as well around some of the re-organisation that is going on in local authorities. How and where should youth work sit in those teams, with this restructuring and reorganisation going on, how do you ensure that CLD and youth work is kept together."

So does Gayle Gorman believe that every young person should have access to youth work, both targeted and universal?

"Yes, I think it's really important that we are able to ensure that those young people who want to access youth work, have that access. Youth work makes a significant difference to communities, as well as the young people involved, so fundamentally yes."



A partnership that tackles the penalty of inequality

Since 2008, The Spartans Community Football Academy has been working with the local community and their partners to deliver programmes and initiatives that have a meaningful, and in some cases, lasting positive social impact in North Edinburgh.

Spartans are helping to close the poverty related attainment gap, delivering innovative education programmes, some of them in partnership with others, some of them in schools and others at The Academy. The delivery style and teaching philosophy behind their education programmes is underpinned by a 'building a bridge of trust – building relationships' model. The programme aims to provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive modern place to play, socialise and take part in a range of fun activities.



Here for good.

The youth and children's provisions are always free to the young people who attend. This helps to remove a key barrier to participation and the associated stigma of being unable to access leisure and social activities. Every week over 80-100 young people enjoy free supervised access to the community football pitch where they can come along and play football in a safe place, as part of the 'Street Football in a Safe Place' provision.

The 'Alternative School'

The Academy uses the power of sport and a youth work led approach as the hooks which encourage young people to engage with this Alternative School.

By working in partnership with Edinburgh's schools they provide a more flexible, tailored learning pathway for those students who need more one-to-one support.

This successful model is learner-centred and provides students with a timetable which is built around their areas of interest such as music, art or sport. The timetable includes: academic subjects; physical activity; personal and emotional development; one-to-one coaching and counselling sessions; preparing for employment (through work experience); and lastly the development of essential life skills like cooking. The Alternative School is led by an English Teacher who has taken a career break to work at The Academy, alongside youth workers, to lead and build the programmes on offer.

Many of the students who benefit from attending are facing real challenges in their lives. Other students come from difficult family circumstances, may be care experienced young people and/or are being looked after by a parent/

carer who has mental health related and/or substance related issues. The Academy can provide some consistency in their lives and the support to build resilience and good emotional wellbeing.

Douglas Samuel explains the impact of their youth work and schools programme:

"Our impact on most of the students we have worked with over the past 2-4 years has been very positive. It's been wonderful to see students who had perhaps been written off (in some cases by themselves) come through and achieve nationally recognised qualifications at our alternative school."

"Of the seven S4 and S5 leavers in June 2018, all achieved N4 English, three achieved N5 Literacy, two achieved N4 Maths and all achieved a N3 or N4 Maths qualification relevant

to or exceeding their predicted ability levels. As well as this, four achieved N4 'Steps to Work' and all sustained a work experience placement for over six months. All of these students, who before were not attaining, are now in positive destinations. Our current S4 cohort are exceeding other people's expectations of academic success.

"Like all youth work provision, it may be several years down the road when one of our students is able to reflect on, bank and apply things they learnt at our Alternative School. We know that academic success and raising attainment for each individual can boost confidence levels and open doors which will, in turn, have a clear positive impact into adulthood."

Youth Work in Primary Schools

The Academy's youth workers are based in some local primary schools for one full day a week where they mentor young people one-to-one who need extra personal, social or emotional support. It enables youth workers to spot and highlight any concerns early on. In addition, these youth workers provide support for and work with small groups of students to help them develop and grow in a less formal environment, at their own pace.

Youth workers are valued members of school staff teams, communicating the same core messages to pupils but their connection to The Academy 'blue coat' means that young people often feel more comfortable approaching them when they need help or support with a problem.

The Academy's community coaches and youth workers facilitate lunchtime and after-school play in local primary schools and deliver curriculum football-based PE sessions. Pupils receive structured, quality physical activity sessions, can interact and engage with our staff and are encouraged to come along to The Academy. We aim to inspire and motivate pupils to be physically active and develop their social, teamwork and football skills in a safe and supportive environment.

Homework clubs are delivered in local primary schools, in some cases in partnership with others. Pupils enjoy homework support that may not be available at home, and physical activity in the 'game of two halves' based approach.

Youth Work in High Schools

In partnership with the Scottish Football Association we deliver the 'School of Football' programme at Craigroyston Community High School. Football is used as a vehicle to inspire and motivate pupils who may be facing challenges at school. An added benefit of this programme is many of the participants will who attend the open-access youth work provision also sign-up to volunteer with the Academy.

Community-based youth work

Spartans also deliver a range of community-based youth work, strengthening community cohesion by becoming a focal point for a range of community-based activities and programmes.

One of the most popular and successful groups is the Fun Fuelled Club. Youth workers provide young people with opportunities for multi-

sport activities and a safe space to socialise. Food insecurity can be an issue for some families and in the Fun Fuelled Clubs everyone gets a nutritious evening meal. This approach extends into the Spartans AM Breakfast Club. Launched by ambassador Tom Kitchin, young people aged 10-to-14 can have breakfast and take part in fun games and activities on Saturday mornings. The club is growing in popularity and now has a regular core of about 15-20 young people, many of whom are referred by local Head Teachers.

Spartans Community Football Academy have built strong links and communication between schools, the local community and their own organisation. Theirs' is an outstanding example of the positive impact a youth work approach, in partnership with schools, can deliver when we bring informal and formal education together.



The measure of youth work

How can you measure the benefit of youth work?
Julian Burton, Youth Work & Schools Impact Officer, talks about the importance of impact.

Youth work changes lives. It provides opportunities for personal achievement and community involvement, supports life and social skills, promotes physical and mental wellbeing, and opens pathways to employment, further education, and positive futures. Positive experiences in areas like these directly impact school success – particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people, who often face a lack of other sources of support and stability. Yet the impact of youth work on raising attainment and closing the attainment gap is often underestimated and can be challenging to thoroughly measure and effectively communicate.

In communicating youth work's impact, it's useful to be able to draw connections with youth-oriented policy priorities like those of the Scottish Attainment Challenge and to articulate how youth work directly addresses the day-to-day concerns of local stakeholders like teachers and school leaders.

Measuring Our Impact

Comprehensive, accurate impact evaluation benefits everyone. It helps youth work organisations identify the aspects of their provision that are providing the greatest benefit. It helps funders understand what their investments are achieving, and community stakeholders identify areas of useful partnership. It provides schools and other statutory services with compelling reasons to work with youth work to improve overall provision.

Best practices in impact evaluation involve clearly defined outcomes for

young people. It means measurable indicators for success; a combination of large-scale quantitative data with in-depth personal experiences to produce a picture of both what the impact is and how it's being achieved. Inclusion of multiple perspectives, including those of young people, youth work professionals, and other stakeholders; and approaches that ensure robust data is gathered with minimal impact on young people's experiences and youth workers' time. This can be challenging – especially for small, local youth work organisations already short on time, staff and funding.

Supporting Impact Evaluation across the Sector

YouthLink Scotland's Youth Work and Schools Partnership programme is undertaking two new projects to help improve the youth work sector's capacity to communicate our impact on young people's attainment.

The first is a national study involving dozens of local organisations and hundreds of young people, intended to produce large-scale evidence of impact across a variety of different community contexts and kinds of youth work offerings. This study will take place until the end of 2020. And the second is a series of free professional development workshops on impact evaluation. These events are designed to provide youth work staff, volunteers, and leaders with tools to build clear evidence of the outcomes your work produces for young people.



Case Study

North Ayrshire

Why pupil participation can play a central role in raising attainment and achievement

Giving young people a platform to have their voices heard locally, nationally and in some cases, internationally, is a key role of North Ayrshire Council's Youth Services Team, as Youth Work Manager, Donna Anderson explains.

Youth Work Services provide a range of opportunities across North Ayrshire to help young people build self-confidence, develop skills, encourage active citizenship and close the attainment gap.

Pupil participation is at the heart of Curriculum for Excellence, ensuring young people have the knowledge, attributes and skills needed to be active citizens and effective contributors. It improves engagement, attainment and achievement and contributes to closing the poverty related attainment gap¹.

Youth workers support young people to participate in their own learning and in the life and work of their school and

wider community. They help young people develop the confidence and skills to make their voices heard and meaningfully participate in decisions that affect their lives. Opportunities for youth participation can be key to engaging young people in learning, increasing their sense of belonging within the school or community and helping them develop important life skills such as teamwork, problem-solving and citizenship.

Essentially, our role is to provide young people with opportunities to stand up and be counted.

We work with young people aged 12-to-25 to enable them to play an active role in their communities. This could

include taking part in youth forums, joining committees and representing their peers at council meetings, as well as organising events and activities in their local area.

With around a quarter of children in North Ayrshire living in poverty, we are under no illusion about the challenges and circumstances many of our young people face every day. Yet in the last year alone we have had over 23,000 engagements with young people. How? We believe it's because our youth participation opportunities are exciting, free and meaningful. And because our youth workers create safe spaces for young people to express their voice, without judgement.

In all our youth work programmes we involve young people in decision making from the start – they help us to develop new ideas and initiatives which then empowers them to take ownership of the actions and deliver some really great results – it's community empowerment at its best.

Working to close the attainment gap, we have a variety of programmes, delivered in schools and in the wider community, ensuring there are opportunities that will engage and inspire all young people. Some are focused on supporting young people to engage with their own learning and decision-making in their school or local community, while other initiatives aim to get them heard on a national platform. To encourage and nurture their enthusiasm, we promote a number of national initiatives such as the Scottish Youth Parliament, along with many high-profile campaigns. As part of the 'Votes at 16' campaign two of our young people attended the Old Bailey in London to represent Scotland's case for electoral reform to lower the voting age from 18 to 16 in all UK elections and referendums.

Campaigns are something Youth Services and North Ayrshire's young people do best. Earlier this year, these efforts were recognised when we received a National Youth Work Award

for our mental health and wellbeing campaign, '13 Ways to Support a Friend'. The series of animations, created by young people, highlight real-life situations and scenarios that young people deal with on a daily basis and offer advice on how to support someone they think may be struggling.

As a Council, North Ayrshire is committed to strengthening the voice of young people and we work closely with Education and other colleagues to support young people to participate in a variety of opportunities. This has included the Council's holiday hunger programme, where young people co-designed the branding and name of the project, 'Wrap, Run and Fun', helped to plan the programme and volunteered in the clubs. We also support young people to engage in the Council's Participatory Budgeting approach, giving them real decision-making influence over funding allocations, including those aimed at closing the attainment gap in their school.

We also help to facilitate the Joint Cabinet Approach. North Ayrshire Council's Cabinet, senior officers, Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament and the Youth Council Executive hold joint cabinet meetings in schools, to consult and engage directly with pupils on hard hitting subjects such as period poverty, cost of the school day and mental health. One young person said *"the question and answer session really showed that young people care about what North Ayrshire Council are doing and are confident enough to challenge this if they feel something is wrong."*

We always look for ways to recognise achievements and shine a light on the positive contribution that so many young people make to our communities, helping to challenge the negative image of young people. Through promoting all the positives, we are starting to see a change in perception with people beginning to see our young people for what they really are, amazing.

¹ www.cypcs.org.uk/ufiles/achievement-and-attainment.pdf

Spotlight on the Scottish Borders

One local authority, three schools, and partnerships that are proving the efficacy of bringing youth work into the heart of your curriculum.

In many aspects of youth work practice, the Borders are a great example of working for and with young people. Their focus on bringing all parts of the learning community together is resulting in real success for pupils across the region.

Peebles High School

Tweeddale Youth Action, based in Peebles, is a youth led organisation offering vulnerable, isolated and disadvantaged young people a safe space to help develop skills, confidence, self-esteem, a sense of pride in what they do and increased participation in their community. Their project has been most successful at supporting the significant number of children and young people facing challenges in their lives.

The project's mission is to support young people to achieve their potential on the journey from childhood to adulthood through a range of youth provision including: cookery classes, bike repair and maintenance classes, textiles and art classes, one-to-one support, trips away and casual drop-in sessions across two youth clubs.

Dave Hodson, the Locality Manager at Tweeddale Youth Action reminds us that inequality is often more complicated than SIMD.

"Anyone visiting the town of Peebles might assume there's no poverty related gap here, but there is. Because of what surrounds them, the impact of this gap can be quite stark for those young people. Add to this our rural location and the challenges this brings for all young people to access opportunities and pathways to learn, socialise and work – and that's the context of our learning community."

TYA uses creative and innovative youth work to re-engage young people in learning and development. Through their social enterprise projects, Bike Punks and Food Punks, young people are motivated back into learning through exciting real work experiences. Some are excluded from, or are on reduced timetables at school, others self-refer from the drop-in youth work provision.

At Bike Punks young people learn basic metalwork, working alongside a sculptor/instructor to create structures for clients, and servicing and hiring out electric bikes to the public. Young people engaging in Food Punks learn to cook and cater for community functions and events. In doing so, young people develop skills and experiences for learning, life and work. They have increased confidence and self-esteem, team working and communication skills – which are all important contributors to closing the attainment gap. In addition, TYA works with CLD to recognise and accredit young people's learning through Youth Achievement Awards.

TYA also works closely with Peebles High School, providing pupil support and alternative learning opportunities to close the attainment gap. TYA youth workers work closely with the Pastoral Team, supporting young

people with social and emotional issues through the school's Nurture Group. This collaboration also provides opportunity to create links between school and community, by benefiting from youth worker's existing relationships with young people who attend TYA's youth clubs.

Providing a different learning pathway enables achievement and attainment for these vulnerable young people, something Campbell Wilson, Rector of Peebles High School believes is key to pupils having opportunities to succeed:

"We now see Tweeddale Youth Action as a key partner for us in meeting the needs of the young people in our community who face the greatest barriers to their learning. The fact that their values are so in tune with the values of the school helps to ensure the outcomes for young people are as good as they can be. There are still a significant number of young people for whom we are not getting things right but we are sure, that in Tweeddale Youth Action, we have the right partner to fix this and we know that our transparent and honest relationship is key to getting the best outcomes for them."

Another part of the learning community of Peebles High School is Scottish Borders CLD youth work. CLD Youth Learning offers opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and confidence for everyday life. CLD youth workers provide learning opportunities both in school and in the community through youth clubs and groups, youth voice, transitions, accreditation and volunteering.

As part of this, they deliver wider achievement to pupils through Dynamic Youth and Youth Achievement Awards. These alternative pathways have been particularly important in raising attainment for pupils who are less likely to achieve their potential through school subjects.

Youth work is helping young people to develop CfE skills and competencies through informal learning and community engagement. These experiences are raising attainment, achievement and skills for all young people, including those affected by poverty.

Kelso High School

For Kelso High School, early engagement has been a key approach to identifying young people who need support. A small team of youth workers focus on building relationships with pupils, starting in Primary 6, through a tailored programme of youth work activity and wider achievement.

Small group work programmes are tailored to particular cohorts, identified in collaboration with school. These have included boys and girls groups to improve behaviour and attendance.

Youth work provides a safe, informal learning environment in the school to facilitate peer-learning, achievement and improvement. At the heart of this approach is the involvement of pupils, who co-produce a learning and development plan, which incorporates opportunities for wider achievement.

Being based in the school, and in a non-teaching role, allows youth workers the time to build relationships with young people and to help them to identify what lies behind their learning barriers. They also work closely with the Pastoral Team to provide more formal pupil support.

The school uses the Wellbeing Web to identify and track young people. This information is used within youth work interventions, to inform personal action plans and measure progress. This progress is also uploaded into SEEMIS, to ensure that support is well co-ordinated.

Working within the senior phase, youth work supports delivery of the SQA Volunteering Award, alongside a member of the Pastoral Team. This provides young people, who may be struggling to identify a post-school pathway, with volunteering opportunities in the local community. The impact of this on sustainable post-school destinations has been positive, with many progressing to employment within their volunteer placement or pursuing a further learning pathway.





what school can be for them. Having the time to build relationships and trust, we were able to get the young people on side and interested in what we were doing. This subsequently improved their participation in school almost immediately. For example, we were able to encourage PEF pupils to sign up and take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, something which the school had found challenging previously. I also helped run the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme and was present on the expeditions. The feedback from the young people was that this was a big positive. Knowing they had me there for extra support was one of the reasons they had signed up."

Jason supports the Pastoral Team and Senior Leadership Team by engaging with pupils who are at risk of exclusion. Throughout the day, Jason is a resource that allows pupils to be timetabled to his workspace, allowing them a safe, non-judgemental, non-formal setting to discuss challenges they are facing. This can include a soft start to the day approach or taking pupils out of classes where they are almost definitely going to struggle to learn or cause conflict.

"Young people at risk of exclusion are often in crisis. I try to provide a safe and trusting environment, where they can learn how to de-escalate, regain composure and calm down. I give them time and support to reflect on and address those issues that have led to that crisis. I support young people to identify the issues that are acting as a barrier to their learning and how those issues can be resolved. The youth worker role is different from that of a teacher and young people respond well. They are able to remain in school and re-engage with learning."

Mr Changleng, Depute Head Teacher at Galashiels Academy says his youth work partnership works:

"Our young people have benefited greatly from working in partnership with TD1. Jason is a central part of our PEF work and a valuable part of our response to young people at Galashiels Academy who require immediate support and care when they have gone into crisis or are experiencing issues that challenge them to get on with their learning."

Galashiels Academy

Galashiels Academy and TD1 Youth Hub are working in partnership to close the attainment gap through improving attendance and engagement. TD1 has a full-time youth worker based in the school, resourced by the Pupil Equity Fund. This worker engages with and supports young people living in SIMD deciles 1 to 3.

The Galashiels-based youth work organisation TD1 work with young people at their youth hub, out in the community and within the school. This provides a bridge between home, school and community, allowing TD1 youth workers to build positive relationships with young people, including the most difficult to engage.

TD1's Youth Development Coordinator, Jason MacKinnon, explains the practice and delivery of this successful youth work and schools partnership.

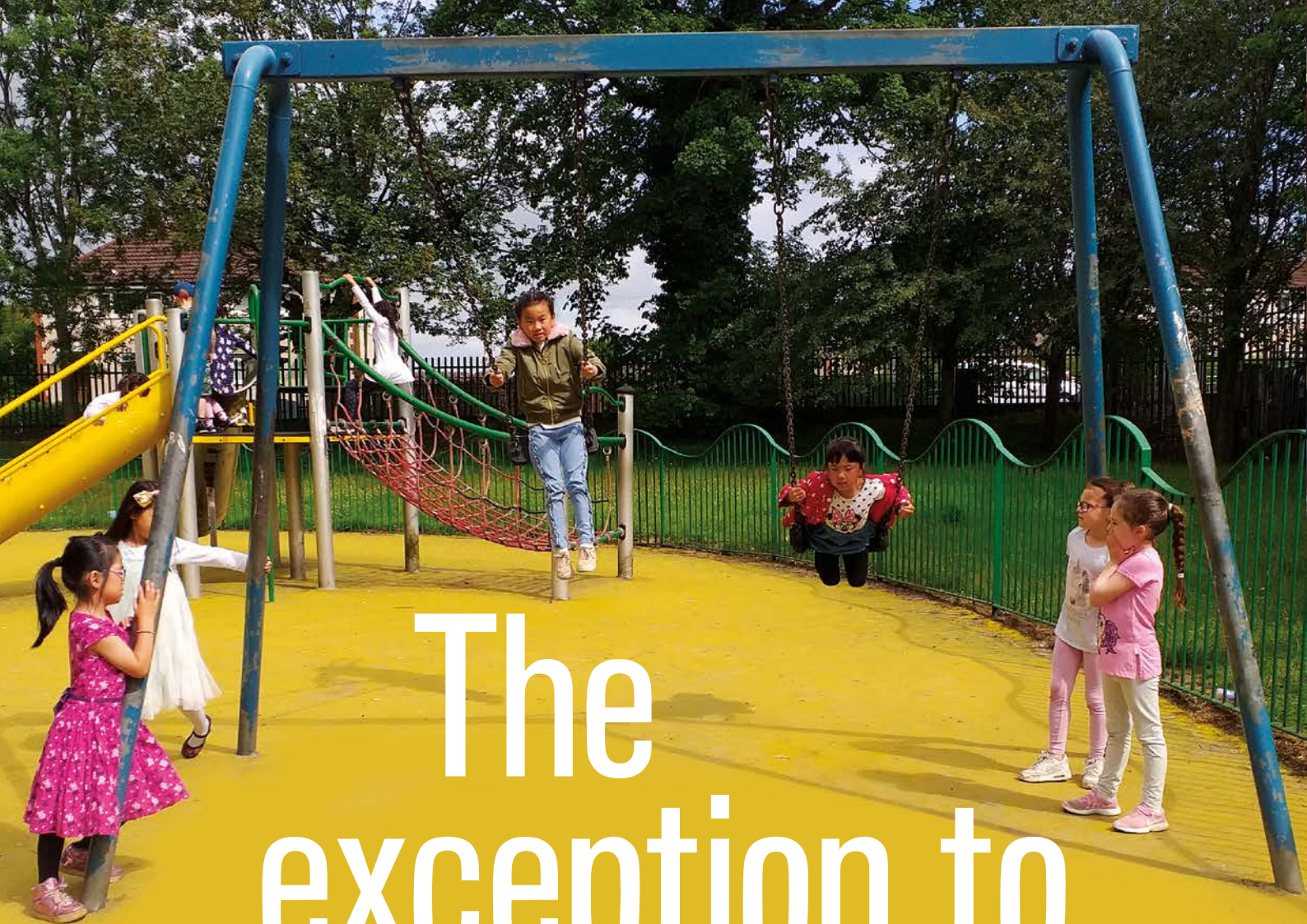
"We deliver a range of one-to-one and group work opportunities in Galashiels Academy. This includes emotional wellbeing, outdoor learning, wider achievement and after school drop-in activities. Evaluations have shown that these interventions have had a positive impact on young people's confidence, attendance, engagement and attainment."

Part of Jason's work involves delivering targeted work with small groups, involving S1 to S3 pupils who experience significant barriers to learning. This work focuses on increasing well-being and promoting positive mental health. It's about resilience and managing behaviour. He provides access to information and supports pupils to explore alternatives for resolving conflicts and difficulties as well as offering advice, practical and emotional support.

"One of our biggest successes has been changing young people's perception of what school is and

“ Every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be. ”
Rita Pierson, Educator





The exception to the rule



In an area of Glasgow which is in the 20% most deprived in Scotland, there is a school which is bucking the trend of poor attainment. St Andrew's RC Secondary School is not alone in facing multiple barriers to pupil's attainment so what is their success? It is in large part due to an innovative Youth Work and Schools Partnership.

Gerry Baldwin runs two youth work projects in Glasgow, Fuse Youth Café, based in Shettleston and the Pavillion, situated in Easterhouse. Both projects offer a range of services for young people, and are run with an incredible passion for making a real difference with programmes that respond to the needs of young people.

Poor attainment has long been an issue for Shettleston and Easterhouse, with academic performance in young people from more affluent areas of Glasgow far outranking that of the East End. Youth work organisations,

Fuse and Pavillion, have been working to close the inequity of the poverty-related attainment gap.

International research has shown that, for children living with poverty, holiday hunger and loss of learning during breaks in the school term, can have a detrimental effect on their future outcomes. Addressing this inequality is pivotal to the youth work programmes both Fuse and Pavillion offer.

In partnership with local schools, they have created new and innovative ways of re-engaging young people

in learning, improving outcomes and pathways to accreditation.

Let's look at the example of Fuse Youth Café and the practice behind their youth work model.

In an area like Shettleston where deprivation is holding young people back, St Andrews RC Secondary School is the exception to the rule, delivering great results and encouraging wider achievement.

So, what is it that Fuse can offer young people as a route out of the poverty-related attainment gap?

Gary Baldwin CEO of Fuse Youth Café: "Our response is to work with our members to create programmes of activity that inspire young people, supports them on a progressive journey to achievement and increases the opportunities available to our young people, while knocking over the hurdles on the way."

The key elements of success for this partnership lie in a range of youth work services, which are targeted, effective and bring the whole community together.

- After school youth drop-in sessions every day and each Saturday night. This is the main platform for youth engagement
- Fuse Journeys supports more issue-based youth work, ensuring that each young person is able to take up the opportunities offered to them. Fuse Journeys also supports young people to gain volunteering experience, which has one of the biggest positive impacts on their educational journey
- The Inclusion Programme - working in partnership with St Andrew's RC Secondary School to offer S4 pupils who do not attend school or are at risk of non-attendance, targeted support to tackle low self-esteem, improve mental health and deal with bullying
- Maths/English Tutorials - Another creative solution for supporting pupils to achieve and testament to a forward thinking school. These tutorials are provided to pupils with a youth work approach. Young people have been successfully supported to achieve a National 3 or 4 certificate in both Maths and English

- Accreditation - Both Fuse and Pavillion have accreditation workers who support young people to gain certificates such as Hi5, Dynamic Youth or Youth Achievement Awards. This type of support has been crucial to the parental engagement, employability and tutorial programmes they deliver in partnership with local primary and secondary schools

- Fuse Power-up Programme - this programme supports young people to make healthy changes to their lives through learning about cooking, food education and physical activity
- The Girls Group - girls of 12 years and over have been taking part in workshops, outings and even a residential trip to look at issues that they feel affect them as young women. This has been an eye-opener for both organisations and while the funding has come to an end, the project will continue

- Parental engagement - both organisations work with a total of 5 schools to deliver activities with parents and children in a bid to close the attainment gap

Underpinning all of these projects is funding through Glasgow City Council's Holiday Food Programme. Fuse and Pavillion have integrated food activity and learning throughout all their services, this ensures that no child or family will feel stigmatised by living with the effects of poverty.

The fund has simply provided additional sessional staff hours and a food budget. This has meant both projects can extend opening hours and increase access to activities and food. Children and young people can cook their own

meals through participation in a cooking session at least three times per week, gaining practical cooking skills. This has proven to be a sociable experience, with young people from different schools having an activity that promotes them talking to each other and making new friends, which all contributes to positive mental wellbeing.

In the last year, both organisations have served around 10,000 meals during school holidays. There have been many positive outcomes from this initiative but probably the most striking has been the continued involvement of parents, which is key to closing the poverty-related attainment gap.



Expanding minds and qualifications

The Cadets, whether air, army or sea, all share the principles of a strong youth work approach, starting from where a young person is, not where they should be. The youth work sector in Scotland has many strengths, and one of these is in the breadth of the offer to young people. Independent schools have long been associated with their 'youth work offer' and for many that has included the Cadets, but we are now seeing more schools within the state sector bringing the experience to their pupils.



In June 2012 the UK Government introduced the Cadet Expansion Programme (CEP) to increase the number of young people who can benefit from the Cadet experience in school, and to increase the number of state schools benefiting from having a Cadet force as part of school life.

The Cadet Expansion Programme and the concept of school-based Cadet activity was developed in response to demand from school leaders, with strong support from both the Scottish and UK governments and local authorities.

Linked Detachments were successfully piloted in 2011 and there are currently nine state secondary schools in Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee, Edinburgh, Fife, Glasgow and West Lothian that host Linked Detachments across the three Cadet Organisations (army, sea and air Cadets).

The Linked Detachment model has been championed by Head Teachers with an understanding of the value of Cadet experience. Funding for a further three Linked Detachments is available and, in the future, we believe innovative funding arrangements could lead to the establishment of additional Linked Detachments.

Pupils in participating schools can elect to join a Linked Detachment as part of their subject choices from S3 onwards. The school determines which pupils would benefit most from this vocational learning, as a result, Linked Detachments have a broad mix of abilities.

Pupils spend time during the school week (usually two double periods) learning the Cadet syllabus, which is delivered by a qualified Cadet Instructor, with some classroom support from a nominated member of school staff. Due to the variety and volume of the Cadet syllabus learning, pupils also attend their local Cadet Detachment on evenings, weekends and a fortnight residential during the summer holidays.

Importantly the Cadet syllabus is deliberately aligned to the four competencies underpinning Curriculum for Excellence.

Improved Outcomes – Viewforth High School

Viewforth High School serves a local community that includes two of the most economically-deprived areas in Fife. Our Linked Detachment programme is an integral part of the curriculum, chosen by pupils from a wide range of academic and behavioural backgrounds. What is common is pupils' enjoyment of the course and the recognition of the value of their achievement.

"Our Linked Detachment provides pupils with opportunities to develop employability skills and progress into further education, training or employment. We are convinced of its success and I have no doubt that, in years to come, all will look back fondly on their Cadet experience at our school." Adrian Watt, Former Rector, Viewforth High School

Impact

The schools programme is part of a far broader strategy to support young people. Some 10,000 Scottish Cadets (boys and girls aged 12-to-18 across over 250 local communities) develop their skills by taking part in the activities, fun and challenges, provided by the Cadet experience.

Scottish Cadets can gain SQA qualifications at SCQF Levels 4, 5 and 6, as well as Duke of Edinburgh's Award, St John's Ambulance Awards, and numerous specialist awards. Through the achievement of recognised qualifications - all aligned to the Skills for Work outcome - these young people can demonstrate their learning to employers, further and higher education.

"Being in Cadets has given me loads of amazing skills and achievements throughout the five years I've been involved in it, and I've gained loads of SQA awards as well as Duke of Edinburgh's Awards and represented Scotland's Cadets at hockey, football, athletics and swimming"

"A couple of weeks ago, when I received a new job offer, my manager at work said they didn't want to lose me as I was by far the best new worker there. I wouldn't be the best worker if it wasn't for the Army Cadet Force giving me the opportunity to develop my confidence, and gain the new skills and qualifications I have." Former Cadet Sergeant Major Naomi Evans



Education Scotland's vision is to achieve excellence and equity for Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators.



We work collaboratively with all stakeholders in Scottish education to improve achievement and attainment for all learners, closing the poverty-related attainment gap and securing positive and sustained destinations for all learners.

Youth work makes a key contribution to the priorities for Scottish education, and to achieving the best outcomes for all of Scotland's young people. We welcome the work of Community Learning and Development (CLD) providers across Scotland's public and voluntary sectors, enabling young people to build confidence and skills through youth work.

Education Scotland works directly and collaboratively with practitioners in supporting improvements and leadership locally, regionally and nationally. We also continue to identify and share good practice through inspecting and scrutinising learners' CLD experiences.



"It's really important that we are able to ensure that those young people who want to access youth work have that access. Youth work makes a significant difference to communities, as well as the young people involved."

Gayle Gorman, HM Chief Inspector of Education and Chief Executive Education Scotland.