



National Human Rights Institution

Draft Strategic Priorities 2020 – 2024

1.

YouthLink Scotland is the national agency for youth work. We are a membership organisation, representing regional and national youth organisations from both the voluntary and statutory sectors. We champion the role and value of youth work and represent the interests and aspirations of our sector. Youth work is part of the wider grouping of informal and non-formal learning which is known as Community Learning and Development (CLD). Our sector has a workforce in excess of 75,000 – including over 70,000 adult volunteers. We reach in excess of 380,000 young people in youth work opportunities each week.

2.

The Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) promotes and protects human rights for everyone in Scotland, including children and young people. YouthLink Scotland therefore welcomes the opportunity to comment on the development of the Commission’s Strategic Plan for 2020 – 2024.

3.

The rights of children are embedded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). In line with the Programme for Government 2018-19 and in collaboration with our members and partners, we are looking at how a new Act could fully incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law^[1]. The best model of incorporation will be

one that delivers the best outcomes for children, young people, families, and the youth work sector in Scotland. In the development of the Strategic Plan for 2020 – 2024, we urge the SHRC to fully consider the significance of this legislation and the role youth work and advocates from the youth work sector will play in realising the rights of children and young people.

4.

Youthlink Scotland currently facilitates best practice in Equalities and Rights through the Equalities in Youth Work Steering Group and promotes Youth Work Awards, supporting rights and participation. We work with Education Scotland, the Scottish Government and the CLD Standards Council for Scotland to ensure that the youth work workforce needs are known and are fully articulated and represented. This ensures recognition of non-formal learning awards to parents, youth workers, employers, colleges, and young people - making a valuable contribution to the wider rights agenda.

5.

We agree with the Commission that strengthened understanding, legal protection and implementation of economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR) and other internationally protected rights in Scotland, has the potential to contribute significantly to progress towards a Scotland free from poverty in all its forms. However, it is important that the National Youth Work Outcomes^[2] are integrated across policy themes, extending beyond economic outcomes, truly reflecting the human rights and wellbeing of Scotland's people and our place in the world. The significant contribution that youth work makes to equality and the realisation of young people's human rights must be recognised.

6.

Our organisation fosters a human rights based approach to help people and organisations understand how human rights can help them deliver services; building a network of people, volunteers, and youth workers in communities, to enable people to influence change and realise their potential.

7.

We are excited to work alongside the SHRC and other relevant bodies to ensure Scotland becomes a progressive and authoritative voice for human rights and international best practice, helping Scotland to develop as a socially progressive and outward looking nation. This must include recognition by SHRC on the valuable role the youth work sector plays in delivering rights for children and young people.

ENDS

[1] <https://consult.gov.scot/children-and-families/uncrc/>

[2] <https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/media/3059/youth-work-outcomes-and-indicators.pdf>