

# Youth Work and Poverty Policy Brief

September 2023



The transformative power of youth work to improve the lives of children and young people and meet the aims of the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan (2022-2027)



## About us

YouthLink Scotland is the national agency for youth work. We are a membership organisation representing the voluntary and statutory youth work sectors. We champion the role and value of youth work and represent the interests and aspirations of the sector. We are an organisation with a sharp focus on the needs of young people, promoting learning, innovation and progressive thinking and are committed to the highest standards of protection and safety for young people.

This policy brief highlights recent research and evidence of the transformative impact youth workers have on reducing the worst impacts of poverty and their role in improving the lives of children and young people. It focuses on the need to harness the power of the youth work sector to help the Scottish Government deliver on the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan (2022-2027)<sup>1</sup>.

To find out more about this policy briefing, please contact YouthLink Scotland's Policy and Research Manager Kevin Kane on [kkane@youthlink.scot](mailto:kkane@youthlink.scot).

## What is youth work?

Youth work is a powerful, dynamic and versatile education practice, equipping children and young people with the tools and support they need to reach their potential. It is part of the wider professional practice of Community Learning and Development (CLD)<sup>2</sup>. Youth work is planned, delivered and evaluated by professionally qualified youth work/CLD practitioners, and other experienced practitioners including volunteers, who hold various competency-based qualifications and skills to practice youth work. Statutory duties are placed on local authorities to work with partners and communities to co-produce and secure the delivery of CLD in their area and publish a 3-yearly CLD Plan<sup>3</sup>.

Youth workers are based in the third sector and local authorities and deliver in settings such as youth centres, schools, colleges, outdoor education centres, or on the streets via outreach programmes and detached youth work. A diverse range of engagement tools

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<sup>1</sup> [Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2022-26/pages/1-1-introduction.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> <https://cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/about-cld/what-is-community-learning-and-development-cld/> The practitioner role is underpinned by the national occupational standards, values, ethics, and competences of the CLD Standards Council.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2013/175/contents/made>

and vehicles for learning are used to respond to the needs and priorities of children, young people, families and communities<sup>4</sup>.

## **Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan (2022-2027)**

It was heartening to see the Scottish Government recognise the crucial role of youth work in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan (hereinafter referred to as “*The Plan*”). It highlighted the role of the upcoming National Youth Work Strategy (2023-2028) in targeting support for those most in need by ensuring young people have the support they need to make informed, positive life choices that lead to a better future<sup>5</sup>.

Through policy measures like these and with youth workers on the fore in local communities, we can tackle poverty (including the poverty-related attainment gap) and continue to support the health and wellbeing of our children and young people. However, more targeted and comprehensive political action is needed to achieve the laudable ambition of tackling child poverty.

## **Youth work and its contribution to tackling poverty**

Youth work is crucial to tackling child poverty. We benefit from growing evidence that a dignified, youth work approach to addressing poverty works. It builds health and wellbeing, improves attendance and engagement with learning, and increases attainment, achievement and positive post-school destinations, helping to lift young people out of poverty. Youth workers often build relationships with the whole family (a key priority of *The Plan*). This is often targeted at low-income families or those with protected characteristics and contributes to tackling poverty, raising attainment, supporting family wellbeing and enabling parents and carers to take up or sustain work, training and study.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.youthlink.scot/education-skills/youthwork-outcomes-skills/> Over a number of years, the youth work sector has worked collaboratively to clearly articulate the contribution of youth work in Scotland. The youth work outcomes and the youth work skills framework proved to be valuable tools in planning and evaluating the work we do, and most importantly in providing a structure for reflective learning conversations with young people on their youth work journey.

<sup>5</sup> [Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2022-26/pages/78/) Page 78, “We will also publish a new Youth Work Strategy focused on providing services to young people most in need. A renewed focus on delivering outcomes through youth work will help to alleviate poverty by ensuring young people have the support they need to make informed positive life choices that lead to a better future”.

## Tackling poverty is a rights issue

As a rights-based practice<sup>6</sup>, youth work promotes inclusion, mutual respect, and equality. It is fundamentally about building relationships based on trust and shared understanding and using the strength of these relationships to develop a person-centred and non-formal learning approach to the development of young people.

We know that a significant proportion of the youth population lives in poverty<sup>7</sup>. Poverty hurts children's development, leading to lower income and health levels in adulthood. Therefore, we should recognise child poverty as denying children's human rights and violating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)<sup>8</sup>.

Poverty deprives young people of their right to education, including access to non-formal learning through youth work. The main determinants of social exclusion are rooted in social inequalities<sup>9</sup>. So, to effectively prevent and remedy the risk of exclusion for many young people, the determinants that generate social inequalities must be redressed. Lessons learned from youth work indicate that this is possible<sup>10</sup>.

We acknowledge the public commitment within The Plan to *further embed a human rights approach to tackling child poverty through the development of a strategy to better mainstream equality and human rights through policy and delivery*" and the re-commitment to the incorporation of UNCRC into Scots Law, the importance of which is routinely cited by youth workers as an imperative to strengthen the protection and enforcement of young people's rights across Scotland<sup>11</sup>. We must recognise youth work's untapped potential to act as a powerful lever in the drive against poverty in Scotland, helping to meet the critical principle of The Plan by ensuring strategic approaches are *"rooted in dignity, equality and respect for human rights"*<sup>12</sup>.

## Youth work reaching young people in poverty

Universal youth work is open to all, often benefiting communities with higher levels of deprivation. This is evident in statistics from Youth Scotland, showing that 64% of

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<sup>6</sup> [Youth Work Outcomes & Skills Framework | YouthLink Scotland](#)

<sup>7</sup> [50,000 families in wealthiest city living below poverty line | HeraldScotland](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Poverty is the denial of children's rights | UN DESA | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs](#)

<sup>9</sup> European Commission (2013) Youth social exclusion and lessons from youth work  
<https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/reports/eurydice-study-social-exclusion-2013.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> European Commission (2013) Youth social exclusion and lessons from youth work  
<https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/reports/eurydice-study-social-exclusion-2013.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> [Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

member groups were based in SIMD 1–5 areas and 27% in SIMD 1 and 2 areas in April 2021–March 2022<sup>13</sup>.

The CashBack for Communities Youth Work Fund administered by YouthLink Scotland for over 15 years (not continued as part of CB phase 6), allocated funding to every local authority area in Scotland. In phase 5 of the CashBack for Communities the Youth Work Fund supported 13,776 young people, 11,433 of whom live in areas designated as SIMD1 or 2 (the remainder being from other priority groups). Across the 15 years they reached **421,710** young people deemed vulnerable to or at risk from being affected by crime.

Funded by CashBack for Communities, the Generation CashBack programme, delivered across a Consortium comprising Youth Scotland, Girlguiding Scotland, Boys' Brigade, and Scouts Scotland, centres around two main strands of project delivery ('Grow' and 'Lead'), tasked with increasing engagement in disadvantaged communities. Generation CashBack calculates the top 20% most deprived data zones within any given Local Authority area using the SIMD instead of the national measure, ensuring they reach urban, rural and island communities throughout Scotland. They also use their relationships with local stakeholders to identify groups facing particular challenges around anti-social behaviour or supporting young people at risk of involvement with the criminal justice system<sup>14</sup>.

## What we know about youth work and its impact on poverty

It is widely recognised that social exclusion produces severe and long-term damage to the living conditions, social and economic participation, emotional life, and health status of young people. It also contributes to the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Additionally, insecurity in living standards, political and social isolation, feelings of estrangement and unhealthy lifestyles aggravate pre-existing conditions of social exclusion. This results in a vicious circle where socially excluded young people are more likely to suffer from additional material deprivation, social and emotional marginalisation, and health issues. Youth work can offer opportunities for preventing and remedying this cycle by offering young people targeted support,

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<sup>13</sup> [acting-on-poverty-poverty-youth-scotland.pdf \(youthscotland.org.uk\)](https://youthscotland.org.uk/acting-on-poverty-poverty-youth-scotland.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> During April 2021–March 2022, Generation CashBack reached 3,293 young people. The majority of delivery reached young people facing the most extensive deprivation – 77% of participants lived in SIMD 1 and 2 areas. 99% of participants reported that Generation CashBack had had a positive impact on their behaviour, 97% of young people reported improved wellbeing against the SHANARRI indicators, and 98% reported feeling more confident.



opportunities for non-formal learning, ameliorating the impacts of poverty, information on health and wellbeing, and opportunities for positive integration into the local community. Youth workers can reduce the risks of further social exclusion linked to deteriorating living conditions and unhealthy lifestyles<sup>15</sup>.

The youth work workforce is an essential lifeline for communities where children and young people are at risk of poverty, food insecurity, personal safety and mental ill health. A recent youth work review by BBC Children in Need identified the significant difference youth work can make in local communities. It also showed that for some children and young people, there is not enough youth work to meet their needs and as a result, children and young people are missing out on this essential support<sup>16</sup>.

Research has shown that young people experiencing poverty and those who struggle in school benefit from increased support through youth work<sup>17</sup>. The more individually tailored and non-formal nature of utilising other institutions where there was a more personal relationship dynamic between youth workers and young people leads to progress towards forming or achieving their aspirations in these settings – often for the first time<sup>18,19</sup>.

Further research highlighted the generation of social capital in young people growing up in one urban area and one rural area in Scotland via community-led youth work projects that aim to re-engage young people categorised as NEET (Not in Employment Education or Training)<sup>20</sup>. By using social capital as a theoretical lens, it was seen that youth work positively impacts transitions and also the young people themselves. Youth work practice acts as a glue between young people and their communities.

The Young Women's Movement report on the Status of Young Women in Scotland in 2020-21 found that young women from working-class backgrounds did not have access to gaining work experience or finding mentors or networks to build

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<sup>15</sup> European Commission (2013) Youth social exclusion and lessons from youth work <https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/reports/eurydice-study-social-exclusion-2013.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.bbcchildreninneed.co.uk/2021/11/our-ceo-simon-antrobus-on-the-transformative-power-of-youth-work/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/national-evaluation-publication-1.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> McPherson, C. (2018) 'It's just so much better than school': the redemptive qualities of further education and youth work for working-class young people in Edinburgh, Scotland. *Journal of Youth Studies* <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13676261.2019.1599103>

<sup>19</sup> Education Scotland – the role of youth work in closing the poverty-related attainment gap – Dundee City Council <https://education.gov.scot/resources/the-role-of-youth-work-dundee/>

<sup>20</sup> Miller, J, McAuliffe, L, Riaz, N and Deuchar, R. (2015) Exploring youths' perceptions of the hidden practice of youth work in increasing social capital with young people considered NEET in Scotland. *Journal of Youth Studies*, Volume 18, Issue 4 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13676261.2014.992311>

connections. Most young women did not feel supported with their mental health in the workplace. They shared that they did not know their options and the jobs available to them, *"I think coming from a poorer/working-class background has limited what feels open to me; my peers from wealthier backgrounds had the time (not having to work to support themselves) and funds (from family) to take up internships or extra volunteering roles. I had no knowledge of the kinds of 'professional' jobs available or connections in any field, so I feel like I've been playing catch up in the four years since I graduated and am therefore behind in terms of work opportunities"*<sup>21</sup>. The importance of youth work in supporting young women experiencing poverty, understanding their options and providing mentoring is crucial to ameliorating these concerns.

A study conducted with around 110 BAME young people by Intercultural Youth Scotland and EDI Scotland in June 2019 reported that *"Four in five male respondents (80.0%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'My school promoted a welcoming and diverse culture'. In comparison, only 48.1% of female respondents expressed similar levels of agreement"*<sup>22</sup>. Youth work is offered to girls and young women to have fun, learn new skills, and grow in confidence. These spaces have allowed girls and young women to explore their interests and enhance their skills and employability. The study offers insights into the experiences of some BAME young people in Scotland's schools, highlighting where improvements can be made through education on cultural differences.

A report by Girlguiding highlighted that young women aged 15 to 18 particularly report feeling worried, stressed and overwhelmed. The factors most affecting them are uncertainty about school and education and finance, loneliness and isolation and a lack of freedom and independence<sup>23</sup>. Youth work is keenly positioned to mitigate the risk of loneliness and isolation, and the practice empowers young women to feel more certain about themselves and the role of their community in their development.

It is not just young women who benefit from youth work practice. In particular, where masculinity intersects with poverty, outcomes for men are extremely poor<sup>24</sup>. Youth workers can offer strong protective factors to mitigate the risk of boys and young men acting out with harmful traits. Youth work supports boys and young men and to act as positive role models in poorer communities<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup><https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6413232bf29ba901ed614415/t/647de6ddc810b62a495f6c44/1685972730455/SYWS+2021+FINAL.pdf>

<sup>22</sup><https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b9aaa1c0dbda3921bdda433/t/5dc2cdb26ad765150b8959c1/1573047736181/IYS+EDI+Report+Artwork+1+1.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/globalassets/docs-and-resources/research-and-campaigns/girlguiding-covid19-research-briefing.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> [NKBL ImagineAMan\\_Apr23\\_Policy-Briefing\\_R1-3.pdf \(noknivesbetterlives.com\)](#)

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

The Lines Between (2020) evaluated a pilot programme led by YouthLink Scotland, with funding from the Scottish Government. The six pilot projects in Moray, Scottish Borders, Falkirk, East Ayrshire, Dundee City, and South Lanarkshire worked with 152 young people in the summer of 2020. The pilot areas took a sensitive and dignified approach to address food insecurity. Additionally, they demonstrated youth work's contribution to preventing learning loss by building young people's skills, motivation, and engagement with education during holiday periods. One of the unanticipated benefits of the pilot was the impact of engaging with wider family members and the role of food as an activity to bring families together.

A recent report from One Parent Families Scotland highlighted the challenges single parents face. This includes social isolation and access to suitable options for childcare<sup>26</sup>. Youth work has a vital role here. The Scottish Government's evaluation of the Summer of Play (2021) identified that future improvements for summer provision should include strengthening the offer for secondary school children. This is one area where youth work can play a key role as the practice extends to working with young people aged 25 – including young and single parents.

In the last 6 years, the CashBack for Communities Youth Work Fund, administered by YouthLink Scotland, supported targeted youth work that:

- Supported **43,625** young people into positive destinations
- Resulted in **22,016** young people reporting that they were less likely to get involved in anti-social/risk-taking behaviour.
- Resulted in **37,212** young people achieving positive behaviour changes.

## Youth work and equality

Youth work offers opportunities for all young people, uniquely contributing to those with protected characteristics. The practice is crucial in supporting young people from across the protected characteristics. Equality, diversity and inclusion are essential values for all youth work. By focusing on the rights of the most marginalised and excluded young people, youth workers understand the unique barriers caused by inequality and seek to mitigate and remove them.

Notably, during the extended equalities consultation, as part of the co-production of the upcoming National Youth Work Strategy (2023 – 2028), groups consulted from across the protected characteristics shared poverty as the critical exacerbating barrier in addition to the other inequalities they experienced. They said without youth work, their connection to society would be worse. This makes the case stronger for investment in the youth work workforce.

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<sup>26</sup> <https://opfs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Living-without-a-lifeline-full-report.pdf>



## Youth work and COVID-19

We know that COVID-19 had a significant impact on those living in poverty. Scotland's worst-affected communities now face the added burden of the cost of living crisis. Youth workers moved quickly to provide whole family support and establish digital services and were described as "*nimble and adaptable*", doing "*whatever they could, whenever they could*" to keep young people safe<sup>27</sup>. During the most restrictive phases, young people were unable to attend school, college or work, and they were unable to meet and socialise with their peers. All the sports, arts, volunteering or youth work activities young people participated in were halted. Despite ongoing challenges, youth work groups continued to build strong partnerships with local communities, pairing tried and tested methods of supporting children and young people with innovative new interventions. Youth work services offered support for food poverty, finance, and mental health support, which continued as the lockdown restrictions lifted, leading to deeper relationships with young people<sup>2829</sup>.

Youth workers worked closely with young people pre-pandemic and understood individual and community needs well. They were concerned about young people being isolated, lonely and anxious about the pandemic. They recognised that for some young people, the COVID-19 restrictions meant being stuck in difficult home environments and exacerbated by food poverty.

Case study examples of youth work's impact during COVID-19 can be found on YouthLink Scotland's website<sup>30</sup>.

## Lessons from youth work

### Attainment and wellbeing

YouthLink Scotland's Youth Work and Schools Partnerships team, funded by the Scottish Government as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, undertook a national case study evaluation<sup>31</sup>. This provided robust evidence that youth work improves the readiness to learn, health and wellbeing and educational outcomes of children and young people, contributing to the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) mission to close the poverty-related attainment gap.

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<sup>27</sup> [YouthLink-Scotland-Youth-Works-Role-During-Covid-19-Final-Report.pdf](#)

<sup>28</sup> [YouthLink-Scotland-Youth-Works-Role-During-Covid-19-Final-Report.pdf](#)

<sup>29</sup> [Acting on Poverty - Youth Scotland](#)

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Youth-Work-During-the-Pandemic-St2mb.pdf> and <https://www.youthlink.scot/news/learning-through-lockdown/>

<sup>31</sup> [national-evaluation-publication-1.pdf \(youthlink.scot\)](#)

In 2021, the £3 million Youth Work Education Recovery Fund enabled 64 youth work programmes across Scotland to provide opportunities for 17,904 young people. The Scottish Government established the Fund to enable the sector to engage young people in some of the country's most vulnerable communities and support their educational, social and emotional recovery after the pandemic. The fund's impact report showed that:

- 82% of participating young people developed their skills
- 79% of participating young people experienced improved health and wellbeing
- 78% of participating young people overcame barriers to learning
- 61% of young people were more engaged in learning
- 37% of young people achieved recognition of wider achievement attainment, e.g. youth awards<sup>32</sup>.

The report identified youth workers' ability to build trusted relationships and create positive and safe spaces for person-centred learning. This contributed to improved outcomes for children and young people.

### **School-age childcare**

Youth work's role within school-age childcare includes delivering breakfast clubs, after-school provision and school holiday programmes. These opportunities are usually free, or low cost, often available during evenings and weekends, when other services may be closed. Youth work's position within the learning community puts youth workers in a unique place to build relationships with young people and their families across school, home and community settings<sup>33</sup>.

Youth work settings can have a huge role in supporting the childcare needs of parents/carers in their local area during holiday periods. Scout Adventures' Fordell Firs, for example, situated near Dunfermline, delivered over 1,000 hours of out-of-school activity day provision last summer and faced increasing demand for their services.

One parent commented on the role of youth work:

*"It's hard to ask for help and we were not doing very good, prices for gas and electricity are so high and I need to buy additional food as no breakfast clubs... the support allowed us to feel valued, cared for and less anxious."*

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ywerf-report-2022-final-designed-report.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/YLSpolicybriefschool-age-childcare.pdf#:~:text=This%20briefing%20explains%20youth%20work%E2%80%99s%20role%20in%20delivering,to%20take%20up%20and%20sustain%20work%20and%20training>

Youth work investment as part of the approach to Summer of Play (2021) provided essential opportunities for children and young people to engage, improve their health and wellbeing and learn. The Summer of Play Youth Work Fund supported 325 youth work or youth arts summer activity programmes for young people aged between 8 and 25 years. This included transition programmes, outdoor learning and opportunities that addressed food insecurity.

25,214 young people directly benefitted from the fund. The youth work activities also ensured choice, affordability and flexibility for families within the local school-age childcare - particularly for those impacted by poverty.

The Scottish Government's vision is for a system of high-quality, affordable and accessible childcare. Youth work should be a key element of local partnership and national policy, ensuring a range of provisions is available locally, aligning with broader support for families most at risk of poverty. The Scottish Government also committed to continued investment and support for the childcare sector in Scotland. Specific resources for youth work will be vital to maximise outcomes for low-income families so that youth work can continue delivering services.

### **Youth work as a non-stigmatising practice**

Food is generally embedded in youth work provision and plays a key role in family wellbeing and tackling poverty. A youth work approach to addressing food insecurity is non-stigmatised and generates a range of additional impacts, such as improved engagement in learning, health and wellbeing, skills development and increased attainment. The YouthLink Scotland and Scottish Government food insecurity pilot evaluation report<sup>34</sup> also evidences the impact on broader family wellbeing and poverty.

One of the projects was Falkirk's Summer Takeaway. Youth workers took a whole family approach to working with young people, providing opportunities for families to learn together. As a direct result of participating in the Summer Takeaway, families reported feeling less isolated and improved health and wellbeing.

In particular, parents and carers reported that they developed the confidence to share skills and activities with their children. *"It's something that has helped with my family. I have four kids who all do their own thing. Doing the Summer Takeaway activities has enabled us to realise that we all needed each other, more than we realised."*

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<sup>34</sup> [https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/media/5659/food-insecurity-report\\_proofed.pdf](https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/media/5659/food-insecurity-report_proofed.pdf)

## The Future

We must foster education and training, offering concrete opportunities for integration in the labour market and fight discriminatory practices by creating meaningful inclusion and commitment to a personalised education that serves the many. Youth work as a social and educational practice can help deliver this. However, political action is needed.

The Scottish Government must harness the power of youth work and wider Community Learning Development (CLD) partners through promoting and securing sufficient youth work services. Youth work partnerships between local authorities, voluntary organisations and young people will help deliver the focus needed on young people's personal, social and educational development.

This core national drive would underpin the Scottish Government's leadership role, following the functions of setting national standards, providing adequate funding and rebuilding a skilled workforce. The critical purpose of youth work is the exploration with young people, individually and in groups, helping to create opportunities in an increasingly bleak and precarious funding landscape.

Therefore, it is a national imperative to focus on the needs of young people experiencing poverty, building physical and social skills and creativity and encouraging them to remain hopeful in challenging times. Youth work must continue to advocate the politics of the common good and demonstrate, in numbers and stories, how good youth work achieves this aim<sup>35</sup>.

The Plan consultation highlighted the desire for more holistic family support services, bringing together financial, practical and emotional support in one place, ensuring families receive the right support at the right time. Youth workers can build relationships with the whole family, providing broader support. This is often targeted at low-income families or those with protected characteristics. The approach contributes to tackling poverty, raising attainment, supporting family wellbeing and enabling parents and carers to take up or sustain work, training and study. The practice is crucial to tackling child poverty and helping create positive changes in the lives of young people.

By apportioning proportionate resources to the youth work sector, the Scottish Government can unlock massive potential in its efforts to tackle poverty in Scotland, delivering on its promise to ensure Scotland is the best place in the world for a young person to grow up. As part of this, investing in the youth work sector's capacity to further research and articulate its role within this policy area will help deliver upon the key aims within The Plan.

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<sup>35</sup> Wylie, T. (2015) Youth Work. *Youth & Policy Special Edition: The Next Five Years: Prospects for Young People*. <https://www.youthandpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/wylie-youth-work.pdf>

There was a clear desire in The Plan to focus on supporting people into quality employment linked to the key enablers and infrastructure needed to make this possible, tailoring support for priority groups and a greater focus on how public spending can help drive the changes needed. Youth work is already working in this space and can adapt further to meet the aims of the National Government<sup>36</sup>.

Youth workers routinely work alongside the most marginalised in our society. They are based in the heart of Scotland's local authorities and can help address the key barriers and struggles experienced by different groups. We know that Children's Services Planning Partnerships will have a central role in driving local collaborative approaches to deliver on the ambitions of The Plan and the shared work to deliver on The Promise by 2030.

YouthLink Scotland agrees that no government alone can tackle and reduce child poverty. It takes united focus and purpose to deliver the change to how public services are delivered, and in moving to a person-centred approach to supporting families. This is why we will continue to work with local and national partners to understand and support the role of youth work in alleviating poverty and developing a holistic support offer that recognises the transformative impact of youth workers on the lives of children and young people.

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<sup>36</sup> [yw-employability-audit-2022-final-002.pdf \(youthlink.scot\)](#)





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