



# THE RIGHT TO YOUTH WORK IN SCOTLAND



NCC GOLD



The Policy Clinic

Open Justice Centre

Open Justice Law School

‘The right to youth work in Scotland’ a research report for  
YouthLink Scotland

Researched, set, and published by

Natalie Rushton | Celeste Blaize-Gibson | Christian Pitt | Graham Hewitt  
| Omoso Agboaye | Lucy Wilson | Daniel Davis



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## Introduction

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This research was undertaken by the Policy Clinic, part of the Open Justice Centre, Open University Law School. Open Justice provides free legal advice and education to members of the public in various legal areas. In 2019, Open Justice established the Policy Clinic, to research on behalf of organisations and charities. The purpose of the Policy Clinic is to provide research and evidence, aiming to influence policy and law reform. All work in the Policy Clinic is overseen by experienced Open University tutors who have a background in policy and advocacy work. The students taking part in the policy clinic are in the final year of their law degree.

Youth work can be a powerful asset to young people, and it can have a significant impact on a community. It has been proven to boost confidence and academic achievement among children and as a result, it promotes positive relationships and personal development. It is not only aimed at improving young people's mental health, but it also aims to respect and promote fundamental rights as well. YouthLink Scotland wants to see Scotland become a country in which children and young people's rights are firmly rooted in the community. One of the ways they believe this can happen is through legislation, which will ensure young people have a universal right to access to youth work. To facilitate this, the national agency for youth work, YouthLink Scotland, asked the Open University Policy Clinic to research Scotland's current youth work provision and explore what this might look like if it were legislated; focusing on whether the Scottish Parliament should introduce a right for all young people to access quality youth work provision.

The study seeks to capture perspectives from youth work organisations across Scotland, encompassing both third-sector organisations and local authorities. Surveys were distributed to gain insights into the factors influencing youth work policies and strategies at the local, regional, and national level. Despite extensive efforts to solicit input from a variety of organisations, the survey's response rate was low however the consistency of response may lead to the conclusion that the views are representative across the broader spectrum of youth work organisations in Scotland.

Consequently, the findings and conclusions drawn from the survey should be interpreted cautiously, acknowledging the potential for skewed insights due to restricted participation. However, from the conducted interviews valuable insights

have surfaced aligning with prevailing perspectives within the overall youth work landscape gave a useful perspective into the issues affecting youth work. The study also delved into best practices in youth work globally, particularly in Ireland, England, Germany, and Sweden to provide advice on best practices globally. The objective was to assess the adaptability or replicability of these practices within the context of Scotland.

We would like to thank the local authorities and third sector organisations who worked with us on this research.

**Students:** Natalie Rushton, Celeste Blaize-Gibson, Christian Pitt, Graham Hewitt, Omore Agboaye, Lucy Wilson, Daniel Davis

**Supervising tutor:** Dr Deborah Legge

# Research Methodology

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## *Introduction to Research Methods*

This research aims to define whether access to quality youth work provision should be a legal right.

The research questions were:

- What is the definition and current state of youth work provision in Scotland?
- What is the potential impact of establishing a right to youth work and/or strengthened Community Learning and Development (CLD) regulations on youth workers in Scotland?<sup>1</sup>
- What legislative changes would be required to implement a right to youth work in Scotland?
  - This should also be seen in the context of strengthening the statutory basis of Community Learning and Development (CLD),<sup>2</sup> which is a current Scottish Government manifesto commitment.

## *Research Design*

To answer the above questions, the following methods were used:

- A survey of independent youth work organisations in Scotland requesting information on youth work provision funded by them (Appendix A).
- Interviews with independent youth work organisations and youth workers exploring what a right to youth work might look like and any implications for youth workers (Appendix C).
- Comparative literature research into countries which have considered a right to youth work (such as Malta, Sweden, Iceland and countries in the Southern Hemisphere) to identify legislative changes required and any implications.

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<sup>1</sup> The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013, in force September 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Id.

## ***Participants***

This study sought to capture perspectives from youth work organisations across Scotland, encompassing both third-sector organisations and local authorities. The survey was sent to participants using the YouthLink database. Further, interviewees were randomly selected from the YouthLink database.

## ***Procedure***

A 29-question survey was used to gather qualitative and quantitative data. It aimed to assess the status of youth work provision in Scotland and identify any existing gaps. It was sent to local authorities and youth work organisations to gauge what the impact of a right to youth work would entail, particularly in the context of the review happening concerning Community Learning and Development (CLD).<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the survey considered whether legislative adjustments are needed to bolster CLD or to establish a right to youth work as a separate legal entity. Four questions were employed to collect demographic information. Quantitative data was obtained from 12 multiple-choice questions, 5 multiple-response questions, and 2 Likert scale questions. This was complemented by quantitative data from 7 mandatory open-ended questions and 10 optional questions. Additionally, a semi-structured survey interview questionnaire was used to get qualitative data on what a right-to-youth work might look like and any implications for youth workers (Appendix A).

## ***Data Collection and Data Analysis***

The survey ran between the 19<sup>th</sup> of December 2023 and the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2024 and was administered using Google Forms. The initial analysis of the survey results was conducted using the Google analysis tool, followed by additional thematic analysis by the team. All survey results can be found in Appendix A.

Interviews were conducted online using Zoom between 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024. Interview transcripts were generated, and recordings were preserved. Subsequently, the data was compiled, and key themes were discerned (Appendix C).

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<sup>3</sup> The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013.



Data from the literature review was collected through a comprehensive search of academic databases and sources provided by the Open Justice team, focusing on relevant keywords and publications within the last five years.

Following extraction synthesis and analysis of the literature, key themes, trends, and gaps were identified. The findings from the literature review provided valuable context, theoretical frameworks, and insights that complemented the empirical data collected from surveys and interviews, enriching the depth of analysis, and contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

To protect the respondents any quotes used in qualitative analysis were anonymised. The consent form used in the study can be found in Appendix B.

### ***Limitations***

Despite extensive efforts to solicit input from a variety of organisations, the survey's response rate was low. It is crucial to recognise that this limited response may not fully represent the prevailing sentiments across the broader spectrum of youth work organisations in Scotland.

### ***Youthwork: The Scottish Legal Context***

In Scotland, the current foundation for youth work was established in the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Regulations (2013),<sup>4</sup> introduced under s.2 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. This mandates local authorities to ensure the delivery of Community Learning and Development (CLD), which the Scottish Government advocates as a professional practice within education with delivery stretching across all stages of lifelong learning (Scottish Government, no date). CLD's purpose is to provide early intervention and prevention to those experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, inequality of opportunity within the education and skills system (Scottish Government, no date). This includes programmes of learning and activities designed with individuals and groups to promote the educational and social development of those individuals and groups which the education authority considers are most likely to benefit from the provision of CLD.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*, s 1(2).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation)(Scotland) Act 2024 (asp 1) (UNCRC) recently incorporated the rights and obligations of the United Nations Convention into Scottish law. Article 28 of the UN Convention emphasises the obligation of states to provide various forms of secondary education to all children encompassing both general and vocational education.<sup>6</sup> This is expanded in Article 29 of the Convention, which guides the education of a child to fully develop their personality, talents, mental and physical abilities.<sup>7</sup>

The legal context for youth work in Scotland is multifaceted and involves various policies and procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of young people. The key policies which collectively shape the Scottish legal context for youth work are the Child Protection policy which ensures that all youthwork activities are conducted in a way that safeguards young people's welfare. The policy emphasises safety and rights and sets out the legal obligations of youth work organisations. The National Youth Work Strategy emerging themes (2023-2028) outlined the priorities and ambitions for youth work in Scotland and sets the standard for youth work practice. In terms of the legal context, this policy calls for the recognition of youth work in terms of policy making; ensuring that this group has a 'voice at the table. Regulations governing the employment of children under school leaving age is another facet of the legal context. Rules around the employment of children affect youth work by setting legal parameters around youth employability, and this can include work-based learning opportunities within youth programmes (Youth Work Essentials). Finally, the youth justice system is pivotal in terms of ensuring a rights-respecting approach which may impact how support services are provided to young people at risk of offending. Consequently, any changes in this system, for example as pertains to the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots Law, may have implications for the wider justice system (National Guidance for Child Protection). These interconnected elements play a crucial role in shaping a comprehensive legal framework that supports the delivery of effective and safe youth work services in Scotland.

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<sup>6</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child, Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly Resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 entry into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with Article 49.

<sup>7</sup> Id

The Policy Clinic explored whether incorporation of the UNCRC into Scottish Law will promote a more inclusive and targeted approach to youth work provision, through Article 28 UNCRC.<sup>8</sup> The Policy Clinic also seeks to understand whether establishing a legal footing for youth work is imperative in upholding Convention principles and safeguarding the rights of young people.

## **Comparative Research into Countries who have considered a right to youth work.**

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The purpose of this part of the report is to identify the nature and causes of youth work in overseas jurisdictions by analysing the legal definitions of youth work and their practical contexts. This is to fulfil the ultimate objective of recommending to the Scots legislative to implement youth work legislation so that it may fulfil the Scottish National Party's manifesto commitment to continuous professional learning. In so doing, the review turns to legislation, custom and policy in, England, Germany, Ireland, and Sweden.

### ***England***

Youth work in England operates within a comprehensive legislative framework aimed at nurturing the holistic development of young individuals. The foundational acts, such as the Education Act 1996, underscore the responsibility of local authorities in providing educational and social development opportunities. Additionally, the Children Act 1989 and 2004 delineate the legal framework for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, emphasising the pivotal role of youth services. Within the diverse landscape of youth work in the UK, numerous initiatives and programs are in place, ranging from Youth Clubs and Centres to Employment and Training Programs. While these efforts address various aspects of youth development, gaps exist in legislation, such as those related to digital safety, mental health support, employment incentives, inclusivity for marginalised groups, and mechanisms for meaningful youth participation. The analysis of global documents and agreements on youth rights will

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<sup>8</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child, Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly Resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 entry into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with Article 49.

provide valuable insights into how international bodies recognise and promote the right to youth work, influencing the ongoing developments in Scotland.

Recent legislation aims to enshrine a right to leisure-time activities for young people aged 13 to 19 and certain persons aged 20 to 24 in law.<sup>9</sup> In essence, the English legislation aims to set out a statutory duty for local authorities, supported by guidance. According to the guidance (Gov.UK, 2023), local authorities “must do all that is reasonably practicable to secure a sufficient local offer for young people in their area.” The guidance “clarifies statutory requirements and outlines a standard that local authorities can benchmark themselves against. To meet their duty under the act, (the) guidance sets out practical and reasonable steps to which local authorities must have regard.”

To be enforceable, the written law must be clear and robust, with an enforcement mechanism set out. English law does not include any such enforcement mechanism with loose wording such as ‘may’ instead of ‘must’. This leaves the law at the mercy of the local authority’s discretion. With such features, enforcing any legislative rights could be difficult, expensive, or impossible for the ordinary person acting without good legal advice. The English case of *Imam also* demonstrates the difficulty of compelling a local authority to perform statutory duties even when the duty is clear.<sup>10</sup>

In England, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) investigates complaints about most council services (not dated). In Scotland, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) investigates complaints about Scottish public bodies (2023). Where no enforcement mechanism exists through statute, the SPSO can intervene in the performance failures of Scottish public service providers. However, even any intervention request to the SPSO could be rejected on the basis that the local authority has discretion on the service provision.

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<sup>9</sup> Education Act 1996, s507B.

<sup>10</sup> *R (on the application of Imam) v London Borough of Croydon* [2023] UKSC 45

## **Germany**

German policy/legal framework exists according to Article 1 of Social Code Book VIII (SGB VIII)<sup>11</sup>. It defines child and youth services and thus also youth work must help every young person make use of their right to personal development and to become a responsible and socially competent individual.

The law also requires services to reflect the interests of young people, who should have a say in what and how services are structured. Furthermore, services should help to teach young people self-determination and motivate them to take social responsibility and get involved in social issues. Unlike with other youth services, the law does not pinpoint specific target groups; instead, youth work activities are aimed at all young people.<sup>12</sup> The law explicitly mentions that persons over the age of 27 can also make use of certain youth work services.

Areas of youth work include informal youth education in general, political, social, health-related, cultural, natural, and technical subjects. Youth work can be found in sport, games and social interaction, and in youth work related to the working world, school and family. International youth work exists, as well as child and youth recreation and recuperation, and youth counselling (Art.11(3) SGB VIII).<sup>13</sup> The funding streams through local authorities as the primary source, supporting facilities and activities in the field of youth work. In 2020 it stood at around EUR 2.5 billion. Of this figure, 60.8% was provided by the local authorities, 15.4% came from statutory authorities at state (Länder) level, and 23.8% from the federal (Bund) level. Facilities and associations receive further funding in the form of donations from individuals, companies and foundations (European Commission, 2023).

Youth work organisations also earn money by renting rooms or equipment, and from participation or admission fees (e.g. for excursions and concerts). Membership fees are another source of funding for youth associations according to the European Commission (2023). Grants however are one of the main methods of obtaining funding. Whilst associations or facilities receive a contribution towards putting their

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<sup>11</sup> Sozialgesetzbuch (SGB) - Achtes Buch (VIII) - Kinder- und Jugendhilfe - (Artikel 1 des Gesetzes v. 26. Juni 1990, BGBl. I S. 1163)

<sup>12</sup> *Id* - (Erstes Kapitel Allgemeine Vorschriften des Gesetzes v. 26. Juni 1990, BGBl. I S. 1163)

<sup>13</sup> *Id* - (Artikel 11(3) des Gesetzes v. 26. Juni 1990, BGBl. I S. 1163)

youth work activities into practice, they have wide discretion over how the services are structured and implemented. The Law on youth services requires grant recipients to meet numerous criteria (European Commission, 2023).

Cooperation between statutory authorities and non-statutory organisations, and between paid and voluntary workers is fundamental to youth work in Germany. Youth work includes other forms of cooperation between practitioners, academics, and politicians. The model of Youth work in Germany where provision for youth work exists in every community and is embedded in the culture is as a result being adhered to over time. This model will take time to mature in Scotland therefore the legislated provision will ensure a consistent approach (European Commission, 2023).

### ***Republic of Ireland***

Ireland's statutory footing is found within the Youth Work Act, 2001 (revised 2014). The Act sets out the functions of vocational and education committees with respect to youth work.<sup>14</sup> It provides for the making of grants and the appointment of an assessor and its functions concerning youth work.<sup>15</sup> It also establishes voluntary youth councils and provides for the development and coordination of organisations and persons involved in youth work.<sup>16</sup> Youth work programmes and youth work services are legislated for and the establishment of a National Youth Work Advisory Committee.<sup>17</sup> As a piece of legislation conferring certain responsibilities onto the Government or Ireland, namely, to develop and coordinate youth work programmes and services, including coordination with education and other programmes, its purpose is to provide a statutory framework for the provision of youth work programmes and services.

YouthLink Scotland's 2023 Policy Convention saw the critique of Ireland's statutory youth work policy by Shirley Donegan, Lecturer at The University of Dublin. Whilst Donegan admitted room for improvement of the legislation existed, particularly with funding, several key points supporting legislation were made. These included the increased credibility and visibility of the sector, the provision of effective advisory bodies, consistency, and a blueprint, together with a bigger voice. Crucially, Donegan

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<sup>14</sup> Section 9

<sup>15</sup> Section 16

<sup>16</sup> Sections 21-23

<sup>17</sup> Sections 17 and 18

summarised that the strength in infrastructure had been vital in supporting quality provision of youth work, and for the recognition and responsibility triggered within government departments to take responsibility for the service. The importance of statutory committee implementation to plan and prioritise funds was highlighted, since historically, the (then) Department of Education favoured funding towards formal education instead of the type of non-formal education encompassing youth work. Through statutory committees however, this disparity could be challenged. In particular, the implementation of key components of the legislation, such as the National Youth Council of Ireland, the National Youth Work Advisory Committee,<sup>18</sup> the National Youth Work Development Plan (Department of Education and Science, 2003) and the National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF), supported the role of the Youth Work Act, ensuring quality provision, implementation, development, and consistency. To Donegan's presentation, Scottish youth work attendees responded that legislation with imperfections was better than none.

## ***Sweden***

Sweden has a long history of prioritising youth welfare and development. The roots of the Swedish youth work model can be traced back to the early 20th century when the country began to institutionalise programs and services aimed at supporting young people's well-being. The post-World War II era saw a significant expansion of youth-oriented policies and initiatives, driven by a commitment to social democracy and the belief in the importance of investing in human capital (European Commission, 2020).

### *The Law*

Youth work in Sweden is governed by several laws and regulations, including –

1. Social Services Act - outlines the responsibilities of municipalities (local councils) in providing support and services to children and young people, including youth clubs, counselling, and other forms of assistance as listed further below it what appears to be the go-to Act for youth work.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Sections 17 and 18

<sup>19</sup> Socialtjänstlag (2001:453)

2. Education Act - regulates youth work within the context of schools and educational institutions, ensuring the provision of comprehensive education and support services.<sup>20</sup>

3. According to the European Commission (2020), an Act on Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (LSS) provides support and services for young people with disabilities to facilitate their inclusion and participation in society.

4. An Act on the Prohibition of Discrimination and Other Degrading Treatment of Children and Students - prohibits discrimination and ensures equal treatment for children and students, including in the context of youth work.<sup>21</sup>

These laws, along with other regulations and policies, form the legal framework for youth work in Sweden, aimed at promoting the well-being, development, and rights of young people.

### ***Lessons from the field***

The literature review and the interviewee disclosures suggested that most lessons can be learnt from the Swedish context. Consequently, some of the key aspects which can add value to the findings above and influence how youth work provision occurs. Following from the answers provided by the current interviews (Appendix C) and comparing them mainly with the Swedish model:

Youth Centres and Clubs - Central to the Swedish youth work model are youth centres and clubs, which serve as safe and inclusive spaces for young people to socialise, engage in recreational activities, and access various support services. These centres are typically funded and operated by municipalities (local councils), with a focus on local community needs and Preferences (Council of Europe, 2024).

Non-formal Education and Learning – According to the Council of Europe (2024) the Swedish youth work model places a strong emphasis on non-formal education and learning opportunities outside the traditional school setting. This includes workshops, seminars, and skill-building activities designed to enhance young people's personal, social, and professional development.

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<sup>20</sup> Skollag (1985:1100)

<sup>21</sup> Act Prohibiting Discriminatory and Other Degrading Treatment of Children and Pupils (2006:67)



**Youth Participation and Democracy** - A core principle of the Swedish youth work model is youth participation and democracy. Young people are actively involved in decision-making processes at both the local and national levels, ensuring that their voices are heard, and their perspectives are considered in matters that affect them.

**Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship** - Recognising the importance of economic empowerment, the Swedish youth work model promotes youth employment and entrepreneurship through various initiatives, such as job training programs, internships, and support for young entrepreneurs.

**Health and Well-being Services** - Another essential component of the Swedish youth work model is the provision of health and well-being services tailored to young people's needs. This includes access to counselling, sexual health education, substance abuse prevention, and mental health support. The Swedish youth work model is based on the principle of universal access, meaning that all young people, regardless of their background or circumstances, have the right to participate in youth activities and access support services.

**Inclusion and Diversity** - Diversity and inclusion are fundamental principles of the Swedish youth work model, with a commitment to ensuring that all young people feel welcome and valued within their communities.

**Empowerment and Participation** - The Swedish youth work model seeks to empower young people by giving them the knowledge, skills, and opportunities they need to actively participate in society and shape their own futures.

**Collaboration and Partnership** - Collaboration and partnership between government agencies, non-profit organisations, schools, and other stakeholders are key drivers of the Swedish youth work model, enabling the coordination of resources and efforts to better meet the needs of young people.

**Prevention and Early Intervention** - The Swedish youth work model adopts a preventative approach to addressing youth issues, focusing on early intervention and support to prevent problems from escalating and to promote positive outcomes for young people (European Commission, 2023).

Social Cohesion and Integration - By providing young people with opportunities for social interaction, learning, and participation, the Swedish youth work model contributes to social cohesion and integration within communities.

Personal Development and Resilience - Through non-formal education, skill-building activities, and support services, the Swedish youth work model helps young people develop the confidence, resilience, and capabilities they need to navigate life's challenges and realise their full potential.

Healthy Lifestyles and Behaviours - The provision of health education, counselling, and support services promotes healthy lifestyles and behaviours among young people, contributing to better physical and mental well-being.

Employment and Economic Independence - By encouraging youth employment and entrepreneurship, the Swedish youth work model helps young people secure meaningful employment opportunities and achieve economic independence.

Civic Engagement and Democratic Participation - Through active involvement in decision-making processes and community activities, young people develop a sense of civic responsibility and democratic values, contributing to a more vibrant and inclusive society.

While the Swedish youth work model has achieved significant success in promoting youth development and well-being, it is not without its challenges. Key issues include addressing the needs of marginalised and vulnerable youth populations, ensuring adequate funding and resources for youth services, and adapting to the evolving needs and aspirations of today's young people in an increasingly digital and globalised world.

Looking ahead at the Swedish model and gaps that exist in current provision, there is a growing recognition of the importance of leveraging technology and innovation to enhance the effectiveness and accessibility of youth services, as well as the need for continued collaboration and partnership between government, civil society, and other stakeholders to address complex social issues affecting young people. By staying true to its core principles of inclusion, empowerment, and collaboration, the Swedish youth work model is well-positioned to continue making a positive impact on the lives of young people and society as a whole.

## Results

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In the results section the definition and current state of youth work provision in Scotland is analysed and whether there are any current gaps in youth work provision.

### ***Definition of Youth Work in Scotland***

In Scotland, there is no formally recognised or established definition for the term "youth work." Respondents to the survey (Appendix A) describe it as:

- “[providing] a safe space for young people to develop friendships, learn new skills and just be themselves”.
- “[helping] young people grow, provide emotional assistance and ensure they reach their full potential.”
- “Meeting young people's needs across the city in schools and local communities through voluntary participation and providing inclusive and empowering opportunities.”
- “Youth work is an informal, rights-based educational practice that supports young people’s personal, social and educational development. Youth workers form developmental relationships with young people that help young people to explore their values and beliefs; address issues that affect them; develop skills for learning, life and work; develop their voice, influence and place in society; realise their rights and reach their full potential. Youth work practice is underpinned by CLD Values Competences, Code of Ethics and the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work.” – YouthLink Scotland.

### ***Current state and how is this achieved/maintained:***

Scotland's youth work policies emphasise youth empowerment, community engagement, and the recognition of youth work as a profession (Education Scotland, Scottish Government and YouthLink Scotland, 2014-19). “The Scottish government has created a national strategy for youth work, with a focus on enhancing service accessibility, increasing youth participation, and advancing social justice. The main approaches used by organisations in youth work include community-based youth clubs, youth drop-in centres and youth work in schools (Appendix A). Although it is

notable that the most recent strategy has been paused by Scottish Government for several years.

Youth work provision operates in a decentralised manner, with local authorities and community-based organisations offering customised services spanning ages from 5 to 25. Many of these organisations cater to over 100 young people and have been active within communities for numerous years. Their sizes vary, ranging from as small as 7 individuals to over 5000 (Appendix A).

Youth work in Scotland relies predominantly on paid full-time and part-time professionals, with additional assistance provided by volunteers. Although the volunteer count may appear modest at times, their flexibility allows them to bolster project initiatives as needs arise. This dynamic resource allocation ensures efficient support for various youth programs throughout the year. Moreover, organisations typically require qualifications for their youth workers, to ensure a skilled and competent workforce dedicated to youth development (Appendix A).

Summarily, Scotland's youth work sector sustains itself through diverse funding streams, drawing support from local authorities, the Scottish Government, external grants, and fundraising. Funding frameworks emphasise outcomes-based strategies and the delivery of sustainable, enduring assistance. Many organisations pursue funding applications continuously throughout the year to secure resources for their programs. A respondent aptly highlighted this perpetual endeavour, stating, "We are constantly seeking funding and maintain a dedicated team of three full-time fundraisers" (Appendix C). Despite these efforts, a significant portion of organisations express concerns about inadequate funding levels. Nearly half of the respondents report a lack of capacity to meet the demands placed upon them, with most organisations providing basic to minimal youth services coverage. This underscores the ongoing challenge of balancing programmatic ambitions with financial realities within the youth work landscape (Appendix A, C).

### ***Impact of legislating youth work provision***

There was an overall sense that legislating youth work provisions would have a positive impact on the sector. Respondents indicate the need for youth work (Appendix A and C).

- “To enable young people to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their potential in a more informal setting”.
- “because it's life changing / life saving for the young people we support”

Youth work services in Scotland are specifically tailored to address the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged young individuals, offering crucial support across various domains including mental health, employability, homelessness, and personal development. Within this framework, youth work serves as a vital conduit through which young people access a wide array of benefits. The survey results indicate that these include a heightened sense of safety and security, access to valuable information, resources, and guidance, active participation in learning and skill-building endeavours, and the opportunity to engage in decision-making processes that impact both themselves and their communities (Appendix A).

Additionally, youth work facilitates exploration and experimentation, enabling young individuals to discover new activities, form social connections through events and outings, and actively contribute to environmental initiatives (Appendix A). By nurturing these multifaceted experiences, youth work plays a pivotal role in empowering young people to navigate challenges, develop essential life skills, and foster positive relationships within their communities. In addition to this positive aspect, legislation may address the following gaps in the current provision.

### ***Legislation may streamline service provision.***

Within the survey (Appendix A), one respondent remarked that.

“Youth work across Scotland is not consistent with no ringfenced local authority funding specifically for delivery of youth work. Youth work in schools is particularly patchy and based on whether the head teacher prioritises this or not,

youth work can make a huge difference to attainment, employability pathways and well-being for young people.”

Another respondent commented; “All youth work organisations are struggling to meet the current need, particularly around mental health support and suicidality of young people.” (Appendix A). Scotland's youth work sector continues to grapple with issues such as youth mental health, substance abuse, and youth homelessness. Future directions include expanding youth work provision in rural areas, improving access to youth services for marginalised groups, and embedding youth work principles in mainstream education.

Scotland's commitment to youth work professionalism is supported by the CLD framework. Half of the respondents were unsure if the CLD supported youth work. It could be garnered that respondents thought that CLD is widely ineffective in terms of its scope. Respondents agreed that the CLD required strengthening. Respondents felt that strengthening the CLD Regulations would have a more positive on young people, youth work organisations, families and healthcare, and Social Services (Appendix A,C).<sup>22</sup>

The European Council advocates for a coherent and flexible competency-based framework for both paid and volunteer youth workers.<sup>23</sup> Defining core competencies tailored to various contexts and establishing unified frameworks for their education and training would enhance quality standards. Such a framework would clarify expectations for youth workers and beneficiaries alike, guiding effective training, professional development, and capacity building. Introducing qualifications for youth work would enhance transparency regarding the competencies of individuals involved or seeking involvement in the field.

Further to this, digital youth work is gaining traction in Scotland, but there are challenges in ensuring that online platforms are safe, inclusive, and accessible to all young people. Legislation can provide a framework which facilitates collaboration

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<sup>22</sup> The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013.

<sup>23</sup> Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 31 May 2017 and explanatory memorandum.

with digital experts, youth organisations can develop guidelines and resources for effective digital youth work practice.

***Legislation may have a positive impact on funding.***

According to interviewees, Ireland is the gold standard for funding in terms of capital, Sweden, and Germany for funding vis a vis assets like buildings (Appendix C). Funding can come from other services which youth work impacts, such as the justice system and mental health provision. Most respondents identified lack of funding as an obstacle to effective youth work (Appendix C). The introduction of legislation will force local authorities and providers to consider exactly what funding is required and prioritise activities across the youth work spectrum. Despite Scotland's commitment to youth work, there are concerns about the stability of funding sources and the reliance on short-term grants. Ideally, then, long-term funding strategies are needed to support the sustainability of youth work initiatives and enable effective planning and delivery. Greater coordination and collaboration between national government, and local authorities are essential to address funding gaps and ensure consistency in quality across the country.

As there is currently no mandated provision for youth work, provisions may appear opportunistic. Creating a legal obligation would bring together commissioners of youth work and the providers to develop a financial plan to support the provision of both the facilities in which youth work can be provided and resources to maintain that provision.

***Legislation may be facilitated by training and development.***

Survey respondents highlighted the pivotal role of CLD in enriching lives through a multi-dimensional approach, identifying it as a key strength (Appendix A).<sup>24</sup> CLD, which includes the youth work sector, supports the establishment of a structured training framework to facilitate progression and pathways in learning. According to the survey findings, most respondents expressed the need for qualifications for their youth workers with half of the respondents, indicating the importance of CLD qualifications for certain employees (Appendix A). While entry-level positions may not mandate

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<sup>24</sup> The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013.

qualifications, optional training is available. However, senior positions typically require a degree in youth work or CLD, as noted.<sup>25</sup>

One respondent emphasised that while CLD incorporates elements that pre-date its formation, it is crucial to recognise youth work both as part of CLD and as distinct from it (Appendix A).<sup>26</sup> Another respondent expressed dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of CLD and suggested quantifying its impact, especially within its various branches, with the introduction of minimum requirements being seen as a positive step (Appendix A). In areas where there is insufficient buy-in, existing regulations may not offer adequate protection. The ongoing CLD review on professional development pathways to enhance standards should also address the development needs of volunteers across the sector. Additionally, the introduction of a specific grant to support staff training and development is recommended.<sup>27</sup>

Respondents were in general consensus that Community Learning and Development (CLD) requires reinforcement (Appendix A,C).<sup>28</sup> Strengthening the regulations and providing clearer guidelines would significantly benefit young people, adults, and organisations. It was suggested that CLD regulations should include a statutory requirement for every young person to have access to youth work. Some respondents further emphasised that strengthening CLD might not be fully effective unless youth work is established as a statutory provision.<sup>29</sup> However, it was noted that the essence of youth work lies in volunteer participation, and mandatory qualifications may discourage volunteers from participating (Appendix A,C).

***Legislation may make provisions more universally available.***

The survey findings reveal a significant disparity in the distribution of youth work services, with only 25% being provided at a national level (Appendix A). This emphasises the prevalence of region-specific youth work programs throughout Scotland. Such a distribution pattern has far-reaching implications for the accessibility and availability of youth work, particularly in rural settings. The lack of a universally accessible pathway to youth work exacerbates existing disparities in service provision.

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<sup>25</sup> Id

<sup>26</sup> The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Id

<sup>28</sup> Id.

<sup>29</sup> Id



Individuals residing in remote areas encounter heightened barriers to accessing vital support networks, educational opportunities, and recreational activities (Appendix C). This disparity underscores the urgent need for statutory legislation to ensure that every young person, regardless of their geographical location, can engage with and benefit from youth work initiatives.

This should also be seen in the context of strengthening the statutory basis of Community Learning and Development (CLD), which is a current Scottish Government manifesto commitment.<sup>30</sup>

### ***Visibility/signposting***

The Young Scot Card (YSC) was suggested as a means of signposting and accessing youth work. The response to the YSC was mixed, with concerns raised as to the demographics covered by the YSC, particularly the increasing number of young people who shut themselves away at home, or those in more rural areas (Appendix C). Other interviewees promoted youth workers in educational settings, signposting YW services outside formal education whilst also providing a dedicated service within school. One interviewee revealed that youth workers promoted the benefits of YW within primary schools, exposing children to the concepts of youth work from an early age (Appendix C). Mental health workers also play a role in signposting young people to youth work, albeit through referrals and usually when a young person is already in crisis. Mobile phones were also suggested to communicate the service to young people, although concerns were raised as to the number of children who had a phone (Appendix C). A Guide to the Effective Involvement of Children and Young People (Leicestershire District Council, no date) highlights the benefits of create methods of engagement to encourage the participation of young people.

Whilst many experts worry that social media is harmful (Ehmke, 2023), social media remains a dominant presence in the lives of young people across the whole of the UK. The UK's independent regulator the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), conducted recent research into young people which suggests that many young

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<sup>30</sup> The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013.

people in the UK have access to social media. Its findings published in 2022 (ASA) state that around 93% of all 11–17-year-olds in the UK have a personal account with one or more of the major social media platforms. The ASA reports that over five million people in the UK aged between 11-17, each with an average of around three social media accounts, this age group is estimated to hold over 15 million social media accounts. Its report also found that 86% of 11–12-year-olds have an account on at least one social media platform, but since they fall below the minimum age of registration (13) on social media, their submitted date of birth likely signifies they're older than they are.

The “Growing up in Scotland Study: life at age 12” (Scottish Government, 2019) measured the social media use and internet use of 12-year-olds in Scotland. Its findings were that 90% of 12-year-olds spend time on social media. Possibly of significance, children in households where at least one person held a degree level qualification, spent less time on social media. This must be indicative of the scope of the power to reach young people through social media.

However, teenage health campaigns through social media are proven to be complex and challenging (Peattie, 2007). Peattie explains that promoting health campaigns to young people through schools is difficult (competing subjects within limited time), and that any advertising campaign would need to combat peer pressure in an audience which has little sense of its mortality. For Generations Y and Z, the internet is central to young people for education, information and socialising. Even as far back as 2006, teenagers had not only adopted the internet, but internalised it, making it a space which they owned, free from the organisation of parents. Now it is online ‘influencers’ who engage and inspire young people through TikTok, YouTube and Instagram. Celebrities and modern influencers have become the most effective marketing tools for young people.

The Digital Youth Work Project (no date), a transnational Erasmus+ project, partners with YouthLink Scotland and others acknowledging the role of digital media in influencing young people and drawing them into youth work. Under “good practices” it recognises the power of social media platforms TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp and Discord as a successful means of promoting youth work through engagement of young people. Interviewee E (Appendix C) found success with TikTok, Instagram,

Twitter and Facebook during National Youth Work Week, with social media platforms having a reach of over 300,000 people in one week.

Interviewees acknowledged the need for promotion of youth work in Scotland, enhancing its visibility amongst young people and promoting its benefits. To be effective, the design and delivery requires clever design. Youth work needs to be desirable and accessible to young people, especially when the voluntary principle of youth work emphasises a young person's choice to be involved (Hammond and McArdle, 2020). Social media is a powerful tool which has the potential to reach and motivate the broadest young audience in Scotland with the right advertising campaign driving exposure and engagement.

### ***Dedicated Buildings***

Our research explored the significance of dedicated buildings in promoting youth participation and democracy within the realm of youth work. Dedicated buildings, such as youth centres, community hubs, and recreational facilities, serve as physical spaces where youth work initiatives can thrive (Appendix C). These buildings are more than just brick-and-mortar structures; they are symbolic representations of a commitment to investing in the well-being and development of young people. Several examples around the world highlight the transformative impact of dedicated buildings on youth participation and democracy in youth work. The Door [Youth] Centres, in Gloucester and London: These youth centres provide a range of services, including counselling, educational support, and recreational activities, aimed at empowering young people from disadvantaged backgrounds (The Door Youth Centre, no date). Through its various programs, The Door promotes youth participation in decision-making processes and encourages a sense of civic responsibility among its members. By providing a safe and supportive environment, brick-built centres enable young people to actively participate in any given community.

### ***Youth Participation and Democracy***

Young people are not actively involved in decision-making processes at both local and national levels. The establishment of youth parliaments provides a crucial avenue for young people to actively engage in decision-making processes at both local and national levels. By participating in youth parliament sessions, young

individuals can voice their opinions, contribute to policy discussions, and advocate for issues important to them. Through this mechanism, youth participation in democracy is fostered, empowering young citizens to shape the future of their communities and nations. (British Youth Council, 2024).

## Recommendations.

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The comments in the interviews and survey results suggest that legislation to mandate the provision of youth work (Appendix A,C) may have a positive effect on its sustainability and availability. Elements of youth work are already provided for under existing legislation, for example, under the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) £200 million a year is allocated to support children and young people impacted by poverty. This funding is routed through the education system and agreed upon by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). This indicates that if a need is identified then funding can be provided.

While extending other legislation such as Education (Scotland) Act 2016 may appear appropriate it is felt that youth work is sufficiently distinct to warrant its specific legislation. This would promote and move youth to work up the policy and political agenda. In its report in March 2021, the Audit Commission suggests several school-based actions to achieve the 11 long-term outcomes set out in the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework. Youth work needs to have a similar objective with respect to outcomes but focus on those activities young people may engage in when not in school.

If the decision to legislate the right to youth work does occur, it can take several forms. However, the use of a regulation as deployed in The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013 provides an appropriate model. The implementation of a regulation would be consistent with other mechanisms within the Scottish Legislature.

***What should be in the legislation?***

Based on the literature search and secondary data collection, there are some core areas which would support not only the enhancement of the current practice – but also the development of a legislative framework. These core components include:

- Definition of youth work.
  - For the legislation access to youth work should be defined as access to a trusted adult in a youth work setting. Trusted Adults, for the legislation, should be a person qualified for SCQF Level 6 as designated in the CLD standards (Standards Council Scotland, 2020). The CLD should validate this as being the minimum level for being recognised as a trusted adult.<sup>31</sup> There is a comprehensive range of training opportunities for both professional and volunteer youth workers, but an appropriate minimum standard must be achieved to be recognised as a person delivering youth work. A trusted adult need not be a professional or a paid youth worker but is recognised in the definition above.
- Defining of age:
  - In Scotland, statutory guidance supporting the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, defines children and young people as under the age of 18 (NSPCC, 2024). A clear establishment of age range should be incorporated into any new legislation.
- Accountability
  - The Local Authority should be accountable for the provision of youth work. This would involve monitoring the youth work within its jurisdiction and taking action should the provision fall below the level mandated in the legislation. They should consider the environment, for instance, whether it is rural or urban, and ensure that the provision is appropriate to the area and its population and population density. Verification that local authorities are meeting the requirements of the legislation needs to be provided for. This need not be too onerous; however, an independent body should be charged with assisting local authorities to verify that all young people have access to a trusted adult. That body could also act

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<sup>31</sup> The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013.

as a catalyst for sharing good practices and ideas to ensure that consistently high standards are being met across the country.

- What is the provision:
  - The provision of youth work will vary. Young people may wish to access different aspects of youth work at different times and therefore the local authority should consider what young people want through a needs assessment. It would be impossible to provide youth work to cover every need, but the local authority should seek to establish what young people want and encourage the provision of that service.
- Evaluation and Measurement:
  - The local authority should be able to monitor the provision and determine whether the statutory right is being provided. They should publish their measures and demonstrate whether those measures are being met.
- Penalties for non-compliance:
  - The purpose of the legislation is to ensure that youth work is considered when budgets are being set. Provision must be made for capital and operational expenditure. It should be noted that youth work provision is met by professional and voluntary services and therefore funding through voluntary giving would form part of the provision.

The benefits of youth work have been demonstrated to be significant in terms of their impact on the young people who participate and on the societies in which they live. In the 2022 review of the youth work educational recovery fund it was found that 82% of participating young people developed their skills and 79% of participating young people experienced improved health and well-being. If these results could be translated to the whole population of young people, the impact on Scotland would be significant.

## Conclusion

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The benefits of mandating youth work in Scotland are numerous and would give the provision of youth work an equivalent priority to other mandatory provisions such as education and childcare. This is consistent with an approach which looks towards the future by giving young people the best start in life and the widest opportunities as they enter the adult world. Youth work not only offers opportunities to improve outcomes for all young people, but it also provides an alternative for young people who are about to or have engaged with, damaging activities, such as substance abuse or crime. As stated by Figueroa (2023, pg. 299) 'it became clear that while youth work is not explicitly directed towards crime prevention, it has a significant impact on reducing criminal behaviour among young people.'

Youth work in Scotland has been the subject of much debate over recent years. The benefits of youth work as accepted by many organisations are substantial, however, the lack of consistent funding resulting in an inconsistent provision has prevented those benefits from being universally realised. A provision, as a right, will ensure that all young people will know that wherever they are in Scotland there will be a place where they will find support, encouragement, a trusted adult, and other young people.

The scope of youth work will vary according to location and local need. For that reason, the definition of youth work in the legislation will be extremely broad. It will include activities such as vocational training outside the educational system, formal programs such as The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, uniform youth activities such as scouts and guides and informal activities such as sports clubs, social gatherings, and drop-in sessions.

To quantify the provision is difficult due to its broad scope, however a typical provision of providing access to a trusted adult in a youth work setting twice a week is certainly measurable. Scaling up to this level of provisions will take time so it would be reasonable to allow local authorities three years to demonstrate that they are meeting this provision mandated by the legislation.

The purpose of the legislation is less about penalising local authorities for not meeting the provision and more about ensuring the local authorities allocate appropriate funding to universal youth work when establishing budgets. Local authorities should have a significant input into how their performance will be measured as the provision will depend on local needs and centrally proscribing a certain provision may not be the best way to achieve the results for the young people. Also measuring outcomes would be exceedingly difficult, especially in the early years and the impact may take a generation to be realised.

Local authorities are best placed to monitor the provisions in their area and act where the provision is falling short of the statutory provision. It would be prudent to appoint an accountable body to provide an independent audit of the youth work provision within a local authority area and encourage sharing best practice.

Whilst some of the provision of youth work will be funded from local authority budgets a sizeable proportion of the provision will come from the voluntary sector. Training of paid youth workers is already facilitated through local authority budgets, and some training for the voluntary sector will be required, however regulatory oversight of voluntary youth work already exists through the CLD therefore the financial increment would not be large.<sup>32</sup> The anticipated savings to health, law and order, and social services budgets will eventually cover the costs of this provision, however in the interim additional funding will be required.

Youth work overlaps the education at one end of the spectrum where vocational training provides training outside the educational sector. At the other end is the provision of recreation and communal activities. This need may be simply met by the provision of a space where young people can meet and access support as necessary. Links to schools would be important in signposting opportunities for young people to engage with youth work.

Having a consistent provision of youth work also provides greater career development opportunity and would therefore encourage more people to develop a career as a youth worker. A mandated provision of youth work would establish youth work as part

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<sup>32</sup> The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013.



of the community in which it operates and would therefore encourage more volunteers to engage in the provision of youth work.

It is important not to burden youth work with every activity involving young people. Many activities are already undertaken by youth workers under existing programs, for example local authorities will have to decide where detached youth work sits in their organisations and therefore budgets. (Detached youth work involved youth workers engaging with young people in the community who are vulnerable or engaged in anti-social activities). In other countries such as Sweden and Germany a consistent approach has been prioritised for several years appears and now demonstrates that youth work is integrated into the community.

Digital technology has been widely deployed in all the countries reviewed and found to be especially useful however digital exclusion and online safety must be at the forefront of any deployment.

An established, universal youth work provision will support the development of young people, realising potential and reducing damaging problems. It is a difficult vision to realise at a time when budgets are being consumed with resolving immediate issues, but it is probably the best investment in the future society can make and therefore should be an extremely high priority with the government.

## **Open Justice Centre**

The Open University

Walton Hall

Milton Keynes

MK7 6AA

General enquiries to: [open-justice@open.ac.uk](mailto:open-justice@open.ac.uk)

Web: <https://www.open.ac.uk/open-justice/>

Twitter: @OU\_OpenJustice

## Appendices

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### Appendix A – Survey Results

Results of the Open Justice Law Clinic Survey of the youth Work Provision in Scotland

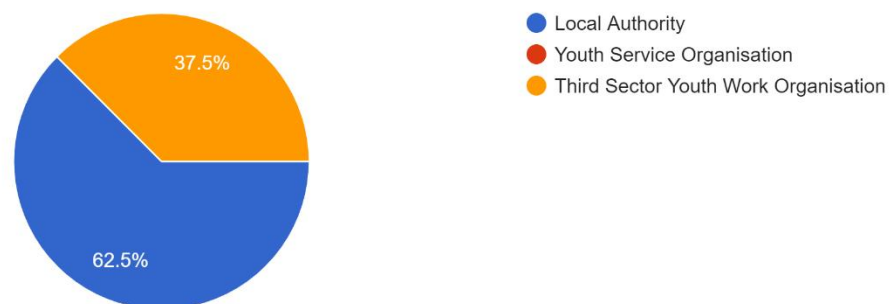
Introduction:

The Survey aims to identify the current state of the youth work provision in Scotland and ascertain as to whether there are any gaps. Furthermore, in line with the broader report the survey aims to gather the opinions of Local Authorities and youth Work Organisations as to the impact of a right to youth work. The Survey looks at the right to youth work in the context of CLD and whether legislative changes are necessary should they be in line with strengthening CLD or separate.

This survey ran between the 19th of December 2023 and the 26th of February 2024. To protect the respondents any quotes used in qualitative analysis will not be named.

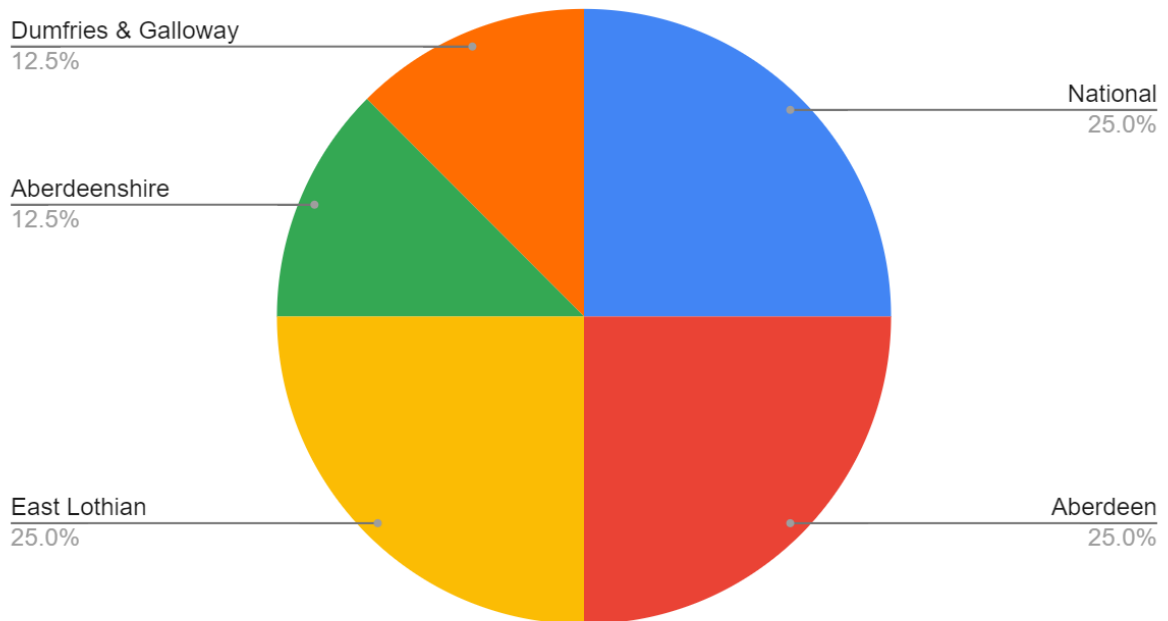
1. Which are you?

8 responses



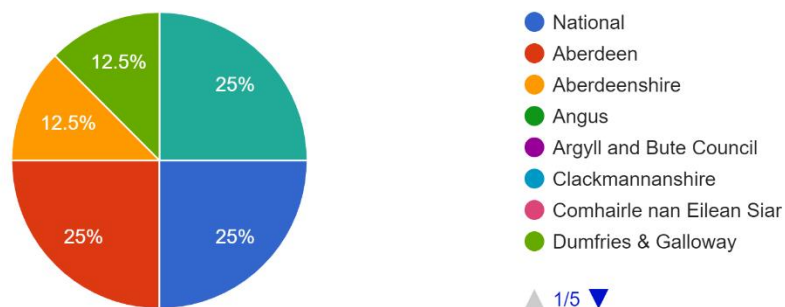
The majority of respondents identified as Local Authorities and the minority as third sector youth work organisations.

## Count of 2. Which area do you operate in?



## 2. Which area do you operate in?

8 responses



National – 25%

Aberdeen – 25%

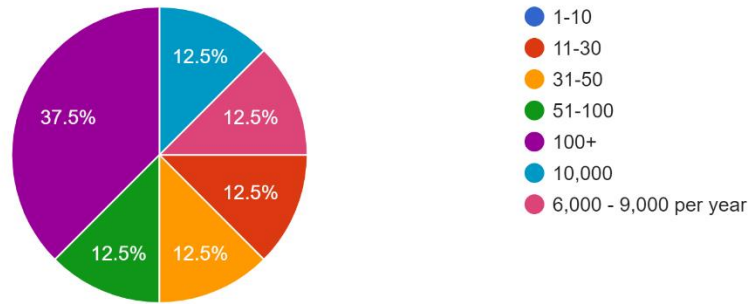
East Lothian – 25%

Aberdeenshire – 12.5%

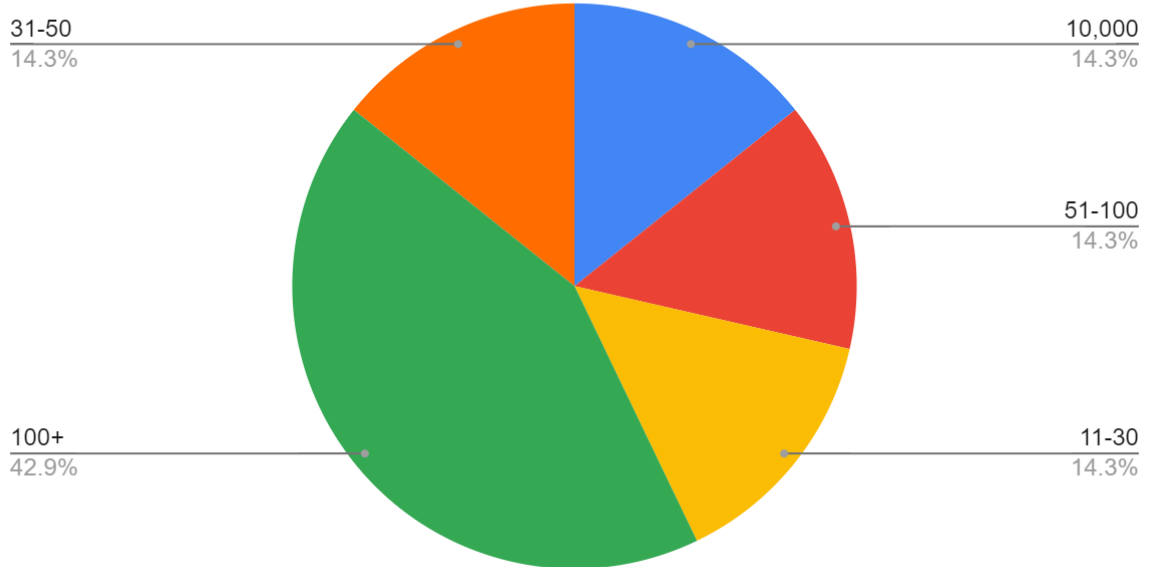
Dumfries & Galloway – 12.5%

### 3. How many young people does your organisation work with?

8 responses

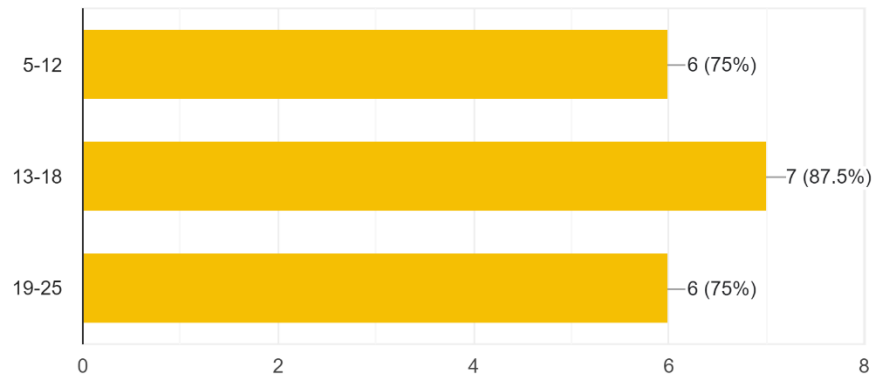


### Count of 3. How many young people does your organisation work with?



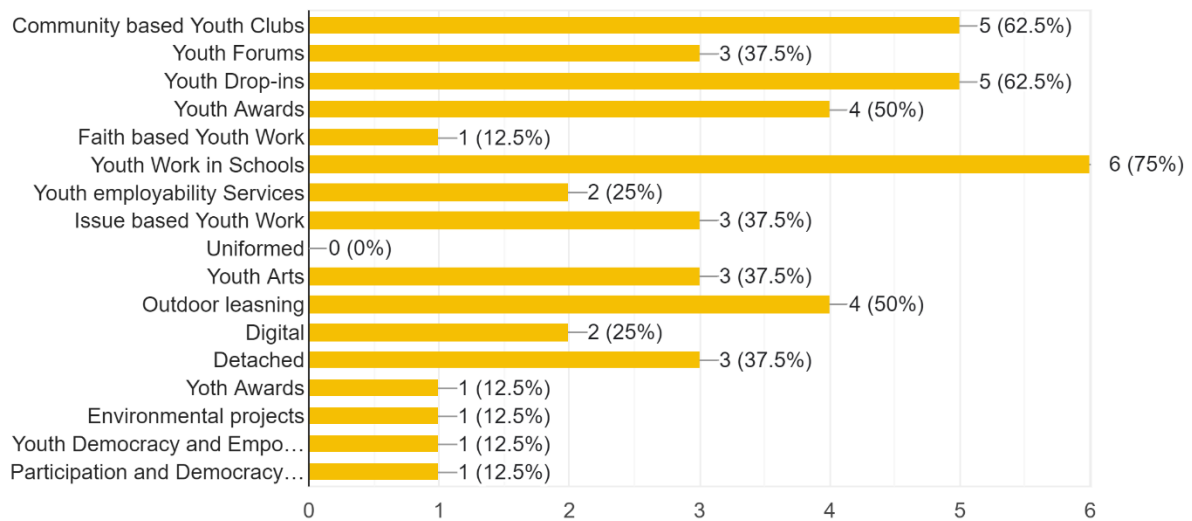
#### 4. Which age groups do you provide Youth Work for? (Tick all that apply)

8 responses



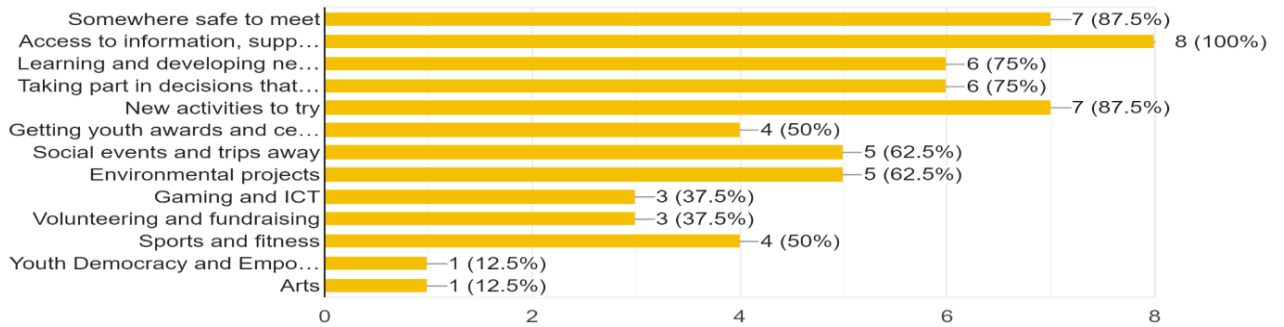
#### 5. Which of the following approaches do you use in Youth Work?

8 responses



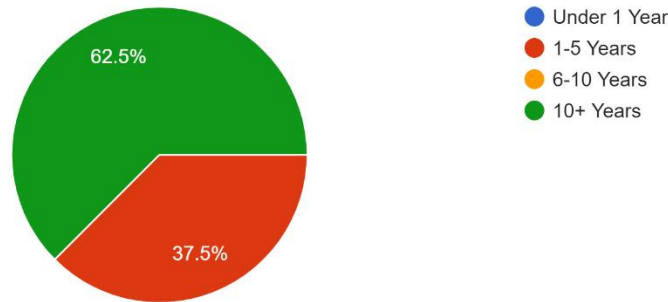
6. Why do young people access your services? (Tick all that apply)

8 responses



7. How long have you been established?

8 responses



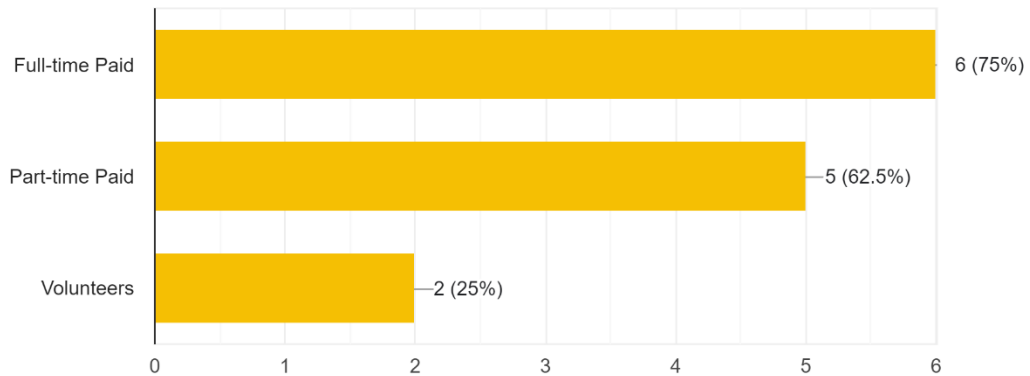
8. How many people work in your organisation?

The respondent answered for themselves with number of staff ranging from Seven to over 5000. Respondents also noted having a variety of employees including both paid workers and unpaid volunteers. One respondent noted:

“...most adult volunteers support event-based delivery and are not regular volunteers.”

9. Are your workers (Tick all that apply)

8 responses



10. How many of your workers are volunteers?

Respondents answered for themselves, and the answers ranged from None to 300. One respondent did note that they were Unsure if there were any. To quote another respondent:

“There are over 100 volunteers for the youth work Service, over the course of a year there will be several hundred people volunteer to support youth work delivery through community-based groups, one-off projects and events.”

This reflects the quote in question 8, that the number of volunteers at one specific time may be small however they may rotate throughout the year so it would be a larger number of volunteers throughout the year to ensure that multiple projects can be actualised.

11. What qualifications do you currently require for your youth workers?

The respondents answered for themselves.

Half of the respondents explicitly mentioned that some of their employees required CLD qualifications.

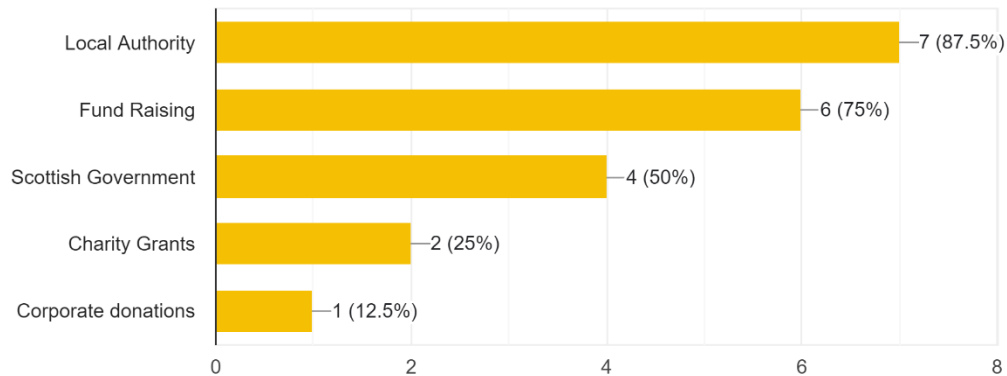
Multiple respondents mentioned that they offered training to their youth workers.

The minority of respondents mentioned that no formal qualifications were required, or that experience was required over qualifications.

“Depends on level of post. Basic entry level doesn’t require qualifications but we provide the option to undertake the PDA in youth work. Full time senior posts require a degree in youth work or CLD”

12. How are you funded to provide Youth Work? (Tick all that apply)

8 responses



13. How often do you apply for funding

8 responses



13a.

Most respondents expanded that finding appropriate funding is a constant pressure:

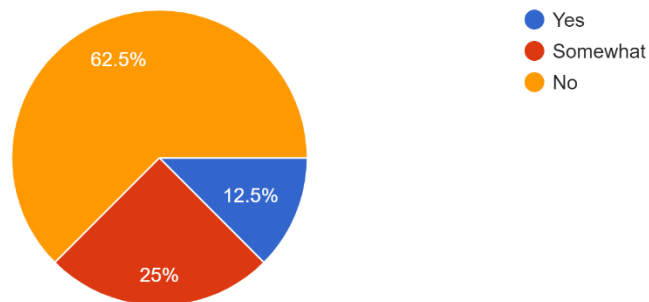


“We are always applying for funding and have a team of 3 paid full-time fundraisers.”

While some respondents mentioned that they apply for funding whenever it becomes available to them

“There's not a timetable for funding applications for our service. Core services are funded through the Local Authority with a number of projects and event-based work that require enhanced or stand-alone funding being applied for as and when required.”

14. Do you receive sufficient funding to carry out effective youth services?  
8 responses



14a

The majority of respondents declared that they were insufficiently funded.

“We never have enough funding to support the need.”

“When we are successful with bids, we have enough to deliver effective services but the pressure and strain on youth funding is becoming more intense and when funding is withdrawn, or bids are unsuccessful then we don't have enough.

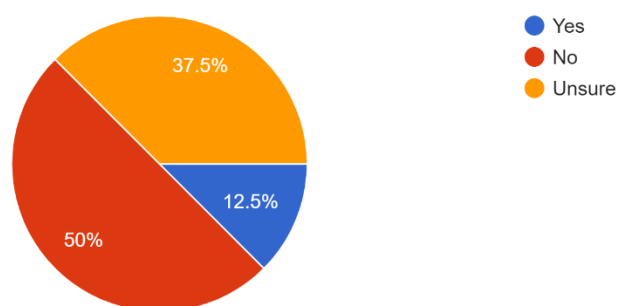
“As we are not a charity, some funding streams are not available to us and the ones that are, they won't provide funding for rental costs, so we need to be specific about what we do and use the funding accordingly.”

This can be contrasted by the minority of respondents who felt they were sufficiently funded or somewhat sufficiently funded.

“We are in a fortunate position in which our Local Authority is particularly supportive of youth work activities, programmes and events. As a service we are pro-active in seeking funding to deliver out-with what our core budget will allow.”

15. Do you have the capacity to meet the demand of your Youth Work service?

8 responses



16. What is your definition of Youth Work?

Some of the respondents mentioned that they agreed with the YouthLink Scotland definition of youth work.

“Youth work is an informal, rights-based educational practice that supports young people’s personal, social and educational development. Youth workers form developmental relationships with young people that help young people to explore their values and beliefs; address issues that affect them; develop skills for learning, life and work; develop their voice, influence and place in society; realise their rights and reach their full potential. Youth work practice is underpinned by CLD Values Competences, Code of Ethics and the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work.” – YouthLink Scotland

Definitions of youth work included:

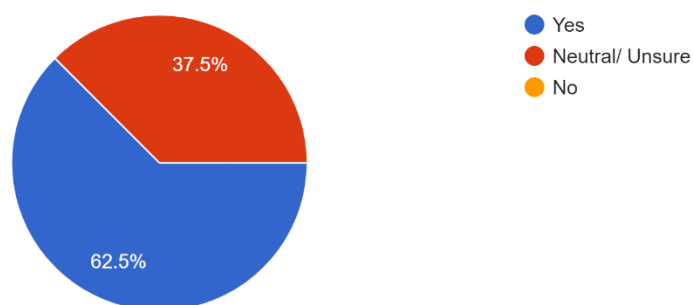
“To provide a safe space for young people to develop friendships, learn new skills and just be themselves”

“To help young people grow, provide emotional assistance and ensure they reach their full potential.”

“Meeting young people's needs across the city in schools and local communities through voluntary participation and providing inclusive and empowering opportunities.”

17. Are there any gaps in the current state of Youth Work provision in your area?

8 responses



17a. Please explain any concerns regarding the current youth work provision?

Responses to the question were varied however funding insecurity can be noted as an underlying theme from respondents.

One respondent mentioned a dissatisfaction with the efficacy of the CLD.

One respondent mentioned that the delivery of youth work in schools can vary from school to school due to no ringfenced local authority funding.

“Youth work across Scotland is not consistent with no ringfenced local authority funding specifically for delivery of youth work. youth work in schools is particularly patchy and based on whether the head teacher prioritises this or

not, yet we know that youth work can make a huge difference to attainment, employability pathways and well-being for young people.”

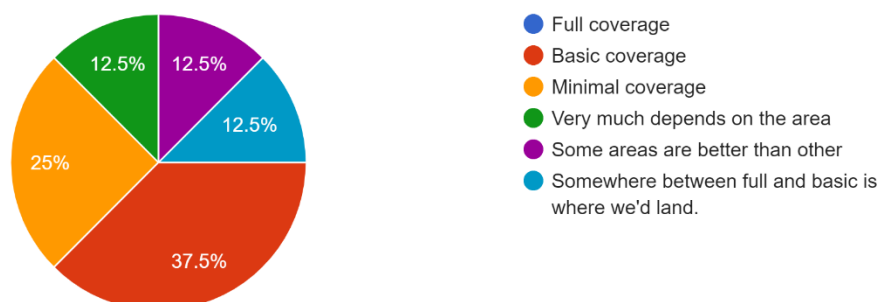
“The lack of funding for staff means that there are waiting lists for young people. This means that some young people are not getting the support when they need it and others are not getting enough time with a youth worker.”

“The prevalence of third sector youth work providers also impacts the volume of provision delivered in an area as this effects demand and need. Our service is well resourced through a combination of core and external funding, should external funding cease we would not be in a position to deliver as full a service as we can currently.”

“All youth work organisations are struggling to meet the current need particularly around mental health support and suicidality of young people.”

18. How far does the coverage for young people who need your services go?

8 responses



18a.

Respondents had varied responses dependent on location of young people. Respondents drew upon funding as an issue regarding overage.

“With a larger budget we could re-establish youth clubs, youth hubs, provide detached youth work and increase the youth participation empowerment work.”

“Lack of funding!”

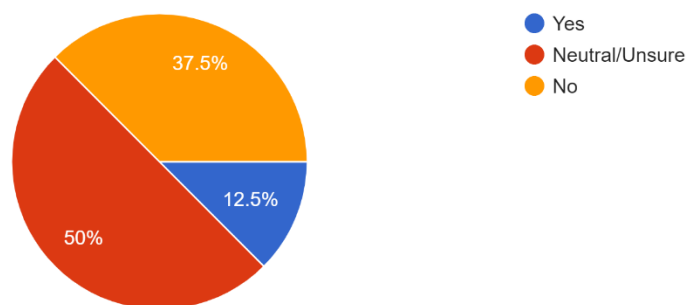
“There are some young people that get very little such as young people ASN but other services have got better as we have funding (area such as young carers/looked after)”

“We are somewhere between full and basic coverage for young people. Answers vary depending on the young person in question, where they live and where they are in terms of their participation.”

“not enough funding to provide something for everyone.”

19. Do the Community Learning Development Regulations 2013 (CLD) adequately support Youth Work (YW)

8 responses



19a.

Half of the respondents were unsure if the CLD supported youth work with only one respondent thinking that the CLD is adequately supporting youth work.

It could be garnered that respondents generally thought that CLD is widely ineffective in terms of its scope, not offering enough in the way ringfenced funding or regulating youth workers and organisations in an effective way

“No ringfenced prioritisation of youth work. Also no ringfencing of voluntary sector youth work provision. When budgets are tight the first thing to get cut is grants to the voluntary sector.”

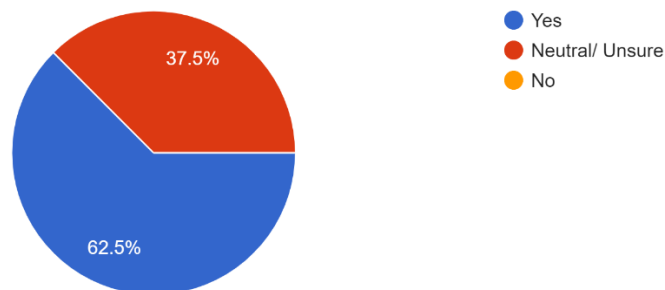
“... this comes down to the worker and not the regulations”

“they aren’t used enough with youth workers to make a difference”

“We would be keen to see CLD quantified overall and in terms of the branches - some form of minimum requirement being introduced would be a positive step. In some areas the existing regulations are enough because there is buy-in, but in areas where there isn't, the regulations do not provide much protection.”

20. Do the CLD Regulations require strengthening?

8 responses



20a.

Respondents generally agreed that the CLD required strengthening. With no respondents in direct opposition to the strengthening of the CLD.

Some respondents expanded that the strengthening of CLD would not be effective as long as youth work was not made a statutory provision.

“unless sector becomes statutory then this is pointless”

“The CLD regulations need to give a statutory requirement for every young person to have the right to youth work.”

Alternatively, some respondents focused on how the CLD should be strengthened or more abstractly how they would like CLD to be perceived.

“Measurables would also help strengthen the regulations... they are open to interpretation in a way that other professions/sectors are not... what is currently mandated is that each area must produce a plan and that the plan must be reflective of what's being delivered and evidence a degree of partnership working - this is not enough to protect or promote CLD.”

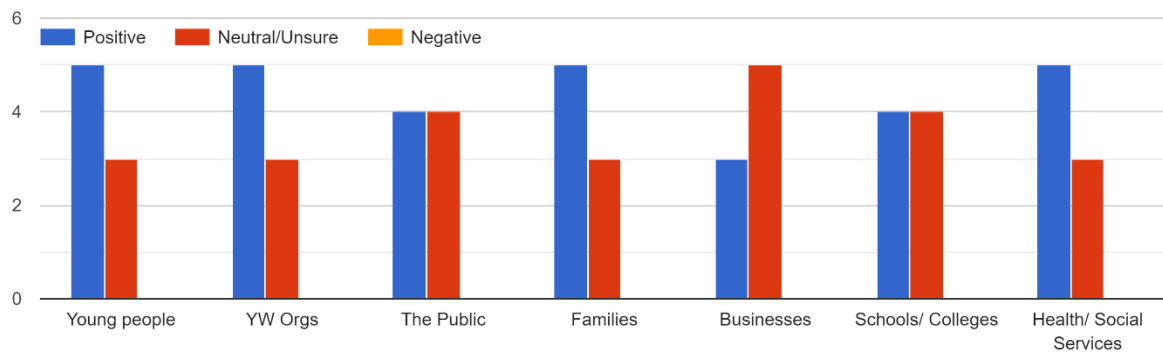
“It needs to be recognised like teaching or social work. No young person or adult know what CLD is, but they know about adult ed, family learning or youth work. More PR is needed re what CLD is.”

Some respondents also focused on the community or local focus the CLD should have:

“...it would be good to introduce community-based requirements for youth work to ensure youth work does not become exclusively limited to the school day or during term time (not pigeonholed to be an education bolt on).”

“With a wider expectation of what local councils should provide.”

21. What impact would strengthening the CLD Regulations have on the following groups?



21a.

Respondents generally felt that strengthening the CLD Regulations would have a Positive to Neutral effect on different sectors of society.

More Positive on young people, youth work organisations, families and healthcare and Social services.

More Neutral or Unsure on the wider Public, Businesses and Schools and Colleges.

Respondents expanded:

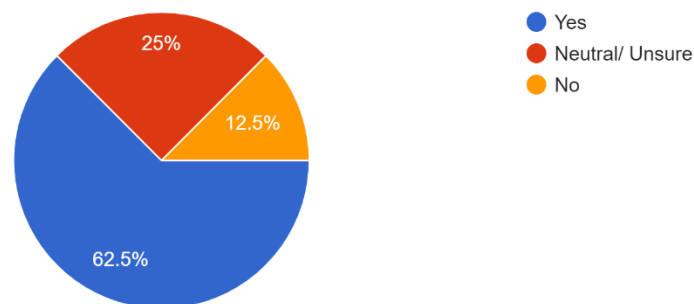
“If the regulations are strengthened and by extension, made clearer so that people knew what they were entitled to in terms of CLD this would have huge benefits to young people, adults and organisations.”

“CLD plays a fundamental role in enhancing and developing people’s lives and the service is multi-dimensional in approach which is its key strength.”

“Should there be a minimum access to youth work introduced there would be positive consequences for businesses, social services etc. as youth work is recognised and evidenced to impact positively on young people's skills, experience, independence and confidence this in turn increases participation, qualification, employability and improves health and well-being, and capacity for learning.”

22. Would you like to see enhanced legislation for Youth Work in Scotland?

8 responses



22.a

Respondents answered that they would generally like to see enhanced legislation for youth work. It should be noted that this is not necessarily within the parameter of CLD.

“It is important that youth work is viewed as part of CLD but also distinct from CLD. Youth work is not just CLD it is so much more - existing long before CLD and with a vibrant voluntary sector that is not CLD but is distinctly youth work. Youth work doesn't exist because of CLD, rather CLD exists because of the three elements of its practice that all individually pre-date CLD: Youth work, Community development and Adult learning.”

“A minimum amount of youth work/clubs. Provision should be dictated by law so that the service is protected.”

“To have clear expectations of what council/ [third sector youth work organisations] should provide”

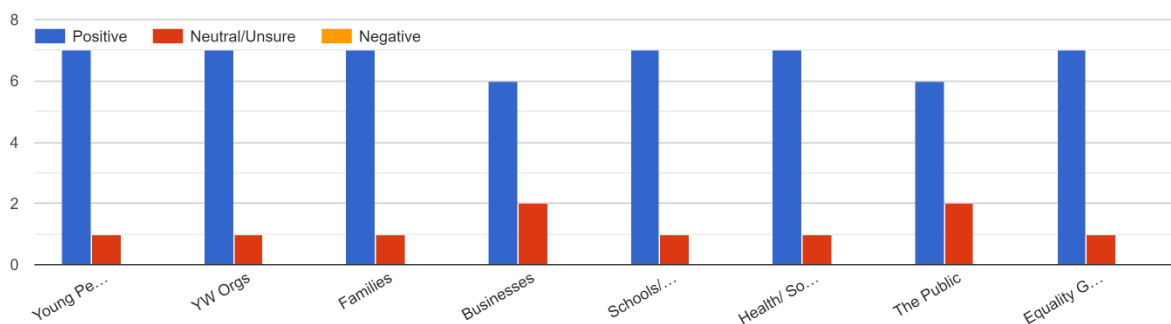


Some respondents either found the question unclear or do not wish to see enhanced legislation for youth work.

“Legislation just puts people off.”

“Legislation in what form? question isn't clear which area you want to look at or point of”

23. What impact would a right to Youth Work (YW) have on the following groups?



23a.

Respondents thought that a ‘right to youth work’ would have a positive impact on societal groups, including Health and Social services and Equality Groups and those with protected characteristics.

Respondents expanded

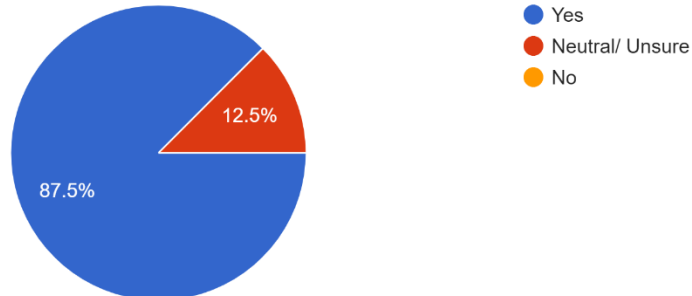
“CLD staff have key skills in engaging with YP on their terms on a voluntary basis. This approach is its key strength and once engaged the positive impact the service can have on individuals and communities is invaluable.”

“All the research tells us that youth work has a positive impact on all of the above”

“if youth work was a right there would be more investment”

24. Is any change required to implement a right to Youth Work?

8 responses



25. In some countries youth work is a separate statutory provision or intergrated into the education system.

How would you like a right to youth work implemented?

Respondents varied on how they would like to see a right to youth work implemented. Responses were most varied on how close the youth work provision should be aligned with the education system as a whole.

“[we] would like to see youth work as a separate statutory provision that has parity of esteem within the wider education system. That’s not to say that teachers can suddenly become youth workers, but rather that youth workers can work alongside and complement formal education professionals.”

“Separate system as young people don't want it to be associated with school with rules, etc.”

“Right to arts/sport/youth work linked to Education”

“I believe that YW should be a separate statutory provision”

Respondents based their perspectives both on how young people and youth workers could benefit from a separate statutory provision,

“should be an offshoot of informal education to develop young people in their own direction”

“There should be a statutory responsible to deliver youth work but not a requirement for young people to attend/participate/engage in it. If the later is pushed for, youth work would end up being regarded as no different to formal schooling. The relationship between the youth worker and young person is what makes youth work unique.”

“In a way that makes sure third sector organisations don't get left out.”

26. Should Youth Work remain voluntary for Young people?

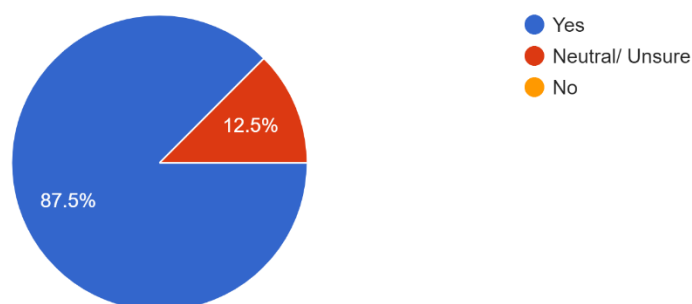
8 responses



Respondents were unanimous in stating that youth work must remain voluntary.

27. Should young people have a say in a statutory Youth Work provision?

8 responses



Respondents were nearly unanimous in stating that young people should have a say in a statutory youth work provision.

## 28. Who should be responsible for a statutory youth work provision?

Respondents differed on the question on who should be responsible for a statutory youth work provision.

Half of the respondents felt that the responsibility should be designated to Local Authorities.

A quarter of respondents remained unsure if there should be a statutory youth work provision or who's responsibility it should be.

The final quarter of respondents felt it important that third sector youth work organisations had responsibility in any provision.

“It should be a shared responsibility devolved to local authorities and voluntary sector organisations. It is vital that voluntary sector provision is safeguarded in any strengthening of legislation, and it doesn't just become a provision delivered by local authorities. This could perhaps be through statutory commissioning of services. “

“Local Authority so it is recognised like teaching and social work”

## 29. Why do you provide youth work?

“because it's life changing / life saving for the young people we support”

“Due to its impacts on young people and social benefits to our society. We deliver youth work in the way we do because a one-size fits all approach would not work for our communities or young people. There is a wide range of evidence that supports the delivery and impact of youth work activity.”

“I have been a CLD worker for 30 years and I do it because I enjoy it and it is one of the few professions where you get the honour of providing life changing opportunities to individuals on a voluntary basis.”

“We believe in the power of young people and our... mission is to empower young people and communities to build a just, sustainable, equitable and inclusive Scotland, where every person can thrive in body, mind and spirit.”

“to give young people a safe space to hang out, try new things and learns new skills. there is no provision for young people who are not sporty or have ASN so by proving a youth club for them to attend is very worthwhile.”

## ***Appendix B- Agreement for Interview***

### Information for Participants

We are students in the Policy Clinic at the Open University. YouthLink Scotland has requested the Open University Policy Clinic to research Scotland's current youth work provision and explore what this might look like, focusing on whether the Scottish Parliament should introduce a right for all young people to access quality youth work provision.

The research will aim to identify:

- The current state of youth work provision in Scotland and whether there are any current gaps.
- What the impact of a right to youth work and/or strengthened CLD Regulations would have upon youth workers in Scotland.
- What legislative changes would be required to implement a right to youth work in Scotland. This should also be seen in the context of strengthening the statutory basis of Community Learning and Development (CLD), which is a current Scottish Government manifesto commitment.

To answer the above question and aims, the following methods will be used:

- Survey of independent youth work organisations in Scotland requesting information on youth work provision funded by them.
- Interviews with independent youth work organisations and youth workers exploring what a right to youth work might look like and any implications for youth workers.

- Comparative research into countries which have considered a right to youth work (such as Malta, Sweden, Iceland and countries in the Southern Hemisphere) to identify legislative changes required and any implications.
- Freedom of Information requests to Local Authorities in Scotland requesting
- information on youth work provision funded by them.

This document sets out the background to the study as a whole and provides detailed information about the part of the study in which you are invited to participate. If there are any questions that are not answered here, please contact me for further information Dr Debbie Legge at [open-justice-policy-clinic@open.ac.uk](mailto:open-justice-policy-clinic@open.ac.uk).

We will provide this data through a number of different activities:

- A review of the literature on
- A Survey with
- Interviews with

What being involved in the research will mean?

Your participation in this study is voluntary. After signing this form, you can withdraw from the study at any time until 28th March 2024 when the report is being finalised, and you will not be asked any questions as to why you no longer wish to take part. If you have withdrawn from the study, you may rejoin at any time unless it will adversely impact the research project.

Participation in this study means that you provide us with permission to use the data we collect in your interview. Your responses will be combined with those of other participants. Information about individuals will not be used in any published reports. The interview will be conducted with several members of the research team and recorded through using Zoom, and you will be sent a link prior to the interview. If you choose to do it via telephone, it will be recorded via a Dictaphone.

Risks and Benefits of being in the study

There is no risk in participating in this project. Your participation and opinions may prompt new perspectives and ideas which may be beneficial in the future. If you do

not receive a direct benefit from your participation in this study, others may ultimately benefit from the knowledge obtained.

### Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept confidential to the extent of the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR. In any reports or publications resulting from this study, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify any individual or group (for example, participants will be given a letter – Participant A - so as not to be identifiable). If an individual can be identified by the nature of their role, specific consent to waive confidentiality will be agreed and all written material will be subject to their scrutiny before publication. We will be using audio equipment in order to record the interviews. The audio data collected will not be included within the published research, only the information gained from it. This may include words that you have said.

Electronic copies of data, including audio, will be stored securely on an Open University Zoom site. Extracts will be shared and viewed by the research team and the organisation instructing the research and publications will be generated based on the data. All documentation will be made anonymous prior to this to maintain participant confidentiality.

The recordings on Zoom will be deleted within one month of the initial recording. The saved audio recordings and transcripts will be deleted from Zoom after the research project has finished. However, any hard copies will be held for a period of up to 6 years. Within this time, you may request to see any data collected in this particular study. However, as stated above, all names of individuals will be not be used and participants will be given a letter instead of their usual name.

### Consent to Participate in the Element of the Study

This element of the study will consist of 7-10 participants. You will be interviewed independently online via Zoom. The interviews will last approximately 40-60 minutes. You will confirm your consent to participation at the start of the interview.

Statement of Consent (please tick the relevant boxes here):

- I have read and understand the study that I will be participating in;

- I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study;
- I understand that taking part in the study will include being audio recorded;
- I have been given adequate time to consider my decision and I agree to take part in the study;
- I understand that any of my personal details, such as my name, will not be revealed to anyone outside of the research team;
- I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports and other research outputs but my name will not be used;
- I understand I can withdraw from the study at any time until 28th March 2024 and I will not be asked any questions about why I no longer wish to take part.

I agree to the Open University recording and processing this information about me. I understand that this information will be used only for the purpose(s) set out in this information sheet supplied to me, and my consent is conditional upon the university complying with its duties obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018.

Name            of            Participant: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name            of            Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix C - Interview Summaries

### Participants

	Interviewers	Date/Time	Transcribed
<b>A</b>	Debbie Legge Graham Hewitt Celeste Blaize-Gibson	11:30 Fri 9 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2023	Y
<b>B</b>	Debbie Legge Graham Hewitt Daniel Davis	15:00 Fri 9 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2023	Y
<b>C</b>	Debbie Legge Lucy Wilson Graham Hewitt	11:00 Mon 11 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2023	Y
<b>D</b>	Debbie Legge Lucy Wilson Daniel Davis	Wed Feb 15 <sup>th</sup> 11:00am	Y
<b>E</b>	Debbie Legge Graham Hewitt	22 <sup>nd</sup> Feb 2024	Y
<b>F</b>	Debbie Legge Graham Hewitt Daniel Davis	21 <sup>st</sup> Feb 2024	Y

### Questions: What does a right to youth work mean?

Can you describe what a right to Youth Work may look like?	<p>A – Every young person should have a universal right/ minimum entitlement to youth services regardless of location, a couple of sessions per week. Important that it is not part of formal education and will include activities in and out of school</p> <p>B - We want to build on the UNCRC, which says they have a right to education, a whole education, not just a school education. We want to see every young person in Scotland who wants it, so there's no compulsion for them to attend, who wants</p>
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	<p>access to a youth worker can get access at a time and a place that suits them as often or as little as they want</p> <p>C – A right to youth work would look like every young person being able to access community-based youth work within their local area.</p> <p>D - In an ideal world young people to have access to youth work in whatever form that takes place.</p> <p>E – having a space, creating an environment and a culture of understanding of the needs of YP. CLD as lead provider of YW. Sited around as experts around children’s rights and implementation of UNCRC</p> <p>F – A statutory service. Relationship building with YP, funded by LA, within education settings so always accessible to YP.</p>
<p>What do you consider would the minimum provision be in order to meet the objective?</p>	<p>A – A youth worker in every school. Youth work should cover the whole spectrum of activities.</p> <p>B - A needs led approach, local authority sector supported. Real investment is in workforce development that is predominantly volunteers. All activities should be included. The minimum requirement for people involved in youth work, would that be the PDA level six</p> <p>C- I think it would depend on the community that you're serving and the range of things that are going on.</p> <p>D - the important thing is giving young people access to trusted adult.</p> <p>E – The LA provides YW in school but keeps separate from education staff. The LA is very hands on. LA collaborative partnership with local voluntary sector partners and national partners.</p> <p>F – Traditional community centre where young people see a place of belonging, in a second home way. Getting young people to engage with community workers. Community worker recognised like a teacher, or a social worker. Commitment to long term funding to secure longevity, and for promoting careers within the YW sector - Needs legislation to secure this. Strengthening of CLD and legislation go hand in hand.</p>
<p>Would that provision apply to all young people</p>	<p>A – All young people (450,000) in Scotland regardless of location</p>

<p>in the target age group and geographical areas?</p>	<p>C- it doesn't have to be prescriptive about exactly what's involved, as long as there's some activity that young people can get involved with.</p> <p>D - Easier in cities than in rural locations. Activities are not necessarily about the activity it's about building the relationship, canoeing is not about the canoeing.</p> <p>F – Minimum baseline number depending on area. In Aberdeen YW work in primary, third, fourth and fifth year. Age 12 to 25.</p>
<p>If not, how would that provision be determined?</p>	
<p>Other</p>	<p>A - Important that it should not be one size fit all. All different styles of learning should be available to young people. Young people in apprenticeship/work employability should also require Youth work in the form of mentorship programmes. Youth work can be used to train employers how to achieve the best from young people</p> <p>D - Message that he gets back from young people is access to one adult who cares and who can pick them up when they fall.</p> <p>F – No one size fits all. About giving YP tools and experiences and life skills to make positive changes. Aberdeen has YW and community workers in every academy. Says it works well as a provision within schools. Youth clubs too.</p>

### How would youth work provision be measured?

<p>Who would be accountable for the provision of youth work?</p>	<p>C- The understanding at the moment is that local authorities are accountable for that provision and that there's a requirement for local authorities to provide youth work provision, youth work in the local area.</p> <p>E – CLD service, with duty on the LA to facilitate and bring together. Responsibility doesn't sit with voluntary lead</p> <p>F – Local authority has a key role to play. Ties in with community work and social work.</p>
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<p>How would providers prove that they have made youth work available a certain number of young people?</p>	<p>C- So local authorities at the moment produce a community learning and development plan, which includes youth work, and it should make reference to the youth work provision that is made.</p> <p>E – Through key performance indicators. Eg. through documenting success journeys of individuals from intro to YW to completion.</p>
<p>How would that be measured/verified?</p>	<p>E – The LA uses performance indicators. e.g. if min entitlement is YP are entitled to awards and accreditation within normal school hours – need to capture the information and report back on it. Also uses National Youth Work Outcomes and Skills Framework. Staff would record outcomes and indicators as the triangular record of information.</p>
<p>If it is a right is there a responsibility to take up that right?</p>	
<p>Is there a measurable qualitative outcome?</p>	
<p>Other</p>	<p>A- Already measured through the Youth Work Outcome Social Education Account</p>
	<p>B- CLD was introduced in Scotland about 1999 as a terminology. And it was talked about it being an approach, not a service. The CLD approach, and underneath it were these component parts, delivery mechanisms.</p> <p>E – Different strands of YW going on e.g. YW in children’s homes very different to YW at the local youth club.</p> <p>F- encouraging more volunteers will help build the YW sector, personal development journey for volunteers.</p>

### Who would be accountable for its delivery?

<p>Would individual organisations be responsible for a 'quota' of people/offers or local authorities?</p>	<p>A – The cost per week for a minimum entitlement to youth work will need to be calculated (similar to childcare). The total cost should then be allocated to local authorities, third-sector organisations and all other youth service providers. The Scottish Government to determine the allocation.</p> <p>Currently all funding for youth work is through the local authorities</p> <p>F – Money available from government for capital projects which some have found easier to access.</p>
<p>What sanctions would be available for non-compliance?</p>	<p>A- Minimum entitlement would mean that local authorities are required by law to provide youth services</p> <p>F – Political problem if not enough funding.</p>
<p>How would that be measured/verified?</p>	<p>A – Commission a funder organisation to manage the funds</p> <p>F – Measuring the baseline of where a YP is. Case studies. A person and what happened is the key narrative shared with bosses and councils.</p>
<p>Against whom would sanctions apply – local authorities, individual organisations or CLD?</p>	
<p>Are organisational responsibilities defined – CLD Standards Scotland define the standards – who is accountable for meeting those standards?</p>	<p>A- CLD define the standards for adult learning, youth and community work. The current CLD review on professional development pathways in driving up standards should consider volunteer – development required in the entire sector.</p> <p>E - Strategic and operational responsibility for the youth work team. Very much part of council's one plan to deliver on outcomes for communities. Sits within children services plan so fits in with legislation. Sees itself as lead provider of CLD youth work provision. Sited as experts around children's rights and the implementation of UNCRC.</p>

<p>How would a right to youth work be promoted?</p>	<p>A- Would use the existing YoungScot Entitlement Card infrastructure to promote minimum entitlement</p> <p>B - not everybody carries a Young Scots Card. Not everybody has a Young Scots Card. We even found that with the free bus travel in Scotland. Maybe difficult to promote as young people's information can not be recorded. That you invest in the infrastructure for education, for further higher education, you know, primary education, secondary school, further higher education.</p> <p>E- Films, sharing qualitative data, sharing good stories, sharing the quantitative data. Social media is used. Really successful, reached 300,000 during YW week through social media platforms – TikTok, Facebook, Instagram were used.</p> <p>F- within education settings and youth clubs/community centres. CLD needs to promote itself – massive campaign about what CLD is and what YW is. Online, and through mobiles phones as an engagement tool. QR codes similar to those used in Scottish Parliament voting. Polls and snap polls. Social Media (snapchat!)</p>
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### How would youth work be provisioned

<p>Can the provision today become mandatory without additional funding</p>	<p>A – The challenge is to secure funding from Westminster. To work out the funding requirement for youth services is very complex</p> <p>E - Works with organisations which deliver youth work. Requirements are collaborative partnership with local voluntary sector partners as well as national partners. Looks at the synergies that partnerships create.</p>
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<p>What training, qualifications and/or experience is expected for youth workers?</p>	<p>A- The fundamental concept of youth work is that it is supported by volunteers participating on a volunteer basis. Mandatory qualification may act as a deterrent to volunteers</p> <p>B- There used to be a part of People's Core Grant that would include staff training and development, but that was removed nearly 20 years ago, and they put in this Workforce Development Fund for the national voluntary youth organisations.</p> <p>E – CLD should be the catalyst for upskilling workforce. Look at practitioners and upskilling their workforce. Meet with practitioners regularly. CLD partnership should be catalyst to make things happen.</p>
<p>Could a mandatory provision be provided by the voluntary sector?</p>	
<p>What steps should be taken to ensure the sustainability of youth work projects?</p>	<p>A- Minimum entitlement (similar childcare provisioning) would ensure sustainability</p>
<p>How can funding mechanisms be secured?</p>	<p>B- There should be money coming from the Equalities Department. When they're looking at employability, money should be flowing from the employability stream into youth work</p> <p>E – As well as core funding, funding might be sourced from mental health and well-being service, or social work. Alcohol drugs partnership might fund detached youth work. Helps voluntary organisations to access funding. BBC children in needs and lottery funding, the LA helps with signposting.</p> <p>Digital focus has been used to access further funding. Same for mental health and well-being funding. Grant monitoring forums, will oversee applications for fundings to check safeguarding in spend and child safety.</p>
<p>Other</p>	<p>B- Young people need support to get onto that pipeline. So you've got your careers, bodies, and everybody getting money, and colleges, and they're all getting money to support young people. But the very young people who need the most support</p>

	<p>can't even get onto that pipeline because they don't have the skills, the support networks at home.</p> <p>And we all came back and that's brilliant, but it shifted the power balance to it wasn't teachers deciding what they thought young people needed. It was youth organisations going, we'll come and work in partnership with your school and the young people and look at how we re-engage young people who have disengaged from your school.</p>
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### Other questions (Optional depending on interviewee):

<p>The existing landscape of Youthwork today</p>	<p>B- Scotland includes youth work, adult learning, community development. The voluntary basis of our workforce - 57,000 youth workers in Scotland right now, 46,500 of them are volunteers, huge proportion of the youth work within the voluntary sector. 32 local authorities and they have all got youth work services right now. Some very good, strong youth work services, some almost non-existent. There's such small teams.</p> <p>Statutory guidance for community learning, but there's nothing specific about youth work. The guidance is guidance. It's not legally binding.</p> <p>Scotland right now, we've had all of these different reviews of education, skills development, employability, all of them have flagged youth work as being a really critical component. But it's the only part of that ecosystem that has no statutory basis and no major statutory investment, if that makes sense.</p> <p>Real strength in the voluntary sector platform for delivering youth work. And I think there's real flexibility</p> <p>Reference to CLD - youth work is probably the strongest of all three because the political agenda</p>
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	<p>We've got a national agency, we've got a strong youth work service in every local authority and we've got a strong voluntary youth work sector. However, we've not got a lot of places and spaces for young people to meet and we've not got a lot of security.</p> <p>E – LA has a role in youth work, part of CLD service, reporting structure sits under education and families. This looks different under different local authorities.</p>
What is youth work	<p>B – Anybody work with young people a youth worker but they must have undertaken some sort of training</p> <p>F – It should be a profession, promoted as a career to young people. Similar in status to a teacher, or social worker.</p>
Would merging youth work and Education to create a single authority responsible for youth pathways provide a way forward?	E – Works well as it is.
What had been done to date to improve access to youth work?	
Have current attempts been successful?	
Why is there a need for universal access to youth work – what areas need to be improved?	
Who should fund it?	<p>A – This is devolved. Multiple funders of youth work – Local authority, Scottish Government</p> <p>F -Local authorities through government funding</p>
Are there any examples of good practice?	<p>A- Scandinavian countries (Finland/Denmark)</p> <p>B-I can't remember if it was Denmark or that, and I remember them speaking about they have invested in big purpose-built youth venues for young people. But they can</p>

	<p>come there and they can get everything, all the services are there.</p> <p>E – Germany. They created spaces based on what YP wanted the space to look like. Evolved through YP with YW taking a step back.</p>
<p>Would a right provide anything that is not already provided?</p>	<p>A-improvement in youth services will improve mental health (suicides), social behaviour and youth justice which should provide overall decrease in the cost to Scottish Government</p> <p>F – reduction in crime</p>
<p>Given the funding crisis what is the most effective/ practical way of moving a right forward?</p>	

### Life changing opportunities

Hard to imagine that my journey in youth work and CLD started over 40 years ago and I have not looked back since.

I used to attend my local youth club in my town and experienced lots of amazing adventures from camping holidays to civic week parades, roller discos and the weekly youth club. As I grew older and more confident as a young person in a place that I called my second home I start to volunteer with these groups I attended and other groups in the centre and unwittingly the journey within youth work began.

It was a great time in my life and during this period I did not think about CLD as a career or really know what it was all about but as time went on and I found myself attending training courses, going on residential with likeminded young people from across Scotland and seeing the real change that people could make to other people by engaging in a positive way. It was hard to think as a teenager that this could be an actual career and back then certainly not a career that I am still in to date.

I was lucky enough to experience working for several amazing Community Learning managers, who went onto have amazing careers in the service from my engagement with them I had the opportunity to learn from them and develop my own way of engaging and supporting. I had the privileged experiencing of having a community centre where at times I spent more time in than at home and to this day I still look back on this time of my life with happiness.

Whilst this was going on outside school, within school it was completely different as I was 100% focused on Art School as my final destination, however after some lengthy chats and soul searching with the art department, peers and family I was convinced that going to study Community Education was the right thing and that I could come back to art any time I wanted.

I attended Northen College in Dundee to start my formal journey in CLD by undertaking the Community Education degree in 1993 and had an amazing three years. I met some amazing people, had three fantastic placements which focused on a traditional community centre, a detached youth work project and a drugs education project and whilst this was going on I was still working as a youth worker and had the opportunity to develop my newly learned skills further.

After I graduated in 1996, I have been lucky enough to work in several high-level managerial and leadership positions across several disciplines and organisations across Scotland including, third sectors, charities, national organisations and local authorities. I have worked within the field of Detached youth work, youth award schemes, building a purpose-built youth hub, criminal justice, employability, worked in a university promoting widening access and youth participation projects and I have found that my knowledge of CLD and its approach has fitted like a glove into each adventure.

The main motivation in my daily work is focused on providing opportunities to individuals regardless of their circumstances and backgrounds and I feel that the qualification in CLD has allowed me to do this. What other qualification exists that allows you to engage with people on a voluntary basis and has the potential to provide life changing opportunities and experiences.

I am a proud CLD worker who would not change my job for anything. I have had the honour and privilege to engage with hundreds of young people across my career and I hope that their engagement with CLD provided a positive future and outlook and during those little moments of reflection brings a smile to their faces as I know it does with me.

## References

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### Articles

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