

# YouthLink Scotland Policy Convention: Youth Work is Human Rights Work

## Policy Recommendations

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### Background

Almost 200 delegates participated in YouthLink Scotland's first National Policy Convention on a [Right to Youth Work in 2021](#). This followed years of smaller policy seminars featured around themed areas of policy. It is the culmination of these themes and the notable desire from youth workers and policy professionals who attend these meetings which led to the policy planning group and YouthLink Scotland deciding to scale up the policy seminars into the large-scale event we now hope will be an inaugural presence on any youth worker and policy professional's annual calendar.

Our 2022 Policy Convention (08/12/22), Youth Work is Human Rights Work, came as the youth work sector advocates for social policy changes affecting children and young people. Thanks to all of the contributors from home and abroad and attendees for being part of such a thought-provoking day. Special credit goes to all the young people and youth work practitioners who provided video inputs on the day. These were very well-received and helped connect youth work participation across a range of policy areas and exemplify why youth work is so crucial to meeting so many public policy outcomes.

This includes renewed and collective pressure from the youth work sector for full incorporation of UNCRC into Scots Law, taking an active and necessary role in discussions on education reform and ensuring the next National Youth Work Strategy (2023 – 2028) meets the ambitions of young people and youth workers as highlighted by them during the vigorous co-production process between 2019 and 2022.

The team has taken some time to go through the presentation content, review the verbal and written discussion in the chat, evaluate the polling results, and analyse contributions online as well as take cognisance of where messages dovetailed with existing priorities noted elsewhere within the sector. We have summarised this into five key Policy Convention recommendations that should be actioned within the following year

## Policy Recommendations

- ◊ Statutory basis of CLD should be strengthened in keeping with the Scottish Government Manifesto commitment in 2023. There is concern that the opportunity could be missed in this Parliamentary term. Any strengthening of the guidance as a bare minimum should explicitly mention youth work.
- ◊ A rights-based approach to education must include access to youth work in formal and non-formal education settings.
- ◊ Full incorporation of UNCRC into Scots Law.
- ◊ A commitment to further engagement of youth work partners at the European Level through the Council of Europe. It was agreed that this is especially important in upholding the rights of children and young people.

*If you wish to be part of the discussion or if you have ideas on future policy conventions you would like to discuss with the policy planning group – please get in touch with Kevin Kane, YouthLink Scotland's Policy and Research Manager on [kkane@youthlink.scot](mailto:kkane@youthlink.scot).*