

Preventative Grassroots Youth Work Fund

Overview:

The Preventative Grassroots Youth Work Fund is administered by YouthLink Scotland and funded by the Scottish Government. The aim of the fund is to improve educational outcomes for young people from low-income backgrounds in communities impacted by criminal activity and anti-social behaviour. Youth work support should focus on:

- Re-engaging young people in learning.
- Building their social and emotional wellbeing.
- Developing their skills.
- Helping them overcome barriers to school attendance.

Eight grants of £5,500 will be awarded.

Who can apply:

Local authority or third sector youth work teams can apply. Importantly, you must be able to demonstrate that you are:

- Already working in partnership with a school/s to support vulnerable young people at risk of disengaging from education.
- Already employing contextual safeguarding approaches with young people to positively address anti-social behaviour.

Funding will enable participating youth work teams to **enhance** the targeted support they are offering to at-risk young people **over a 3-month period, from January to March 2026.**

Fund criteria:

Youth Work Approach

We want to fund a diverse range of approaches to explore what works, why and in what circumstances. All projects will support young people aged 10-18 from low-income backgrounds. Youth work teams applying for funding must demonstrate that their approach will be:

- Rights-based – responding to young people’s needs and interests in their local context.
- Collaborative – schools will be key partners in identifying at-risk young people and in evaluating impact. Youth work teams may also want to engage other local service partners to co-design activities with young people.
- Offer sustainable support to young people (this additional short-term funding allows youth work teams to enhance support over a 3-month period, but it will be important to demonstrate that relationships with young people can be maintained beyond the funded period).

The activities funded in each context will reflect circumstances and existing relationships within the community. These might include (but are not restricted to):

- Building relationships with young people in P6/7 of primary schools, identified as being at risk of disengaging from school / getting involved in antisocial behaviour, as they transition to secondary school.
- Offering intensive outdoor learning / other residential learning opportunities during the February holidays.
- Engaging parents / carers alongside young people.
- Detached youth work models.
- Working in partnership with police / other local services to co-design work-based learning / relationship building experiences with young people.

Safeguarding requirements

Youth work teams must be able to demonstrate that they have an effective Safeguarding or Child Protection Policy and membership of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme. As a guide, your policy should include:

- Clear procedures for reporting and responding to concerns with a named person who is responsible for safeguarding and their contact details.
- A Code of Behaviour for staff and volunteers.
- Safer recruitment practices to demonstrate that appropriate policies are followed when appointing staff or volunteers, and that regular training is offered to reduce the risk of harm or abuse. This includes appropriate background checks, such as PVG scheme membership for regulated roles.
- A clear process for reviewing and updating your policy to reflect current legislation, guidance, and learning.

Fund Outcomes

Youth work teams will be expected to evaluate young people's progress towards the following outcomes:

- Young people are more engaged in learning.
- Young people's attendance in school is improving.
- Young people are developing their wellbeing and skills (e.g. confidence, resilience, relationship-building, communication, team working)
- Young people feel a greater sense of belonging in their communities.

YouthLink Scotland will provide support to youth workers and their local partners to measure progress towards these outcomes. We will train youth work teams to use Youth Work Skills Track to gather evidence of impact. Skills Track is a newly developed online tool, built around the National Youth Work Outcomes and Skills Framework that enables youth workers to collate and report on young people's progress, triangulating evidence of skills development and learner engagement from a range of relevant sources, including individual reflections from young people, observations from school and other partners and parents / carers where relevant, as well as professional observations from youth workers themselves.

Funding period:

All funded activity must be delivered between January 2026- March 2026

All project reports must be submitted by Monday 13th April 2026.

Timeline:

- Fund opens 9th December 2025
- Deadline for expressions of interest to YouthLink Scotland – midday 19th December 2025
- Decisions communicated – 23rd December 2025
- Project delivery – January 2026 – March 2026
- Project reports due no later than Monday 13th April.

Format of Expression of Interest

Please submit your expression of interest using the form that accompanies this guidance. Expressions of will be checked for eligibility by YouthLink Scotland and scored against the fund criteria.

If you would like advice before submitting your expression of interest please contact Gill Gracie (ggracie@youthlink.scot)

Closing date for applications:

All applications must be submitted by no later than **midday on the 19th December 2025**. Please submit your application to grants@youthlink.scot.