

Scottish Government Just Transition Climate Change Policy Engagement Evaluation Report: YouthLink Scotland

Introduction

As part of the Scottish Government Climate Change Policy Engagement work, YouthLink Scotland:

- Delivered **3 training sessions** for the youth work sector across **8 local authorities**
- Engaged with a diverse range of **428 young people** across **12 local authorities**
 - This engagement was a mix of **in person** and **online** sessions as well as the development and distribution of a **survey**
- Young people were asked questions covering the three key policy areas: Transport, Land Use and Agriculture, and Built Environment and Construction

Below is a summary of the findings from this consultation.

Youth Worker Training

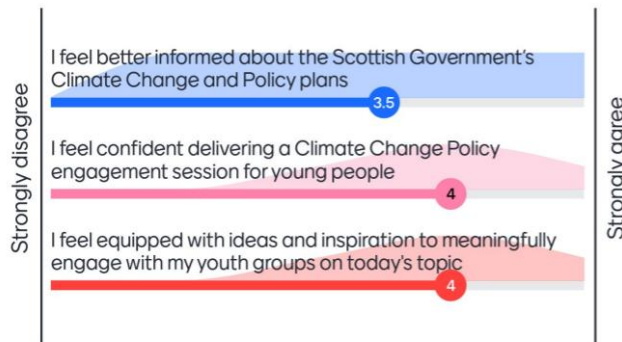
YouthLink Scotland delivered 3 training sessions for the youth work sector to:

- Be informed about the Scottish Government’s Climate Change and Just Transition Policy plans regarding transport, built environment and construction and land use and agriculture
- Collaborate with fellow youth workers and YouthLink Scotland to design and develop a Climate Change and Policy engagement session suitable for their youth groups
- Feel confident and be equipped with ideas, inspiration and knowledge to meaningfully engage their own youth groups with these three topics

A total of 8 Local Authorities took part in this training:

Date of Training	Location	Topic	Attendance
17 th August (full day)	In person, YouthLink Scotland offices, Edinburgh	Transport, Built Environment and Construction, Land Use and Agriculture	Stirling, Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, Dumfries and Galloway
24 th August	Online via Teams	Transport	Dundee, North Lanarkshire, Fife, East Dunbartonshire
31 st August	Online via Teams	Built Environment and Construction, Land Use and Agriculture	Dundee, North Lanarkshire, Fife, East Dunbartonshire

Scales



Feedback

from training:

- 'I enjoyed meeting new people and being able to discuss ideas to help create session plans'
- '(I enjoyed having) time to talk about how we adapt the questions, and issues that yp face in relation to engaging with the issues around climate change'

Keep Scotland Beautiful Climate Change Policy Basics

Keep Scotland Beautiful ran an additional training session for the youth workers involved and YouthLink Scotland, to better understand the climate change policy basics. This took place on 24th August and was attended by YouthLink Scotland, Stirling, North Lanarkshire, Dumfries and Galloway.

Youth Group / Young Person Engagement Sessions

The 8 Local Authorities (from Stirling, Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee, Fife, North Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire), who took part in the training, developed and delivered sessions to engage their youth groups with the Climate Change Policies.

Additionally, YouthLink Scotland ran an online session for young people who were involved in the Scotland's Young People's Forest project, and #iWill Ambassadors.

We also created a distributed a SurveyMonkey form for young people to complete for those who were unable to take part in these online or in person engagement sessions. This was distributed in our YouthLink Scotland briefing, on our website and social media channels.

Below is an overview of the engagement and demographics of young people who were involved:

Overview of Involvement and Demographics	
Local Authorities – number of young people engaged	North Lanarkshire - 91 Aberdeenshire - 1 South Lanarkshire - 2 Dundee - 72 Stirling - 25 East Renfrewshire - 18 East Ayrshire - 1 East Dunbartonshire - 34 West Dunbartonshire - 1

	Dumfries and Galloway - 126 Renfrewshire - 55 Fife - 2
Total number of young people engaged in person	363
Total number of young people engaged online	75
Total number of young people engaged via survey	21
Total number of young people engaged (across in person, online and via survey)	428
Age range	
0 - 12	56
13 - 17	319
18+	65
Ethnic group	
Indian, Scottish Indian or British Indian	6
Pakistani, Scottish Pakistani or British Pakistani	8
Bangladeshi, Scottish Bangladeshi or British Bangladeshi	3
Chinese, Scottish Chinese or British Chinese	1
Japanese	1
Malaysian	1
Nigerian	6
Black Scottish	1
White Scottish	338
Other White British	14
White Ukrainian	8
Mixed Scottish / White South African	1
White US / German	1
Jewish	1
Unknown	31
Sex / Gender Identity	
Woman/girl	267
Man/boy	149
Trans man/boy	2
Trans woman/girl	1
Non-binary	7
Don't know	2
Prefer not to say	0
Disability	
Yes	171
No	238
Don't know	19

Overview of Young People's Feedback

The below feedback has been collated across all online and in person engagement sessions, and surveys completed by young people. The questions asked were adapted from the Scottish Government Engagement Packs and created by the youth workers who took part in the training sessions to ensure they were suitable for young people and covered all three themes:

Transport

1. **What do you need from public transport to make it work better and fairer?**
2. **What would encourage you to travel 'greener'? E.g., take the train, bus, walk, cycle**

Reliability and frequency: There was a strong consensus across all local authorities that public transport, particularly buses, were not reliable and the routes were not well connected or frequent enough. Young people want more bus routes so they can access opportunities outside of school hours such as youth groups, and for buses to be more frequent, run later into the evening/night, connecting smaller towns and villages (including more rural train lines and stations). They highlighted that buses and trains were often cancelled at short notice or don't show up when scheduled. Some young people use the First Bus app to track timings and cancellations but they have found this is also unreliable and not up to date. Young people spoke about being 'at the mercy of the bus company' due to not being able to drive (or if their parents don't/can't drive them) and out of control as well as lacking independence due to unreliable and infrequent public transport. This also negatively effects young people's access to opportunities including jobs.

Recommendations:

- More bus routes
- Increased frequency of buses
- Better reliability of buses and trains
- Run bus timetables later into the night
- Improve apps to give warning if transport is cancelled or late

Cost: The high cost of public transport was a barrier to young people using trains in particular. Young people felt that trains should be included in the Young Scot free travel card scheme, as often young people have to take the train to get to school. They also felt that a cashless society doesn't always suit young people who may not have their own bank account or bank card.

Recommendations:

- Include trains in Young Scot free travel card scheme
- More information about free bus travel and advertising of this, and simple processes of applying for these discounts
- Remove peak fares
- Cheaper electric cars
- More car sharing and rental schemes
- Tourists could pay taxes to improve public transport infrastructure for locals

Improved facilities and maintenance: Young people noted that public transport facilities are often not well maintained, clean or comfortable to use. They also highlighted that there are barriers to active travel (walking and cycling) due to lack of maintenance. Young people also flagged that bus drivers are not always friendly e.g. some young people spoke about losing their entitlement cards and not being let on the bus.

Recommendations:



- Better maintained bike lanes and footpaths
- Better training for bus drivers
- Water fountains/refill areas near public transport
- Opportunities to recycle when travelling
- Electric buses
- Air conditioning, music, WiFi, USB chargers, music playing
- Bigger spaces on public transport e.g. for prams and wheelchairs, and a preference for double decker buses
- Better and cleaner roads and pavements e.g. maintaining potholes would make for a more comfortable journey
- Public transport cleaned more regularly
- Better bus stop conditions e.g. being protected from the rain
- Accessible repair kits for bikes e.g. pumps, patches

Safety: For some young people, using public transport was daunting, particularly when travelling somewhere new and not knowing how to get there. Many young people did not feel safe using public transport and were sometimes prevented from using it by their parents at certain times of the day because of this. One young person mentioned being put off getting on the bus due to ‘scary older teenagers or drunk people or people on drugs’. Alcohol and vaping on public transport was noted by many of the groups as an issue. Others noted that they don’t feel like it’s safe to chain their bikes up outside and this prevented them from using one. Poorly maintained roads, cycle lanes and footpaths also made active travel feel like an unsafe option, as well as a lack of street lighting.

Recommendations:

- Additional cameras on public transport
- Bike storage improvements and access
- Better maintained bike lanes and footpaths including separate cycle lanes to roads
- Mandatory education and information should be provided to young people about independent travel
- More traffic lights and improved pedestrian crossings e.g. zebra crossings or lollipop ladies
- More and better lampposts/lighting for walking at night time and especially in the winter
- Cutting back overgrown trees and bushes
- Lower car speed limits
- More traffic Police



Incentives: Young people felt that incentives were required to encourage more young people to use public transport, travel actively and take a more sustainable option.

Recommendations:

- Reduce cost of transport (including cheaper electric cars)
- Payment schemes or discounts for young people for public transport or buying bikes
- Toll roads that charge cars for low occupancy within vehicles, or laws for minimum number of passengers

- Award schemes e.g. Duke of Edinburgh, John Muir Awards, that encourage young people outdoors and to travel actively
- Reduce the stigma of not having a car – make sustainable options seem ‘cooler’
- Cycle confidence training for young people

Other recommendations:

- For young people not to be stereotyped – they felt when young people get on public transport in a group, people become ‘judgy’ and assume they are ‘up to no good’
- There is an expectation, inevitability and social pressure on young people to learn to drive when they turn 17 – this is an exciting prospect because of the independence it provides
- A survey of transport needs should be carried out regularly
- Ban or limit the use of private jets

Land

1. **How can we redesign our green spaces to be better and benefit people and the planet?**
2. **What would you do with an unused piece of land in the community and what would this look like?**

Infrastructure and facilities: Young people felt that there was not enough green space or community owned land they were able to use, or that the facilities were not adequate for their needs. For example, many sports pitches or facilities are not fit for purpose and cannot be played on, are locked at night or privately owned. The groups came up with creative ideas that would encourage more young people to use their local green spaces and make them more accessible for their age group.

Recommendations:

- More bins
- More pathways
- Specific areas for sitting, playing and relaxation
- Public toilets
- Drinking taps and refill stations
- Young people need parks to be built that accommodate older young people/teens as current ones mainly cater for younger ages
- Places for young people to access 7 days a week
- Information about how to get to these spaces via public transport, but ideally being able to walk there
- Sheltered spaces e.g. pergolas and gazebos, as well as areas for sitting down – more benches and picnic areas
- Outdoor sports facilities e.g. netball courts, gyms, outdoor swimming pools, football pitches, pump track or skatepark
- Information about the wildlife and green spaces e.g. signs and maps



Maintenance and safety: Young people felt more could be done to maintain their local land and green spaces. Many of them noted that public bins are often overflowing and not emptied regularly enough, or are simply not there in the first place. Similarly, with the transport theme, some young people did not feel safe actively travelling or utilising land in their local authority.

Recommendations:

- Checking in on parks regularly
- Bins emptied more regularly
- Public paths and walkways accessible and well maintained
- Cutting grass regularly
- Better drainage
- Better lighting – this should be solar powered
- More security to stop vandalism of green spaces such as parks
- Make legislation for our right of way in Scotland to encourage more walkers
- Give farmers better rights in court to prosecute people who do damage to land

Community involvement: Young people wanted to have say in the design and use of land and green spaces in their area. They felt that the community had a lot to contribute and welcomed more intergenerational working.

Recommendations:

- Local young people being involved in maintenance of land e.g. litter picking
- Community gardens and allotments
- Talking to young people about what they want and designing spaces with the community in mind
- Events to bring people outside
- Educate farmers on ways to reduce emissions
- Improve school grounds for biodiversity

Environmentally friendly design: Young people wanted to see their green spaces and land be designed more environmentally friendly and sustainably and shared some ideas about how they envisage this. This including encouraging and protecting wildlife, biodiversity and native species.

Recommendations:

- Planting interesting plants – areas where wild flowers can be left to grow
- More hedgerows rather than fences
- Protect peat bogs
- Utilise rooftops and vertical growing

- Strategic and careful planting of different tree species as well as protection of older trees
- No plastic grass – suggestion of a tax for this
- Native species used for biological control e.g. ladybirds to control aphids
- Ban on pesticides

Cost: Young people felt that the more sustainable option was often the more expensive one when it came to buying food that was local, seasonal and organic. They also felt farmers needed more support to help them transition to more sustainable practices.

Recommendations:

- Reduce cost of organic food
- Carbon taxing of food miles
- Grants, government funding and subsidies for farmers to allow them to support their families and make green changes



Buildings

1. **What could the government do to help you live more comfortably and 'greener' in your home?**
2. **How can you be supported and informed about the changes needed to buildings and homes to make them cheaper and 'greener'?**

Independence and education: Young people felt like more needed to be done to increase the confidence and life skills of young people moving out of their family home. They highlighted that there is a lack of information about this process with a focus on grades rather than life skills at school.

Recommendations:

- Lessons and workshops in schools that are mandatory from a young age – teaching life skills on green living, living alone, budgeting and sustainability
- PSE lessons could also teach young people about landlord and tenant rights so they can make informed decisions and protect themselves
- Information should come from an impartial reliable source e.g. not a company trying to sell them something
- Apps to support young people to find out about or track e.g. their energy usage



Sustainability: Young people felt strongly that our homes and buildings needed to be built more sustainability and be run using renewable energy and were aware of the benefits of e.g. solar panels, heat pumps, smart meters.

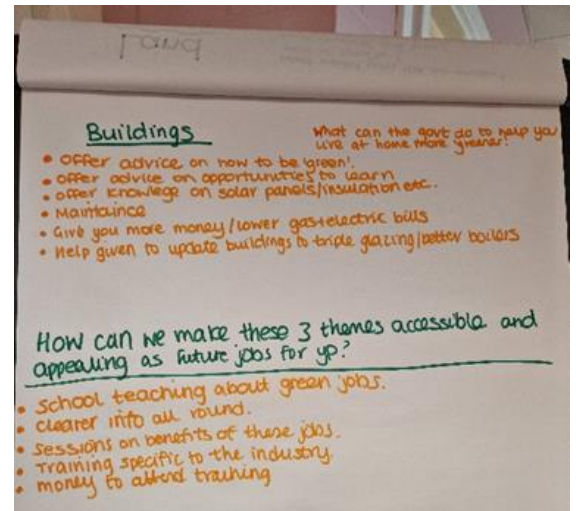
Recommendations:

- Zoning laws to make sure new houses being built are integrated with shops and other facilities to reduce the need for travel/cars
- More investment in older houses
- Use more urban brownfield sites rather than green sites for building new houses
- Community accessible composting
- More charging points for electric cars

Cost: There was a general aspiration from young people to be able to buy a home in the future. This felt inevitable, or an expectation for many but also increasingly unlikely for young people due to cost.

Recommendations:

- More affordable, fairer housing and bills
- Grants should be more readily available and support from the government for families who are struggling
- If companies are making a profit, they should reinvest money into the industry to lower costs for those in need
- Community energy banks to share and store energy locally – if anyone is struggling they would be able to access energy for free (similar to a food bank)



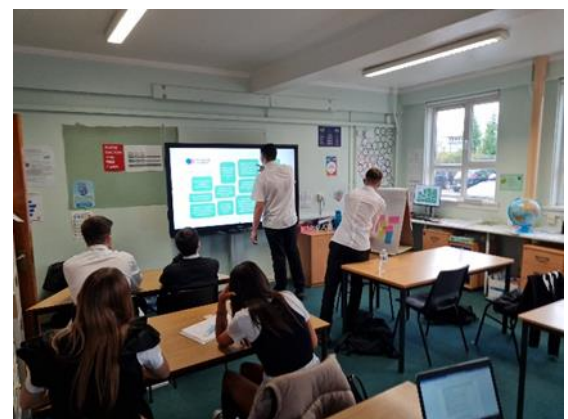
Overarching Question

How do we make these three themes (transport, buildings and land) accessible and appealing as jobs for young people in the future?

It is young people's opinion that there is little or no visibility on what green jobs are and are therefore specialised or out of reach. Young people asked for incentives to make these jobs more appealing, as well as ensuring there were accessible opportunities and information about how to get into these careers.

Recommendations

- Make these jobs sound fun – young people want to enjoy their jobs
- Have good wages or at least the living wage – some young people had unrealistic expectations about pay, so education and setting expectations are key
- Perks like access to company cars e.g. electric cars
- Highlight the social value/positive impact– a job with a purpose was appealing to young people
- Job security – young people did not think jobs related to land and agriculture were very secure
- Having a say in making change – being listened to by your employer



- Educate young people in schools – particularly on importance of sustainability and the environment
- Provide workshops and taster sessions
- Access to work experience, apprenticeships and local jobs
- Career days for green jobs
- Career talks at schools and during work experience week
- More college courses that are funded
- Ability to gain experience without going to university – qualifications being learnt on the job
- Part time jobs are also appealing for young people who are studying at the same time



Youth Worker Feedback

Youth workers felt that young people engaged most passionately with the land and transport themes. They suggested this was due to their lived experience on these topics.

Some young people felt promises have been broken by people in positions of power before and previous consultations have resulted in no change.

Young people were keen to hear what will happen next and how their views will be implemented into policies.

Youth workers highlighted it would be beneficial and more meaningful if they had more time to carry out this engagement work as it would have allowed them to reach a wider group of young people.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Workforce and Practice Manager, Liz Green, lgreen@youthlink.scot