



Review of Qualifications and Assessment: final report Response from YouthLink Scotland

Introduction

YouthLink Scotland is the national agency for youth work. We are a membership organisation, representing over 100 regional and national youth organisations from the voluntary and statutory sectors. We champion the role and value of youth work and represent the interests and aspirations of our sector.

Young people develop a broad range of skills, capacities and achievements through youth work. This helps them to reach their potential in learning, life and work. In a reformed education system, youth work is integral to supporting a rights-based and inclusive educational experience. Access to youth work should be a fundamental element of every learner's education journey.

Response

YouthLink Scotland welcomes the report of the Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment and its ambitious and learner-focused recommendations to ensure we value the diverse achievements of every young person.

Young people who participate in youth work repeatedly tell us that youth work is part of education¹. It complements and enhances delivery of the formal curriculum, and the provision of support for pupils, contributing to raising attainment and improving outcomes for young people, including those impacted by poverty. We are therefore encouraged to see the report acknowledge that education takes place across various settings, including community-based learning. Youth work educators support young people's learning across settings.

As part of the National Discussion, young people also told us that greater collaboration is needed between youth workers and teachers and that their skills and achievements through youth work should be recognised with parity alongside formal qualifications. The Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment highlights the importance of existing partnerships across the system, including community learning, in helping to broaden the range of experiences for learners. Its recommendations will drive greater

¹ https://youthlinkscotl.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/views-of-young-people-participating-in-youth-work_web.pdf

collaboration to ensure young people's entitlement to a broad curriculum offer, assisting in the recognition and value of their achievements across education settings. Through our Scottish Attainment Challenge national programme², YouthLink Scotland supports strengthened collaboration across schools and youth work. There are many examples of where these partnerships are supporting the most vulnerable young people towards positive futures. We believe greater partnership with youth work will ensure young people have equity of access to a wide range of opportunities to build knowledge, develop and apply skills and understand their achievements intended for the Scottish Diploma of Achievement (SDA) and provide a more equitable education system.

The report highlights the need to capitalise on the expertise of professional experts such as youth workers to support learners to complete programmes of study, project learning and personal pathways. Youth work is ideally placed to build on its existing role in education, to contribute here. This includes ensuring young people can realise their guaranteed entitlement to support from a suitable adult (such as a youth worker) to complete their personal pathways. Youth workers will also be vital to support the strengthened role for youth awards, as highlighted in the report; working towards parity across formal and non-formal awards.

YouthLink Scotland is committed to working with Scottish Government, the new agencies and the youth work sector to consider how to support a coherent approach to partnership. However, to make this happen, it will also be vital to include youth work in ongoing discussions around how these recommendations are taken forward. And that youth workers are included (as noted in the report) in professional learning and support for the workforce. In particular, understanding the role of youth work within education needs to be included in Initial Teacher Education (ITE).

For more information about youth work's role in education please contact Marielle Bruce, Youth Work and Schools Manager, mbruce@youthlink.scot

² <https://youthlinkscotl.wpengine.com/education-skills/scottish-attainment-challenge/>