

#YouthWorkChangesLives



YouthLink Scotland Annual Report 2021/22

YouthLink
Scotland
The national agency for youth work

Reflections from our Chair



The Very Reverend Dr. Lorna Hood OBE, Chair, YouthLink Scotland looks back at an impactful and challenging year.

This has been another important transitional year for the sector. Covid-19 again had a significant bearing on the year, with many restrictions still in place and all legal restrictions in Scotland not lifted until 21 March 2022. Conversations around Covid recovery at times felt premature as the sector was still challenged by what it could and couldn't deliver, with good access to facilities continuing as a major block to the full return of in-person youth work activity.

The year has required considerable patience, resilience and fortitude from everyone and also strong advocacy to ensure that young people's rights, and specifically fair and equitable access to youth work services and opportunities were upheld.

As the national agency for youth work and an intermediary organisation between government, public agencies and the sector, YouthLink Scotland's role was crucial this year to represent and advocate on behalf of our membership and to work with government and other funders and agencies to seek solutions. In doing this we continued to meet our three strategic outcomes as an organisation to attract investment in youth work, to develop and support the sector to deliver for young people and to improve understanding of the importance of youth work.

In terms of attracting investment to the sector, we have been successful in both advocating for increased investment and in continuing to partner with government to deliver key funding streams. Existing funding through CashBack for Communities and the National Voluntary Youth Organisations Support Fund continued. New funds introduced the previous year, such as the Outdoor Education Recovery Fund and the Social Isolation and Loneliness Fund, received renewed funding. The Youth Work Education Recovery Fund report in February 2022 demonstrated strong evidence of youth work and schools partnerships delivering for young people, as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Significantly, as part of Covid recovery the Get Into Summer funding had a youth work stream for voluntary organisations, and local authorities also allocated much of their funding to deliver enhanced youth work activity, specifically targeted at those most in need.

The organisation continued to build knowledge and understanding of youth work and its' vital role in supporting children and young people and this has been increasingly acknowledged throughout the year. On the campaigning and advocacy front, the youth work manifesto and work across party-conferences played a key role in keeping youth work on the agenda. Co-production of the National Youth Work Strategy recommenced after a pause and included an additional booster consultation to ensure black and people of colour-led youth work organisations and other protected characteristic group perspectives were more effectively represented within the draft strategy, alongside sector inputs around the key themes. The expectation is that the strategy will be delivered before 2023.

As I look forward to the end of my term as Independent Chairperson I take great comfort from knowing that despite the many challenges emerging for young people, and the difficulties the youth work sector has faced, YouthLink Scotland remains well-placed to continue its crucial role as the lead agency and key intermediary for the sector.



Publications

YouthLink Scotland has continued to co-produce a wide range of publications to support the sector and get the evidence of the impact of youth work out there. Here is a flavour of our publications this year.

- [COVID-19: Updated Youth Work Guidance](#) (May, 2021)
- [COVID-19 Updated CLD Guidance](#) (May, 2021)
- [Updated Youth Work Guidance](#) (July, 2021)
- [Youth Work Closing the Poverty Attainment Gap during the pandemic](#) (June, 2021)
- [Access to Facilities Report](#) (June, 2021)
- [COVID-19 Updated CLD Guidance](#) (June, 2021)
- [Updated Youth Work Guidance](#) (July, 2021)
- [#YouthWorkCeilidh Toolkit](#) (July 2021)
- [Updated Youth Work Guidance](#) (1 July)
- [Lockdown Lowdown 3](#) (July 2021)
- [YouthLink Scotland Statement on Healthcare Improvement Scotland - Draft Sexual Health Standards](#) (June, 2021)
- [YouthLink Scotland and Youth Scotland joint statement on The Scottish Government Consultation Paper on the Introduction of new Legislation on the Sale and use of Fireworks in Scotland, and Tackling the Misuse of Pyrotechnics.](#) (August, 2021)
- [Engaging Young People in Heritage Toolkit](#) (September, 2021)
- [NYWS Blog](#) (September, 2021)
- [YouthLink Scotland Policy Conference Event Pack](#) (September, 2021)
- [YouthLink Scotland Policy Convention Report](#) (October, 2021)
- [YouthLink Scotland's Research Ethics Policy](#) (September, 2021)
- [Homophobic and Biphobic Discrimination](#) (November, 2021)
- [Transphobic Discrimination](#) (November, 2021)
- [Link Magazine Our Climate Emergency – youth work's role for people and planet](#) (November, 2021)
- [Education reform consultation on behalf of Professor Ken Muir, University of the West of Scotland and Independent Advisor to the Scottish Government](#) (November, 2021)
- [YouthLink Scotland response to Education Recovery: Key Actions and Next Steps - The contribution of education to Scotland's Covid Recovery](#) (November, 2021)
- [Imagine a Man: What it is like to be a boy or a young man in Scotland in 2021](#)
- [YouthLink Scotland response to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee Inquiry into the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People in Scotland](#) (December, 2021)
- [YouthLink Scotland's Annual Report 2020-21](#) (November, 2021)
- [Health, social care, and sport committee YLS Evidence Session](#) (Jan, 2022)
- [YouthLink Scotland Submission to Scottish Government on the Resource Spending Review](#) (March, 2022)

Our Year – An Overview

YouthLink Scotland’s CEO, Tim Frew gives us an overview of the year that was and talks about future priorities.

The year to March 2022 has continued to be one of turbulence in the business environment both internally and externally, due to the continued impact of Covid-19 and the cost of living crisis. A focus on Covid recovery, child poverty and climate change, accompanied by changes to the political environment and the beginnings of education reform and other key changes to social policy has presented many challenges but also opportunities.

Internal Changes

Covid-19 has changed the working pattern of staff indefinitely. During the year we moved from mobile and home working towards a hybrid working pattern once restrictions allowed. A significant change during the financial year was to gain access to our new office premises. A digital boost grant has ensured that we have the kind of premises which can accommodate hybrid meetings and the feedback of the sector to the new venue which has more focus on purposeful meeting spaces and hot-desking has been excellent. The organisation continues to modernise our internal systems and communication. Our digital evolution plan has largely been achieved and website and rebranding work has begun.

Relationship with Scottish Government and key partners

YouthLink Scotland continued to play a key role with the new CLD Policy Unit at the Scottish Government contributing to the CLD Leadership Group during Covid-19. The new Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training, Jamie Hepburn MSP recommitted to the delivery of a National Youth Work Strategy. We continued to develop and expand partnerships with many other parts of the Scottish Government, Skills Development Scotland, COSLA, Public Health Scotland, and Education Scotland. The strong reputation of YouthLink Scotland and the sector has been enhanced following Covid-19, and this has been evidenced by the new funding programmes we have been asked to deliver, and representation in key working groups set up to recover from the pandemic and plan for the future.

Influencing National Policy

YouthLink Scotland made a number of policy responses and engagements during the year, through official policy consultation responses, representing the sector on expert groups and meeting with key stakeholders to articulate sector perspectives.

There were also a number of engagements with Scottish Parliament committees and cross-party groups as well as with politicians from all parties in the run up to national and local elections.



The Youth Work Manifesto prepared for the Scottish Parliament Elections had three clear asks, and these were reflected in different ways in all of the party manifestos for the first time.

Co-production of the National Youth Work Strategy recommenced after a pause and included an additional booster consultation to ensure black and people of colour-led youth work organisations and other protected characteristic group perspectives were more effectively represented within the draft strategy, alongside sector inputs around the key themes.

As outlined in the Chairperson’s report above, there has also been a persistent focus on ensuring access to facilities for youth work. As a result of this influencing role the Guiding Principles for universities, colleges and community learning and development (CLD) providers has a clear direction around the importance of youth work and CLD within education and emphasis on access “to emphasise that in-person youth work should be allowed to take place across Scotland and any access barriers addressed to avoid an inequitable picture across the country for young people”.

We have continued to represent the sector on key committees and working groups.

Other priorities for next year are to:

New and Existing Partnerships

We have maintained important contracts from the Scottish Government for No Knives, Better Lives, Action on Sectarianism and Action on Prejudice as well as consolidating our CashBack for Communities programmes. We have also continued with a funded programme to measure the impact and capacity of the sector to address the poverty-related attainment gap through the Scottish Attainment Challenge. The addition of funding for the sector through the Youth Work Education Recovery Fund, demonstrates the effectiveness of youth work interventions.

We have developed new funding partnerships to support the sector with cyber resilience, digital youth work, mental health and wellbeing, food security, participatory budgeting and education recovery. This year we also established strong partnerships with environmental and sustainability organisations through projects such as Our Bright Future, Young People's Forest, and the Scottish Youth Climate Programme. We also worked with Volunteering Matters and Young Scot to support YouthVIP – supporting young people's engagement in volunteering.

We have established new relationships with UK Youth and Volunteering Matters, who are the new custodians of the #IWill movement UK-wide and continue to work with Scottish partners through the Scottish #IWill Advisory Group. This year also saw a strengthening of UK-wide and international links with fellow youth work agencies in other nations, such as NYA in England, who came to Scotland on a study visit.

FUTURE PLANS

The work plan for 2021-22 follows three key strategic priorities which will shape our new strategic plan scheduled for the end of 2022, along with a new brand for the organisation and website. The National Youth Work Strategy for the sector, is scheduled for the end of 2022 after a pause in co-production due to Covid-19 priorities.

The three key strategic priorities of the organisation are as follows:

- **To attract investment in youth work**
- **To develop and support the sector to deliver for young people**
- **To improve understanding of the importance of youth work**

- **Collaborate with all stakeholders in the development of a new National Youth Work Strategy**
- **Secure our core sources of funding and ensure our financial model is robust with new income streams**
- **Ensure our work is informed by members and smart data**
- **Lead innovation and new practice with the sector around emergent policy needs as part of Covid recovery**
- **Create value for members through carefully listening to them and acting on what they tell us**
- **Attract and sustain investment in the youth work sector through accessing funding via government, business and charitable trusts**
- **Support and develop the capacity of the youth work sector and provide guidance**
- **Improve policy and public awareness and recognition of youth work, especially around young people's role in complementing developing policy relating to education, employability, health and wellbeing, inequality and child poverty**
- **Continue to nurture and develop appropriate partnerships**
- **Further advance research into the impact and value of youth work in collaboration with partners including Scottish Government and publish these with a view to impacting on policy decisions**
- **Maintain our viability as an organisation through a process of continual evolution and systems improvement**

Networks

Our networks bring the youth work sector together, to shape national policy, share practice and ensure youth work is protected and strengthened. With the pandemic continuing to have an impact on the delivery of youth work, our member networks have been invaluable, delivering critical guidance, informing decision-makers and building the case for further investment in the sector.

This year we brought together the following groups:

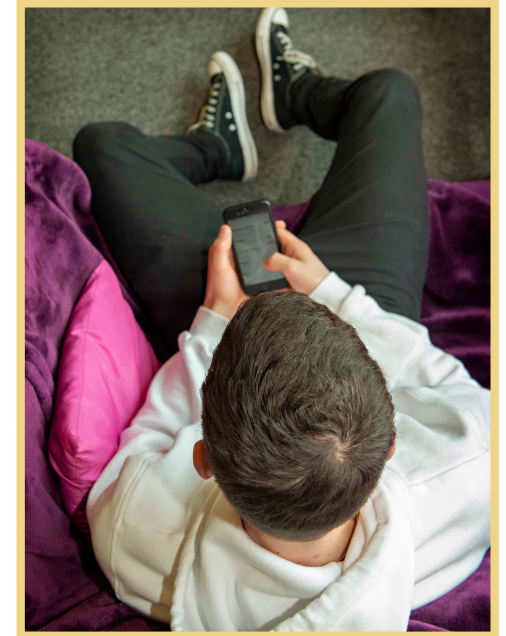
- Local Authority Youth Work Managers
 - National Voluntary Youthwork Organisations Scotland
 - Youth Work Training Forum
 - Scottish Youth Work Leader's Forum
 - Digital Youth Network
 - Equalities in Youth Work Network
 - Members Network
 - Communications and PR Network
 - Covid-19 Youth Work Recovery Group
 - Outdoor Learning Group
 - Health and Wellbeing in Youth Work Network
-

Digital Youth Work

We have continued to support our sector to deliver wonderful and creative digital youth work, connecting with young people online throughout the pandemic who would have otherwise been isolated. Helping young people to grow their cyber resilience is a key part of the digital youth work offer, so that they can be connected and confident in their online lives, and develop vital digital skills for future employment.

This year we:

- Delivered over **1000** sessions of confidence building training to youth workers in response to the pandemic
- Delivered 'Digital Youth Work with Built in Cyber Resilience' training programme across a broad range of digital youth work approaches.
- Ran a highly successful Digital Youth Work Summit, including innovative use of makerspaces, design thinking and virtual reality in youth work
- Supported the sector with leadership, strategy, advice and guidance
- Grew the Digital Youth Network
- Set up regular Digital Meetups to support and enable digital development
- Launched digitalyouthwork.scot as an online hub for resources and best practice
- Partnered with Passion4Fusion to set up an exciting co-creation project, using digital to tackle mental health stigma
- Piloted digital makerspaces, working with the Young STEM Leaders Programme, The Citadel and Douglas Universal Connections



Workforce Development

We work with the sector, Education Scotland and the CLD Standards Council to support the training and development needs of youth workers and organisations.

This year we:

- Delivered over **3000** learning places at **162** online events
- **48** training titles covered the sector priorities in: Digital, Equalities, Climate Emergency, Youth Work and Schools, Violence Reduction and Children's Rights
- Worked with Scottish Government to ensure the sector had relevant and up-to-date guidance at all stages of Covid-19 restrictions
- Continued the rollout of the Detached Youth Work Guidelines and training to members and the wider youth work sector
- Hosted a training seminar for youth workers with the internationally acclaimed author and speaker Jackson Katz. The event was attended by **300+** workers from across Scotland and the EU, and was a call to arms on youth work's role in ending gender-based violence
- Delivered 'Doing Digital Youth Work Better and Better', a series of practice development sessions aimed at developing and strengthening relational youth work practice in digital-first settings
- Launched our Intersectionality Toolkit and dynamic training to support a community of practice

We led sector engagement on:

- CLD Standards Council Approvals Committee and Cross Committee Group
- Erasmus+ Replacement Group, UK Government and scoping work with Scottish Government
- Maintaining and growing international networks and opportunities
- JETS (Joint Education Training Standards) UK and Ireland group
- Steering and development groups for the review of Digital with the CLD Competence Framework and the Digital CLD Awards

Youth Work Training Forum

The forum advocates on behalf of youth work training providers, to enable the sharing of information, good practice, and resources in the training and development of youth workers across the sector.

This year we discussed:

- National Youth Work Strategy
- SVQ refresh
- Mental Health Training and Leadership Training
- Youth Work Training Calendar
- A Force For Good Youth Borders Workforce Research.
- Workforce Development Network updates



Investment

We administer a range of funds on behalf of Scottish Government which invest directly in youth work projects and organisations across Scotland.

Our grant programmes are designed with and for the youth work sector in Scotland and support youth work organisations and the Scottish Government, and other funders, to work in partnership to support young people.

This year we administered:

Outdoor Education Recovery Fund -

£500,000

supporting

14,800

young people

Social Isolation and Loneliness Fund -

£231,000

supporting

4,800

young people

National Voluntary Youth Work Organisations Support Fund -

£500,000

supporting

12,600

Youth Work Practitioners

CashBack for Communities Youth Work Fund -

£711,000

supporting

14,200

young people

Get into Summer Programme -

£1,170,000

supporting

75,300

young people



YouthLink Scotland worked in partnership with Creative Scotland to deliver £1.25m of funded activities as part of the **Get into Summer programme**, enabling the youth work and youth arts sectors to respond directly to the immediate and longer-term impact of Covid-19.

- **95% of participating young people developed their skills**
- **83% of participating young people are more engaged in learning**

Statistics,
Outdoor Education Recovery Fund

“Being part of the project has helped me grow in confidence as I didn’t have very much friends before and now I have lots. I always used to stay at home and not go out but I now meet these friends and go to the park or just hang about with them. I am finishing my Dynamic Youth Award. Being part of this group has helped me become more active and happier.” –
Young Person, CashBack for Communities Youth Work Fund



Policy and Influence

We represent the interest of our members and the wider sector by influencing policy development, communicating impact, responding to government legislation and consultations, and communicating the positive impact of youth work for all young people and those living with the barriers of poverty and inequality.

Our year

In September 2021, over 200 delegates took part in [YouthLink Scotland's Policy Convention](#) on a Right to Youth Work for all Scotland's young people.

We responded to over 30 written and verbal policy consultations and engaged with the sector, national and local government across a range of policy and legislation:

Education Reform

Programme for Government

GIRFEC

Food Insecurity

Climate Change

Sexual Health

Young Carer's Voice

UNCRC

Volunteering

Social Isolation and Loneliness

Play Vision

Out of School Care Provision

In January 2021, YouthLink Scotland supplied oral evidence to the Scottish Parliament, Health, Social Care, and Sport Committee, on youth work's key role in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of Scotland's young people. You can watch here

As a sector we continued to engage on the consultation and process for the National Youth Work Strategy (2022-2027).

Published the Link Magazine Our Climate Emergency, highlighting the sector's role in supporting young people to take action on climate change.

Contributed to the Ministerial Group on Tackling Social Isolation; Child Policy Officers Network; the Strategy Group on Incorporation of UNCRC and Voluntary Action.

Held our National Youth Work Conference on Our Climate Emergency, attended by over **200 delegates**.

#YouthWorkNeedsAHome

continued to campaign for access to facilities for the youth work sector.

Scotland's #YouthWorkCeilidh in August 2021 celebrated great youth work across the country with music, song and great banter.

In March 2022, we launched Invest in Young People, Invest in Youth Work, the youth work sector's manifesto for the Scottish Local Government Election, calling on local and national politicians to commit to the following key asks to protect youth work at local level:

- Make access to youth work opportunities a right for young people in Scotland
- Increase investment in the youth work sector at a Scottish Government and local authority level
- Formal recognition of youth work within the strategies and policies of Scottish Government and local authorities
- Find a long-term sustainable solution to the lack of access to facilities for youth work
- Strengthen the CLD regulations to prevent cuts to youth work provision
- Ensure youth work has access to school facilities to strengthen the positive impact of Youth Work and Schools

Cross Party Group on Children and Young People

We provide the joint secretariat for the CPG with Children in Scotland. This year the CPG met 4 times:

- Priorities for Children and Young People
- Impact of Covid-19
- Impact of Covid-19 on Care Experienced Children and Young People
- Discussion of the CPG Pandemic Report with Education Secretary, Shirley Anne Somerville



Socials

280,000
website hits and over
77,000 users

15%
increase in Twitter
followers to over
20,000



2.8m
impressions and
44,250
engagements on
Twitter

6%
increase in Facebook
followers to
4,600

438,000
impressions on
Facebook

1,000
follower landmark surpassed
since launching
@IWillScotland
Twitter account

Youth Work and Education

Youth work in Scotland is part of education. It is a valuable element of the learner journey for all children and young people, helping them to develop a broad range of skills, capacities and achievements to support them to succeed. YouthLink Scotland works to strengthen youth work's role within education.

Youth Work and Schools

YouthLink Scotland's Youth Work and Schools Partnership programme, one of the Scottish Attainment Challenge national programmes, aims to strengthen collaboration between youth work and schools to improve outcomes for young people impacted by poverty.

“Alongside schools, youth work improves the wellbeing, readiness to learn and educational outcomes of children and young people.”

This year we:

- Directly supported 450 practitioners to build their capacity for collaboration
- Worked to ensure a strong youth work voice in Education Reform
- Contributed to a system wide understanding of effectiveness, including developing evidence and insight to inform current and future provision and practice
- Developed and delivered high quality resources and professional learning to build capacity and support improvement
- Supported the development of quality partnerships to support children and young people with their educational and broader needs
- Further embedded the Youth Work Outcomes and Skills Framework to support young people to recognise and articulate their progress through youth work
- Gathered and shared learning and impact through the [Youth Work Education Recovery Fund](#)

Through the Youth Work Education Recovery Fund

- **82%** of young people developed their skills, particularly confidence, resilience, communication and relationship building skills
- **79%** of young people improved their health and wellbeing
- **78%** overcame barriers to learning

“I was so determined to reach the goals I set myself – that feeling when I did was amazing. It’s made me think differently about school and my choices going forward.”
(YWERF young person)

“This project ensured young people were able to achieve qualifications they wouldn’t otherwise have had the opportunity to engage with. For one of our pupils in particular, this project was the first time he had engaged with productive learning in two years. He now has skills and qualifications to achieve a post-school destination.”
(Teacher)



In the last year we have published a range of reports and guides to support the sector:

[Youth Work: a guide for schools](#)

[Youth Work and School Partnerships Professional Learning Resource](#)

[Lost in Translation](#)

[Youth Work: an audit of reach and impact](#) to promote the sector’s role in supporting young people across the youth employability landscape.

[Scottish Youth Work Leaders Position Statement on Education Reform](#)

Employability and Skills

YouthLink Scotland believes youth work’s role within the employability system deserves greater recognition. There is a wealth of evidence demonstrating the integral relationship between youth work and employability, through the role youth work plays in supporting young people in schools, community and post-school contexts.

This year we:

Continued to work with partners and stakeholders to highlight youth work’s integral role within employability and skills. This included supporting the Careers Review, to ensure understanding of youth work’s role within the careers service eco system.



Europe and beyond

Despite a complex and challenging European backdrop we have been working hard to maintain a positive and progressive voice on the European youth work scene.



This year we:

- Represented Scotland at the 'Bonn Process – the European Youth Work Agenda' meet up
- Continued to be an active participant in the International Youth Policy Dialogue Network
- Promoted opportunities for the sector to participate in funded SALTO and other European/International learning opportunities
- Represented Scotland at the European Youth Work Seminar alongside the German Federal Youth Work Congress
- Maintained valuable relationships with European partners and built new relationships with partners in Switzerland
- Ensured youth work's digital response to the pandemic was extensively used as a best practice case study with its roots in the Erasmus+ programme
- Represented at the international seminar around Finland's Youth 2022 Conference by YouthLink Scotland and YMCA Scotland
- Actively influenced UK and Scottish Government to create new exchange opportunities according to sector priorities

#iWill Scotland



The #iWill movement in Scotland aims to encourage and empower more young people to take action, make a difference and influence change within their communities, the environment and broader society through activities such as volunteering, fundraising, mentoring, campaigning and activism.

Through our Power of Youth Charter we call on organisations from business, health and social care, voluntary sector, education and environment to come forward and support the young people of today to make a difference for the world of tomorrow!

This year we:

- Developed partner resources and communications ahead of Power of Youth Day and #iWill Week
- Recruited **12** new #iWill Scotland young ambassadors
- Gained **397** new followers on @iWillScotland Twitter and **172** new @iWillScotland Instagram followers, more than doubling our reach
- Achieved **18000** impressions during #iWill Week on Twitter per day; @iWillScotland was mentioned **112** times on Twitter and over **200** accounts were reached on Instagram with nearly **2500** impressions
- Developed Power of Youth Charter resources
- Contributed to the development of Scottish Government's Volunteering for All Action Plan
- Made progress on Phase 1 and 2 of the YouthVIP programme, realising young people's recommendations for inclusive volunteering
- Held the YouthVIP Summit in Feb 2022, led by the YouthVIP Legacy group attracting **100+** attendees from cross-sector organisations



Research

YouthLink Scotland is dedicated to developing an evidence base for the impact of youth work on the personal, social and educational development of young people in Scotland. We do this through the commissioning of high-quality research opportunities, through a range of youth-led research initiatives; and through regular meetings of our research steering group.

Imagine a Man

In 2021 as part of the No Knives, Better Lives programme, YouthLink Scotland explored what it is like to be a boy or young man in Scotland today through **Imagine a Man**. The purpose of the research was to develop and deepen our understanding of how young people feel about masculinity and growing up.

A total of **1,230** young people across Scotland completed a survey, 25 young people took part in focus groups and five adult practitioners were interviewed. The themes explored included stereotypes and expectations, risky behaviour, community and relationships, ideal futures and support needed to explore masculinity.

The findings:

- What it's like to be a boy or young man in Scotland in 2021 is more positive than expected
 - For a positive future for boys and young men we need to focus on providing stability, security and breaking down stereotypes
 - For masculinity to flourish we need safe space, positive stories of masculinity, role models and more funding for youth work
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On Our Wave Length

In 2021 we completed the youth-led research project **On Our Wave Length** exploring environmental impacts on coastal communities in Scotland. Delivered in partnership with Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. You can check out the **Heritage Toolkit**. The project was a finalist in the Nature of Scotland Award.

- **5** youth groups from Argyll and Bute Council, Fife Council, North Berwick Youth Project, South Ayrshire Council and Volunteer Centre Western Isles
- **45** young researchers
- **11** youth workers
- **160** community members engaged
- **150,000** twitter users reached
- **3887** views of heritage toolkit

Research Ethics Policy

Supported by a Scottish Government Analyst as part of the Analytical Exchange Programme we published a **Research Ethics Policy** to support both YouthLink Scotland and the youth work sector to conduct research and evaluation ethically.

You can read our blog on research ethics **here**.



Scottish Youth Work Research Steering Group

We continued to provide the secretariat for the **Scottish Youth Work Research Steering Group**. The group comprises of representatives from the youth work sector, academia, public health, Scottish Government, the CLD Standards Council and Education Scotland.

The steering group met five times this year. The group's main aim is to find funding for a priority setting exercise to engage with the sector to develop research priorities for the next 5 years.

YouthLink Scotland and Northern Star presented to the Social Research Association Conference in November 2021 - Transformative Evaluation – A participatory research methodology to examine impact.

Youth work's role during and recovery from Covid-19

Awarded funding from Scottish Government Covid-19 Learning and Evaluation Group to conduct an evidence review on youth work's role during and recovery from Covid-19.

OPEN Space

Through the Ideas Fund, we supported young people from the OPEN Space project on Shetland to complete youth-led research to explore a new safe space for young people.

Supported a Masters Student

We supported a Masters Dissertation placement student from The University of Edinburgh to explore youth work's role in the Scottish Education system.

Learning for Sustainability



YouthLink Scotland is committed to realising the ambitions of the 2030 Vision for Learning for Sustainability and Net Zero Nation Strategy. This is reflected through a number of our national programmes and work streams.

Scottish Youth Climate Programme and COP26

The Scottish Youth Climate Programme was a partnership project between YouthLink Scotland, Young Scot and Keep Scotland Beautiful in the lead up to and beyond the historic summit, to develop a confident and equipped climate literate youth work workforce.

This year:

- We recruited **274** Local Climate Champions from **31** local authority areas across Scotland
- We created a National Youth Work Champion Network for youth workers
- **179** young people attended **20** events at COP26 in Glasgow
- **71** young people attended the Scottish Youth Climate Summit Event and contributed to the Scottish Youth Climate Declaration
- **11** new resources for Youth Workers were created by YouthLink Scotland and shared on the online platform
- **6 case studies** have been shared on the online platform to inspire and motivate the sector, share best practice and highlight the vital role youth workers play in supporting young people as climate champions
- **204** individuals completed climate emergency training, **155** completed the assessment and **153** were CLP certified

100% of youth work champions felt more confident and knowledgeable in their understanding of COP26 and the climate emergency after taking part in the programme. 100% also felt more confident and equipped in supporting young people to tackle the climate emergency.

Climate Emergency Toolkit:

Developed a Climate Emergency Toolkit for Youth Workers with 10 great workshop sessions:

- How to Host a Mini-COP
- Visualising Climate Futures Activity
- Climate Storytelling Workshop
- Trees Through the Seasons Activity
- Web of Life Activity
- Where to Start Activity
- Eat With the Seasons Activity
- Energy Source Game
- Doughnut Economics Drawing Activity
- Fast Fashion Alternatives Game

Scotland's Young People's Forest



Scotland's Young People's Forest (SYPF) Panel is a panel of 23 of young people aged 11 – 25 with a vision to create the first forest in Scotland that is co-designed, led and governed by young people.

[Meet the Scottish Young People's Forest Panel](#) and find out why some of these volunteers wanted to take part.

What has the SYPF done so far?

- COP26 events: The panel promoted the project in Glasgow, inspiring further youth-led conservation projects and highlighting the importance of climate initiatives while experiencing the buzz of the conference
- Two residential: This time spent engaging directly in and with nature helped the Panel to visualise different uses of land which they might want to consider in the development of the forest whilst receiving expert advice to inform them
- National Consultation Survey: To engage with a wider cohort, and to inform the work of the Panel, the panel designed and delivered a National Consultation Survey. The consultation aimed to understand how other young people in Scotland felt about the Scotland's Young People's Forest project and to gather their opinions on some of the major decisions the project needs to make. You can read the report here: **[SYPF Consultation Report Final 2022.pdf](#)**
- Forest prototype building: To summarise the work the Panel have done so far with this project, they developed several detailed forest prototypes to steer the next phase of the project and to help the young people to envision exactly what they are hoping the forest will look like. These prototypes were then designed by professional illustrators for future use as shown:

Our Bright Future



Our Bright Future is an ambitious and innovative partnership which brings together the youth and environmental sectors, and ensures the needs of young people and the environment are heard through the promotion of three youth defined asks:

Ask 1: More time spent learning in and about nature

Ask 2: Support to get into environmental jobs

Ask 3: Government, employers, businesses, schools and charities to pay more attention to the needs of young people and the environment

We have continued to influence politicians, partner with other organisations and empower young people to take action. To find out more about the Our Bright Future Project visit: **[Learning for Sustainability | Our Bright Future \(youthlinkscotland.org\)](#)**







AoS is a national programme that focuses on providing information that inspires action on sectarianism in Scotland. We provide an online space for sharing resources and information on the topic of sectarianism as well as training for youth workers on how to engage young people in discussion on the topic. Sectarianism can affect anyone and everyone. 88% of people in Scotland believe that sectarianism is a problem in Scotland and 14% of those asked said they had experienced it personally.

This year we:

- Gained almost **20,000** page views
- Increased our website visits to **8,500**
- Increased the number of young people using the website with the majority of users now aged **18-to-35**
- @AoSScotland had **72,000** impressions
- Delivered Tackling Sectarianism CPD training to **60** youth workers
- Continued to provide essential information and resources to youth workers, young people and the wider public

“AoS has made me aware of the different partners and resources.”

“The website has great resources on the topic and a wide range of activities for young people.”

“It where I go to access a range of resources to support me when delivering sessions around sectarianism.”



action on
prejudice

Action on Prejudice, Challenging Inequality and Hate. YouthLink Scotland, with support from Scottish Government, has set up [Action on Prejudice](#) to be the first online hub to provide information and resources for young people and those that work with young people about tackling discrimination, prejudice and hate crime.

This year we:

- Had **2,200** sessions on our website, alongside **4,000** page views
- **106,000** impressions on @AoP_Scotland
- Worked with Primate to create a new website
- Provided the youth work sector with information relating to prejudice, discrimination and hate crime in a period of time where this was heightened on social media
- Continued to promote the Speak Up resource and delivered training on how the 5Ds can be implemented in an online setting
- Developed and piloted new Intersectional Youth Work resource and training to **40 youth workers**

“Really enjoyed the opportunity to reflect with others and also really like the information on the slides.”

“Brilliant session, thank you so much for such an insightful and energetic session.”

“Great session, conversations were good, could talk all day and helped filter it into the work.”

“Really good, was good being in a smaller group and listening to other people’s stories and examples.”

~~No knives~~ Better lives

NKBL is a Scottish national programme that aims to deter young people from carrying knives. It is a collaboration between Scottish Government and YouthLink Scotland. The campaign aims to raise awareness of the consequences and information for young people, parents and practitioners to share these messages.

NKBL is a national initiative that is delivered at a local level with a youth work approach.



This year we:

- Launched our new Website <https://noknivesbetterlives.com/>
- Refreshed our logo to emphasise 'Better Lives' to better reflect the aims of the project
- Updated branding across all our social channels
- Completed the Nae Danger (bystander) VR Game in preparation for the rollout in 2022/2023
- Completed Phase One of the Boys and Young Men research. Published the findings in our report **Imagine a Man Report** and the created an alliance around violence prevention in masculinities work
- Developed a new **Your Choice Alcohol Toolkit** that explores the link between alcohol and violence through a cultural lens, aimed at schools and youth clubs
- Engaged with over 500 practitioners this year, thanks in part to some big name draws like Jackson Katz and Tim Chapman, and a hybrid engagement model
- Developed a 'Triage' document for schools, highlighting that partnership working is crucial to implementation of a 'public health' approach
- Developed our 'Theory of Change' document – which clearly pulls together what we do, how we do it, why we do it and our contribution analysis
- Successfully engaged on TikTok and Snapchat as new social channels for young people
- Continued promotion and training in the Nae Danger (bystander) Interactive Schools Game
- Participated in the Glasgow Hackathon for The Hope Collective, a UK-wide violence prevention initiative
- Presented at London: Tackling and Preventing Knife Crime Digital Conference

Mental health and wellbeing

Youth work plays a crucial role in supporting young people's mental health and wellbeing. Through our policy work, our programmes, investment and targeted work, it is at the heart of our youth work approach.



This year we:

- Grew our Health & Wellbeing in Youth Work Network to 50 members
- Launched **Heids Together** – a wellbeing and youth work resource
- Inputed into the Sexual Health Standards Review
- Delivered Children's Rights Training
- Supported over **100** youth workers through Wellbeing Wednesdays to support their own mental health & wellbeing through the pandemic
- Took part in the stakeholder group for the Big Ideas fund, supporting mental health research projects in the Highlands & Islands
- Welcomed new members: Magic Breakfast, Changing Faces, Police Scotland Youth Volunteers
- Received **£69,000** from Comic Relief to design Well App a mental health app designed by BME young people in partnership with Passion 4 Fusion
- Worked with partners & young people to share their experiences of Blame Culture through the pandemic as part of the Royal Society of Edinburgh's Curious Festival
- Worked with Youth Scotland to advise SAMH on new elearning resource for youth workers [Elearning for Youth Workers | SAMH](#)
- Sat on the planning group for an online child & adolescent mental health conference with UN House and the Soroptomists
- Worked together with partners on the **World of Difference Changing Faces resource**
- Created new National Sexual Health Training for Youth Workers
- Worked with the Barnahus (Bairns Hoose) engagement group



Representation

YouthLink Scotland continued to make sure our youth work sector was strongly represented on key policymaking bodies, working groups and networks:



- Scottish Attainment Challenge Working Group
- Skills Development Scotland – Careers Review Programme Board.
- Cyber Resilience Network
- Scotland’s Funders’ Forum
- Scottish Public Leaders Forum
- Scottish Education Leaders Forum
- Employability Stakeholder Group
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Board
- UNCRC Incorporation
- Participation and Rights Network
- Third Sector Employability Forum
- Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) Intermediaries Group
- Volunteering Round Table
- CLD Standards Council for Scotland Sub Committees
- NYWS Stakeholder Reference Group
- Police Scotland Youth Volunteers Programme
- Education Scotland/YouthLink Scotland (Various Groupings)
- Young Scot Board
- JETS (4 Nations Training Group)
- 3 Nations (National Voluntary Youth Agencies Group)
- #IWill in Scotland Advisory Group
- Step up to Serve UK Advisory Council
- National Outdoor Education Advisory Group
- Children’s Sector Strategic and Policy Forum
- Cyber Resilience Learning and Skills Network
- Cyber Week Scotland Communications planning
- Young Scot Digi Know? Project Advisory Group
- CLD STEM Strategy Implementation Steering Group
- Working with Scotland’s Communities Survey Advisory Forum
- International Youth Policy Dialogue
- Scottish Volunteering Forum
- UK Volunteering Forum

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

(including income and expenditure account)

	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Fund	Total Funds 2021	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Fund	Total Funds 2020
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income						
Income from charitable activities:						
Services	1,399,304	-	1,399,304	1,357,292	-	1,357,292
Income from other trading activities:						
Conferences and Training	267,674	59,553	327,227	300,986	50,839	351,825
Investment income	1,597	-	1,597	5,614	-	5,614
Total Income	1,668,575	59,553	1,728,128	1,663,892	50,839	1,714,731
Expenditure						
Expenditure on charitable activities:						
Services	1,661,778	59,553	1,721,331	1,650,222	57,045	1,707,267
Total Expenditure	1,661,778	59,553	1,721,331	1,650,222	57,045	1,707,267
Net income/(expenditure) before transfers	6,797	-	6,797	13,670	(6,206)	7,464
Net income/(expenditure) before other recognised gains and losses	6,797	-	6,797	13,670	(6,206)	7,464
Revaluation of Investment	10,538	-	10,538	(3,347)	-	(3,347)
Actuarial gain/(loss) on pension plan	-	-	-	87,832	-	87,832
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in funds for the year	17,335	-	17,335	98,155	(6,206)	91,949
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward	373,550	-	373,550	275,395	6,206	281,601
Total funds carried forward	390,885	-	390,885	373,550	-	373,550

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

			Total Funds			Total Funds
	Unrestricted	Restricted	2021	Unrestricted	Restricted	2020
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets	-	-	-	1,222	-	1,222
Current assets						
Debtors	124,090	-	124,090	83,957	-	83,957
Cash at bank	530,000	-	530,000	573,853	-	573,853
Investment	105,655	-	105,655	96,653	-	96,653
	759,745	-	759,745	754,463	-	754,463
Liabilities						
Creditors falling due after less than one year	355,473	-	355,473	378,204	-	378,204
Net current assets	404,272	-	404,272	376,259	-	376,259
Creditors falling due in more than one year	13,387	-	13,387	3,931	-	3,931
Net assets excluding Pension Liability	390,885	-	390,885	373,550	-	373,550
Net assets	390,885	-	390,885	373,550	-	373,550
The Funds of the charity						
Unrestricted						
General	390,885	-	390,885	373,550	-	373,550
Restricted	-	-	-	-	-	-
	390,885	-	390,885	373,550	-	373,550

#InvestInYouthWork

YouthLink
Scotland
The national agency for youth work

[YouthLink Scotland Website](#)

Caledonian Exchange
19A Canning St Edinburgh EH3 8EG
Scottish Charity No. SC003923