



Campaign Overview

Youth workers create safe, welcoming spaces, indoors and outdoors, online and in communities—where young people are free to grow, explore, and thrive. In today's fast-changing world, safeguarding is more than physical protection. It means nurturing emotional resilience, promoting digital wellbeing, tackling harm and exploitation, and offering positive, preventative alternatives that change lives.

The youth work manifesto has a clear vision: a Scotland where every young person has a **right, a space, a future**. That means:

- Enshrining a legal **Right** to youth work for all young people
- Ensuring free and fair access to safe **Spaces** in every community
- Securing sustained investment in youth work to build strong **Futures**

We want to raise awareness of our **Manifesto for 2026 – A Right, A Space, A Future** – and show how your work every day is delivering on its national commitments and strategic priorities.

National Commitments

- 01 A Legal Right to Youth Work for All Young People**

Young people across Scotland consistently tell us that youth work makes a real difference to their lives. Making it a legal right ensures every young person – regardless of where they live – can access safe spaces, trusted relationships and support at key points in their lives. It creates fairness, consistency, and long-term impact.
- 02 Universal Access to Spaces for Youth Work**

Youth work happens in physical, digital, outdoor and mobile spaces. But access is inconsistent. Every young person deserves welcoming, inclusive environments in their own community, places they choose to be, not where they are sent. Investing in spaces protects and strengthens community infrastructure.
- 03 Sustained and Increased Investment in Youth Work**

Youth work cannot survive on short-term, precarious funding. Long-term investment secures jobs, builds trust, and delivers preventative support that reduces pressure on health, education, justice, and social care systems. It's not a cost – it's a solution.

Five Priorities for *A Right, A Space, A Future*

Beneath the three national commitments sit five strategic priorities that show how youth work delivers real change. Each priority has clear asks for government, and powerful messages you can use in your campaigning.

01 Tackling Child Poverty

Why it matters: Poverty drives health inequalities, youth homelessness, violence, and lower attainment. Youth work offers trusted relationships and practical support that help young people overcome barriers and thrive.

We're asking for:

- Fund targeted programmes tackling barriers (transport, food, digital access, stigma).
- Recognise youth work as a key partner in poverty reduction.
- Prioritise investment in projects supporting young people experiencing poverty.

Campaign lines:

“WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE ARE TRUSTED AND SUPPORTED, POVERTY DOESN'T DEFINE THEIR FUTURE.”

“YOUTH WORK LIFTS BARRIERS, BUILDS DIGNITY, AND HELPS YOUNG PEOPLE MOVE FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING.”

“YOUTH WORK BREAKS THE CYCLE OF POVERTY. LET'S INVEST WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE NEED IT MOST.”

Stat to use:

83% OF YOUNG PEOPLE SAY YOUTH WORK SKILLS AND ACHIEVEMENTS ARE IMPORTANT TO THEIR FUTURE.

02 Delivering Rights, Participation and Inclusion

Why it matters: When young people know their rights, feel respected, and are heard, they grow up confident and engaged. Youth work creates the spaces where this happens.

We're asking for:

- ➔ Embed the UNCRC in national and local youth work strategies.
- ➔ Invest in youth-led decision making and participation.
- ➔ Recognise youth work as a gateway for young people to claim and use their rights.
- ➔ Target support for those furthest from opportunities.

Campaign lines:

"APPLAUD THEM OR DOUBT THEM –
YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICES CANNOT
BE IGNORED."

"YOUTH WORK TURNS RIGHTS INTO
REALITY, GIVING EVERY YOUNG
PERSON THE SPACE TO BELONG
AND THE POWER TO BE HEARD."

"YOUTH WORK GIVES YOUNG
PEOPLE A VOICE, AND MAKES
SURE IT'S HEARD."

Stat to use:

**97% OF YOUNG PEOPLE
BELIEVE YOUTH WORK
SHOULD BE A RIGHT.**

03 Education

Why it matters: Not all young people thrive in classrooms. Youth work offers a relationship-based approach that builds confidence, improves attendance, and helps young people re-engage with learning.

We're asking for:

- ➔ Formalise partnerships between schools and youth work organisations.
- ➔ Invest so all young people can access youth work as part of their learner journey.
- ➔ Support whole-school approaches with youth workers reducing exclusions and raising aspirations.
- ➔ Guarantee access to outdoor and residential learning.

Campaign lines:

“NOT EVERY YOUNG PERSON FITS THE CLASSROOM, BUT EVERY YOUNG PERSON DESERVES TO LEARN.”

“YOUTH WORK REBUILDS CONFIDENCE AND CREATES THE PATHWAYS THAT TAKE YOUNG PEOPLE FORWARD.”

“YOUTH WORK IS EDUCATION TOO – LEARNING FOR LIFE, NOT JUST THE CLASSROOM.”

Stat to use:

ONLY 22% OF YOUNG PEOPLE FELT FULLY SATISFIED WITH THEIR EDUCATION.

04 Health and Wellbeing

Why it matters: Trusted youth work relationships boost confidence, resilience and positive choices, reducing pressure on crisis services.

We're asking for:

- ➔ Invest in youth work as part of Scotland's mental health and wellbeing strategy.
- ➔ Fund early intervention and emotional literacy programmes.
- ➔ Create joint funding mechanisms between NHS boards and youth work organisations.
- ➔ Recognise youth work's role in tackling health inequalities.

Campaign lines:

“COURAGE GROWS IN SAFE SPACES
– YOUTH WORK IS WELLBEING
IN ACTION.”

“YOUTH WORKERS ARE THE
TRUSTED ADULTS WHO HELP
YOUNG PEOPLE NAVIGATE LIFE’S
CHALLENGES AND BUILD RESILIENCE
FOR THE FUTURE.”

“STRONGER MINDS, STRONGER
FUTURES – YOUTH WORK
SUPPORTS BOTH.”

Stat to use:

**96% OF YOUNG PEOPLE WANT
MORE FUNDING AND ACCESS
TO SKILLED YOUTH WORKERS.**

05 Youth Justice

Why it matters: Early support prevents problems from escalating. Youth work tackles trauma, builds trust and helps young people make safer choices.

We're asking for:

- Embed youth work in local youth justice strategies.
- Fund youth-led violence reduction, restorative justice, and community safety programmes.
- Recognise youth workers as trusted adults preventing escalation into the justice system.

Campaign lines:

“WITH YOUTH WORK SUPPORT,
YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T JUST IMAGINE
A BETTER FUTURE, THEY BUILD IT.”

“YOUTH WORK TACKLES HARM
BEFORE IT TAKES ROOT, KEEPING
YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE AND
COMMUNITIES STRONG.”

“THE RIGHT SUPPORT TODAY
MEANS SAFER COMMUNITIES
TOMORROW.”

Stat to use:

**97% OF YOUNG PEOPLE
WANT MORE YOUTH WORK
OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE.**

How to Get Involved

We encourage both youth workers and young people to promote the manifesto in a way that works for them – whether that’s public-facing content, closed group activities, inviting local politicians to your project or community-level engagement – make it your own!

Show What Youth Work Makes Possible

Photos & Videos

Capture the moments that matter. Share images and short clips that show how youth work helps young people grow in confidence, learn new skills, and feel supported.

Quotes & Stories

Share powerful stories — from young people, youth workers, or partners — that bring the impact of youth work to life. Real voices make the strongest case.

Submit to the National Impact Hub

Share case studies, statistics, and quotes that show how youth work is making a real difference in young people’s lives! Our National Impact Hub on our website aims to showcase the most impactful stats, stories and case studies across a broad range of youth work areas. If you have something you want to showcase on our impact hub, get in touch with us via media@youthlink.scot

Get the Message Out There

Invite Decision-Makers In

Ask your local councillor, MSP, or funder to visit your group or project. Give them a chance to see youth work in action, meet young people, and hear why it matters. Find out who your MSPs are with the postcode finder: <https://www.parliament.scot/msps>

Make it Local and Visible

Display posters in community hubs, libraries, schools, GP surgeries or partner venues. Drop off Manifesto postcards or flyers to local services and stakeholders.

Tell Your Story in Local Media

Pitch a positive youth work story to your local newspaper or radio station. Highlight a young person's achievement or a youth-led campaign.

Host a Conversation: Use a session to explore the Manifesto. Ask young people: What does a "safe space" mean to you? What rights do you think all young people should have?

Create Your Own Mini Campaign: Use posters, storytelling walls, or creative displays in your space and through socials showing how youth work has made a difference.

Share Your Practice: Write a short post or video about how you support inclusion, wellbeing, or early intervention. Highlight your successes and what support you need.

Get the Message Out There

Tag and Amplify: Use social media to boost your reach. Tag your local reps and key ministers. Use the hashtags to join the national conversation and make youth work visible.

Manifesto Makers: Support young people to write their own version of "a right, a space, a future" – in a poem, blog, podcast, or video.

Social Media Suggestions

A selection of social media graphics and assets are available [here](#) and [here](#) - feel free to download and share these!

Post Prompts:

➔ What does a safe space mean to you? Youth work helps create them every day.

We're supporting the youth work sector's vision for a Scotland where every young person has a right to youth work and access to safe community space. Let's help to build brighter futures!

Read the full **#RightSpaceFuture** manifesto here: [LINK]

➔ Every young person deserves the right to youth work. Let's make it law.

We're proud to stand with the youth work sector in campaigning for a **#RightSpaceFuture!**

Read the full manifesto here: [LINK]

Social Media Suggestions

→ Safeguarding. Wellbeing. Empowerment. Youth work is all these things and more!

It tackles root causes before problems escalate, creating safe spaces and building trust. We're proud to support the Youth Work Manifesto, calling for all young people to have a **#RightSpaceFuture**: [LINK]

→ Young people are telling us what they need:

- More mental health support
- More youth spaces
- More youth workers they can trust

Let's **#InvestInYouthWork** to support their needs and build brighter futures! Read the full Youth Work Manifesto here: [LINK] **#RightSpaceFuture**

→ We're supporting the youth work sector's vision for a Scotland where young people have:

- A legal right to youth work
- Access to safe spaces in communities
- Investment in youth work to build strong futures

Let's help young people secure a **#RightSpaceFuture** - read the full manifesto: [LINK]

→ A right, a space, a future - young people deserve youth work!

We're supporting the Youth Work Manifesto and calling for Scotland to **#InvestInYouthWork** to give young people the support, safeguarding, and empowerment they deserve.

Read the full **#RightSpaceFuture** manifesto: [LINK]

Boosting Your Social Media Impact

- Make sure you use the hashtag **#RightSpaceFuture** and tag us @YouthLinkScot.
- Tag Relevant Ministers: Highlight youth work's empowering impact by tagging key government ministers.

@Ben MacPherson (Youth Work Minister)

@JennyGilruth (Education & Skills)

@neilcgray (Health)

@MairiGougeon (Rural Affairs)

@AngusRobertson (International and Culture)

@S_A_Somerville (Social Justice)

@AConstance23 (Justice)

@ThomasCArthur (Social Care and Mental Wellbeing)

@NatalieDon_ (CYP and Promise)

@jenni_minto (Public Health)

@MareeToddMSP (Drugs and Alcohol Policy, and Sport)

@kaukabstewart (Equalities)

@RichardLochhead (Employment)

Remember:

- Don't feel pressure to post every day or follow a fixed structure.
- Do what works for your team and your young people.
- Every contribution, big or small, helps build the national picture.

Get in Touch

For support, questions or to submit your stories for our Impact Hub, contact: media@youthlink.scot

**LET'S SHOW SCOTLAND
WHY YOUTH WORK MATTERS
MORE THAN EVER.**

#RIGHTSPACEFUTURE