Strategy for 2016 – 2019

Changing Lives Through Youth Work

Consisting of Five Ambitions for:

Young People  |  Youth Workers  |  Community Based Youth Work
Partnership Working  |  Sustainability
CHANGING LIVES THROUGH YOUTH WORK
WHO WE ARE

We are a membership organisation and Scotland’s national charity for the support and delivery of community based youth work.

OUR MISSION

To support young people to achieve their full potential.

OUR VISION

Young people who are confident, resilient, aspirational and ready to reach their potential.

OUR VALUES

• We believe young people have the right and need to be respected, valued and encouraged.
• We believe that youth work changes lives.
• We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion.
• We champion all those who support young people particularly the role of volunteers in youth work.

WHY?

Every young person has potential. Our investment encourages them to raise their aspirations and achieve their potential.

FOR?

All children and young people aged between 5 and 25 years of age and those who support them.

HOW?

We support a network of over 1,200 youth groups and projects and deliver services that help over 64,000 young people to learn, succeed and make positive contributions to their communities.
Introduction

On behalf of the young people we support across Scotland, our Trustees and Staff as well as those youth workers and volunteers engaged in Youth Scotland’s membership and network, I am delighted to commend this three-year Strategy for the period April 2016 – March 2019.

In 2014, we celebrated our 80th Anniversary of Opening Doors for young people. The organisation, as a well respected and established education charity, has evolved and grown in numerous ways during our eight decades of service but always with young people at the heart of what we do and what we stand for.

‘Changing Lives through Youth Work’ is our ambitious 2016-2019 strategy for young people; youth workers; community based youth work; partnership working; and sustainability. It builds on our long history; consolidates and develops the successes achieved in recent years and especially in delivering the Strategic Priorities of 2013 – 2016.

We are operating against a backdrop of continuing economic pressures. This means we have to ensure the outcomes that we include in this strategy can be evaluated effectively and demonstrate the impact that youth work can and does make in the lives of so many young people.

Our focus in the next three years, incorporating the Year of Young People in 2018, will be to seek out and provide more non-formal learning opportunities for young people to contribute both to their personal self-development and prospects for employment. We will continue to support our paid and voluntary workforce throughout Scotland. We will promote the added value of community based youth work both directly and in collaboration with numerous other partners. We will ensure that Youth Scotland is an effective and sustainable organisation within the charitable and youth work sector in Scotland.

With your continued support, we look forward to a further period of growth for Youth Scotland and among the young people we support.

Dr Derek G Casey
Chair of Youth Scotland
Youth Scotland’s statement of ambition

As Scotland’s national charity for the support and delivery of community based youth work, the Youth Scotland network is ideally positioned to encourage and support the aspirations of young people and those who work with them. For over 80 years, we have adapted to the social needs of the day and have been hugely ambitious in offering non-formal learning opportunities to countless thousands of young people across Scotland.

Our Strategy, ‘Changing Lives Through Youth Work’ adapts to the needs of young people today. It follows an unprecedented decade of growth and innovation in youth work practice, delivery and support services. In the challenging financial climate in which all charities and public service organisations are operating, this strategy provides a broad outline of our intentions and aspirations. We will consolidate and build on our successes so far and challenge ourselves to do all that we can to enable young people to fulfil their potential. The strategy assumes the same level of financial support we have received in recent years and we will strive at least to maintain this welcome external support. This will help consolidate and develop existing programmes. We will continue to maintain our level of reserves while finding the balance between investing in the future of the charity and supporting essential development projects.

Supported by our stakeholders, we also have ambitions to expand the range of services we provide for young people and those who support them in communities throughout Scotland. This will mean finding new income sources and challenge us to generate more income internally through our own services and projects where this is possible.

As such, ‘Changing Lives through Youth Work’ sets out what we intend to do with existing forecasted resources but in addition to these ambitions we set out our early thoughts on and aspirations for new initiatives and potential areas for new, replacement and additional income sources. Our strategy will therefore be a “live document” and reflect our successes in expanding our range of services and respond to the natural pressures and opportunities which are faced by all in the voluntary and public sectors.
Young People
Our Strategic Aims and Outcomes for 2016 – 19

AMBITION 1

More young people to reach their potential by becoming successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens in their youth groups and communities.

Outcomes:

Youth People will:

• Develop skills for leadership, take initiatives, and take the lead among their peers and in the community.

• have increased access to opportunities which are enjoyed and valued.

• gain more recognition and accreditation for their achievements.

• have a stronger voice and increased involvement in decision-making.

• improve their health and well-being.

• develop their skills for learning, life, and work.

Activities:

• Young people will develop their skills for learning, life, and work through engagement within the Youth Scotland network.

• Young people will demonstrate planning, recording and reflection of their learning and gain accredited certification and recognition for their achievements at SCQF level 3 to 7. These will be through the Dynamic Youth Awards and Youth Achievement Awards.

• Young people will undertake training to develop skills in taking a leadership role in their community through programmes including Involvement Training, Girls on the Move, Youth Active, Breaking Barriers, and Mentor Training.

• Young people from across Scotland will take part in the Young People Taking the Lead national conferences to share experiences and develop skills in leadership.

• Young people will organise national training events, conferences and programmes on themes that they have identified with their peers.

• Young people will be empowered to join regional groups and thematic discussion forums to be consulted on a range of topics and issues facing young people today.
Youth Workers
AMBITION 2

Increased effectiveness of those who work with young people to deliver quality youth work programmes.

Outcomes:

Youth Workers will:

- develop their competencies to deliver quality youth work programmes.
- be supported to have the skills to offer accredited recognition of young peoples’ achievements.
- increase their knowledge and understanding of young people’s issues and needs and how to respond appropriately.
- feel better supported and know where to access relevant information.
- be better able to demonstrate an understanding of policy issues.

Activities:

- Youth workers will receive training to offer young people accreditation opportunities.
- Youth workers will receive training in youth participation, which will develop their skills in engaging young people in decision making processes.
- Youth workers will access practical skills and be offered issue based training and training on policy areas including Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) and Curriculum for Excellence.
- Youth workers will access nationally accredited training opportunities including the Professional Development Award (PDA) in Youth Work accredited by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), Leading in Youth Work accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM), and the Adult Achievement Awards.
Community Based Youth Work
AMBITION 3

Sustained, stronger and more resilient community based youth work to be achieved through our national network of member groups and Area Associations.

Outcomes:

*Youth Groups will:*

- increase their capacity to deliver high quality youth work.
- become more enterprising and innovative through accessing the benefits of Youth Scotland membership.
- have increased access to high quality, practical tools and resources helping to create and maintain a safe and effective youth work environment.
- continually improve their core quality standards.
- have a greater voice that represents their interests on local and national platforms.
- be attracted to join Youth Scotland while existing members will be retained.

Activities:

- Youth groups will have access to information resources including Youth Work Essentials and will be supported to develop a quality and safe youth work environment.
- Youth groups will have access to the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme and will be supported to develop and implement child protection policies and procedures.
- Youth groups will be supported to have appropriate policies and procedures in place and supported to adhere to quality standards.
- Youth groups will have access to specific funding resources to support delivery of community based youth work through our grant schemes (eg. CashBack for Communities).
- Area Associations will be supported continuously to develop their services to members, ensuring that they and the Youth Scotland Network is the ‘go to’ organisation for community based youth organisations.
- The role of community based youth work will be promoted, recognised and valued at local and national level.
AMBITION 4
Partnerships and services that are more innovative, dynamic, responsive and flexible.

Outcomes:
Youth Scotland will:

- reach out to a broader range of partners to extend, where mutually beneficial, the range of resources and expertise available to increase and improve our youth work services.
- extend the volume of services available through mutually beneficial partnership working to enable more young people, workers and groups to benefit from our services.

Activities:
- Youth Scotland will work in partnership to develop the CashBack for Communities Small Grants Scheme aimed at voluntary run youth groups.
- Youth Scotland will develop a team of free-lance staff who will enhance and add value to Youth Scotland’s small core staff team and increase our ability to respond to new challenges.
- Youth Scotland will seek to be part of or to lead emerging new themes for youth work.
- Youth Scotland will develop new partnerships at local and national levels to enhance our programmes and services.
- Youth Scotland will continue to develop strategic partnership working with Scottish Government and with Education Scotland.
- New partnerships will be developed to support workforce development.
- Youth Scotland will collaborate with other youth work awards providers to lead the Awards Network in Scotland.
Sustainability
AMBITION 5
To be a sustainable organisation that is well placed to deliver on its strategy for young people.

Outcomes:
Youth Scotland will have:

• an effective Board of Trustees that practices and promotes good governance and leadership.
• a knowledgeable, committed and experienced Executive Team.
• a diverse range of income streams.
• a level of reserves compatible with the medium and long-term needs of the charity.
• improved ability to meet the needs of our members and stakeholders.

Activities:
• Youth Scotland will maintain a strong Board, drawing trustees from a range of backgrounds with skills and experience that enables us to reflect and meet challenges, and identify opportunities, in the environment in which we operate.
• Youth Scotland will ensure that all risk register controls are well managed.
• Youth Scotland will continue to maintain a low turnover of staff and high employee satisfaction level by implementing appropriate external quality improvement frameworks.
• Youth Scotland will develop a strategy for income generation leading to sustained funding through a diverse and growing range of sources.
• Youth Scotland will engage with all our stakeholders, especially young people, in consultation processes so that their views and needs are valued and considered.
• Youth Scotland will review our evaluation systems and develop an enhanced evaluation framework.
In ‘Changing Lives through Youth Work’ our major focus is to:

- Support more young people to aspire, challenge themselves, have a wide range of experiences and attain formal or informal recognition. We want to create ways for youth work to enable more young people to demonstrate what they have achieved personally and within their communities.

- Develop a new award for the under 10 age group.

- Promote new opportunities for all young people, including those with disabilities, to develop and contribute. These might be in a wide range of areas such as their local communities, through sport, the environment, the media or cultural activities, in Scotland or internationally. In assessing our role in each project, we will analyse how each one helps young people to aspire, to challenge themselves, to gain experiences and to achieve.

- Create more leadership opportunities to increase youth employability in partnership with our membership.

- Invest in opportunities for youth workers’ continuing development as practitioners.

- Increase our membership to reach more young people across Scotland.

- Work with new partners across sectors who share our values.

- Raise Youth Scotland's profile to help secure individual and corporate investment.
Youth Scotland values the development of community based youth work as an essential approach to the delivery of our work. Our strategy for 2016 – 2019 has been developed through consultation with our membership, including the network of Area Associations and other stakeholders.

We provide opportunities to enable over 64,000 young people to aspire and achieve. Through this work led by nearly 8,000 youth workers, young people will be confident, resilient and ready to reach their potential.

The principle of engaging with young people in decision making locally, regionally and nationally, providing them with the skills to be more effective contributors, and encouraging them to take leadership roles is central to what Youth Scotland promotes as core principles of quality youth work. This right for young people to participate and be involved in decisions that affect them, enshrined in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, is practiced and evidenced in all our programmes and services.
Defining Youth Work

Youth Scotland works within the sector’s shared definition of ‘youth work’ developed by the *Step It Up* \(^1\) report and adopted in the *Statement on the Nature and Purpose of Youth Work* \(^2\):

Youth work in Scotland is defined as having three key features that set it apart from other types of work with young people:

- young people choose to participate.
- the work must build from where young people are.
- youth work recognises the young person and the youth worker as partners in a learning process.

With these three features in mind, the purpose of youth work is as follows:

- build self-esteem and self-confidence.
- develop the ability to manage personal and social relationships.
- create learning and develop new skills.
- encourage positive group atmospheres.
- build the capacity of young people to consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control.
- develop a ‘world view’ which widens horizons and invites social commitment.

Nationally Agreed Youth Work Outcomes

- Young people are confident, resilient and optimistic for the future.
- Young people manage personal, social and formal relationships.
- Young people create, describe and apply their learning and skills.
- Young people participate safely and effectively in groups.
- Young people consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control.
- Young people express their voice and make social commitment.
- Young people’s perspectives are broadened through new experiences and thinking.

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\(^1\) *Step it Up... Charting Young People’s Progress*, (2003,) University of Strathclyde

\(^2\) *Nature and Purpose of Youth Work*, (2009), YouthLink Scotland
External Environment

National Youth Work Strategy 2014 – 2019
This strategic plan will work within the context and time frame of the national youth work strategy 2014 - 2019, “Our ambitions for improving the life chances of young people in Scotland”.

The five ambitions of the national youth work strategy are ones that Youth Scotland is fully committed to. They are:

- ensure Scotland is the best place to grow up in.
- put young people at the heart of policy.
- recognise the value of youth work.
- build workforce capacity.
- ensure we measure our impact.

Strategic Guidance for Community Learning and Development
This guidance renews the Scottish Government’s commitment to CLD and makes clear that CLD should empower people, individually and collectively, to make positive changes in their lives and in their communities. We believe youth work has a vital contribution to make to these principles.

Scotland Performs – the National Performance Framework
Many of the Scottish Government’s sixteen national outcomes will be directly achieved by the development of young people. In creating better employment opportunities, giving children the best start in life, improving the life chances of young people at risk, and growing strong and supportive communities.

Our work will contribute directly to five of the outcomes:

- **Number 4**: Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors, and responsible citizens.
- **Number 6**: We live longer, healthier lives.
- **Number 8**: We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
- **Number 9**: We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.
- **Number 11**: We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
Youth Scotland Working Within the Policy Context

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)
Curriculum for Excellence
Developing the Young Workforce – Scotland’s youth employment strategy
Closing the Attainment Gap
16+ Learning, Activity Agreements
Opportunities for All
More Choices, More Chances
Equally Well
Youth Arts Strategy, “Time to Shine”
Youth Sport Strategy, “Growing Children, and Young People a Sporting Chance”
Active Girls Strategy
Learning for Sustainability
Young people’s involvement
Statement of Ambition for Adult Learning
Play Strategy
Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act
Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013
Youth Scotland policies
Youth Scotland's Strategic Plan for 2016 - 2019