Bridging the Gap:
Improving Outcomes for Scotland’s Young People through School and Youth Work Partnerships

www.LTScotland.org.uk  Learning and Teaching Scotland
Youth work can enhance the life of any young person. It can contribute positively to young people’s personal growth and to the growth of the communities they live in.

Moving Forward: A Strategy for Improving Young People’s Chances through Youth Work (Scottish Government, 2007)
Forewords

Foreword from Bernard McLeary

This publication celebrates the range of school and youth work partnerships in Scotland. As the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence moves forward, we need to continue to develop and strengthen the links between our schools and the other learning providers that give Scotland's young people access to more choices and opportunities and so improve outcomes for them.

Youth work provides opportunities for young people to develop personally through community-based activities, and recognises, celebrates and builds on the achievements of young people through their participation in these activities.

Youth workers have a broad range of skills and are able to engage with young people in ways that build their confidence and enable them to develop as effective contributors, responsible citizens and successful lifelong learners. Youth workers can build positive relationships with young people and offer personal support. They help young people to develop skills such as teamwork, leadership and problem solving, and promote young people’s achievements; this can have a positive impact on young people’s learning across the curriculum and in other areas of their lives.

Schools engaged in partnerships value the knowledge of communities that youth workers bring and their ability to connect to the home and to other partner agencies. There need to be increased opportunities for teachers and youth workers to train and work together, leading to a greater understanding of roles, and a sharing of valuable knowledge and expertise and of aspirations for the young people.

Learning and Teaching Scotland recognises the significant contribution that school and youth work partnerships can make in supporting young people for life in the 21st century, and will continue to support developments.

Jim Sweeney,
Chief Executive,
YouthLink Scotland

The national agency for youth work

The new national framework Valuing Young People: Principles and Connections to Support Young People to Achieve their Potential (Scottish Government, 2009) recognises the significant role that youth work can have in delivering the national outcome of young people who are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

Curriculum for Excellence gives us a great opportunity to develop partnerships and improve outcomes for Scotland’s young people. Youth work in and around schools provides many options, choices and opportunities for young people. Youth workers work in partnership with young people and build relationships starting from where young people are.

It is crucial that we all keep the needs of young people at the centre of our approaches. We need to work together to support young people to become motivated, confident and achieving. We should prevent young people from moving through the system without recognition of their qualities and achievements. ‘It takes a whole village to raise a child’ according to the African proverb, and we cannot expect our schools alone to educate our young people: we need professionals with different skills, knowledge and expertise to work in partnership to meet the holistic needs of young people.

Youth work in schools has a complementary role to community-based youth work. It is important that we continue to provide high quality youth work at times when young people are not at school, and in places where young people can feel safe and can interact and build positive relationships with youth workers, volunteers and peer educators.

This publication is timely and welcome. YouthLink Scotland is committed to working with Learning and Teaching Scotland to support further developments.
Bridging the Gap is primarily for school staff and youth workers who, together, can deliver better opportunities and outcomes for young people in Scotland. This publication sets the policy context and offers examples of practice to encourage youth work and school partnerships across Scotland to deliver more opportunities to engage and inspire young people. It is intended to complement the ‘sharing practice’ case studies exemplifying the youth work contribution to Curriculum for Excellence on Learning and Teaching Scotland’s website.

This report is based on national development work carried out in response to the Scottish Government’s national youth work strategy Moving Forward: A Strategy for Improving Young People’s Chances through Youth Work (Scottish Government, 2007), to build and strengthen school and youth work partnerships.

The development work included identifying case studies that exemplify the contribution of youth work to Curriculum for Excellence and improving overall outcomes for young people.

Curriculum for Excellence aims to enable all young people to become confident individuals, successful learners, effective contributors and responsible citizens. In each curriculum area, the experiences and outcomes embody these four capacities and the related attributes and capabilities. Experiences and outcomes describe national expectations of learning and progression. All learning providers need to be familiar with these experiences and outcomes to maximise their contributions to preparing young people for their futures and the highest possible levels of achievement.
Fundamental changes in education are required, firmly focused on the needs of young people. Responsibility for these changes extends beyond schools and involves all those working with children and young people in Scotland. *Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3* (Scottish Government, 2008) recognises that the curriculum is all the experiences planned for children and young people throughout their education, ‘wherever they are being educated’. Learning partnerships involving all providers will help provide a coherent package of learning and support to meet young people’s individual needs and respond to local needs and circumstances; this will help prepare young people with the knowledge and skills for learning, life and work that they require to take their place in modern society and contribute to the economy.

The case studies outlined in this report are drawn from a range of practice, both in schools and in communities, and will be informative to local authorities, headteachers and other teaching staff, community learning and development providers, the voluntary youth work sector and other partners including Skills Development Scotland, health services, and further and higher education. Scottish education is being transformed to meet the demands of the 21st century. Schools, youth workers and other partners must ensure that young people are given the best possible choices and chances through the development of effective partnerships.

The inspection model of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) for schools and learning communities provides a framework to evaluate the impact of partnership approaches to improving outcomes for young people. *Improving Scottish Education: A Report by HMIE on Inspection and Review 2005–2008* (HMIE, 2009) recognises the need for local authorities to formalise partnership arrangements.

‘School efforts are extended by activities offered by Community Learning and Development providers. If the ambitious aspirations set out for young people in Scotland are to be realised, action is required to formalise such arrangements.’


This report provides an overview of the current policy context, a guide to building partnerships, and an insight into practice nationally; it also presents a range of case studies and highlights the potential impact of effective school and youth work partnerships.

‘Learning must be exciting, inspirational and relevant; it must equip each young person with the skills and self-confidence to achieve their full potential.’

Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Scottish Government
Valuing Young People: Principles and Connections to Support Young People to Achieve their Potential (Scottish Government, 2009) provides a helpful tool for those working with young people to ensure connections across services. Organisations across the public and voluntary sector, as well as young people, have shaped Valuing Young People.

Valuing Young People highlights a set of common principles for local and national organisations across sectors to follow. These principles include partners working together to:

- deliver services that reflect the reality of young people’s lives by supporting them through key life transitions, ensuring they are informed and boosting their aspirations

- work with local partners to address barriers and gaps so that young people are not excluded from opportunities or limited in their capacity to achieve their full potential

- recognise and promote young people’s positive contributions to their communities and as national and global citizens

- involve young people at an early stage, along with the voluntary sector and other relevant partners, in developing services and opportunities in the context of community priorities.

These principles should underpin policy developments and national delivery. For local partners, particularly those involved in Community Planning Partnerships, the principles should influence Single Outcome Agreements and provide a reference for local service delivery. The outcome should be better services for young people, providing better value and improved long-term outcomes.

The national youth work strategy Moving Forward: A Strategy for Improving Young People’s Chances through Youth Work (Scottish Government, 2007) highlights the youth work contribution to strategic initiatives such as Curriculum for Excellence, Getting it Right for Every Child and More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2006). Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy (Scottish Government, 2007) and 16+ Learning Choices: First Step Activity and Financial Support (Scottish Government, 2008) also reinforce the importance of the youth work contribution to equipping young people with skills for learning, life and work.

‘Ensuring that Curriculum for Excellence provides vocational learning and the employability skills needed for the world of work and its foundation for skills development throughout life.’

Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy (Scottish Government, 2007)

The More Choices, More Chances strategy aims to reduce the number of young people not in employment, education or training by supporting them into positive and sustained destinations.
Skills for Scotland reflects the Scottish Government’s aim that all young people stay in learning to improve their long-term prospects of being employed. Consistent with that ambition, Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3 (Scottish Government, 2008) introduces the notion of entitlements for young people, including their entitlement to a coherent curriculum from age 3 to 18 and opportunities to move into positive and sustained destinations.

16+ Learning Choices will ensure that from December 2010 all young people receive an appropriate and relevant offer of learning in advance of their school leaving date. While this offer is universal, there will be a particular focus on meeting the needs of vulnerable young people through a partnership approach with inputs from a variety of learning providers, including youth work.

Learning and training providers should work in partnership to provide quality learning and vocational opportunities. Youth work approaches support partnership practice and a partnership ethos through active networks across all strands of education and learning. Youth work links to both the early years and skills strategies, providing a key strand of lifelong learning.

The National Performance Framework, created as part of the Scottish Government’s Spending Review in 2007, includes national outcomes that focus on children and young people where youth work can make a contribution. The national outcomes describe what the Government wants to achieve. In 2008, representatives of national and local government signed a concordat that committed both to moving towards Single Outcome Agreements for all 32 of Scotland’s councils. These agreements set out how each council will work towards improving national outcomes for local people in a way that reflects local circumstances and priorities.

The commitment to improve the learning experience for children and young people includes the development and implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence and the national outcome that ‘our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens’.

The National Performance Framework contains indicators and targets relating to the education, health and welfare of young people, outlined within local authorities’ Single Outcome Agreements with the Scottish Government.

Youth work has an important contribution to make in achieving the national outcomes, including that:

- we are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation
- our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens
- our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
- we live longer, healthier lives
- we have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk
- we live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger
- we have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.

‘Staff in community learning and development are also making an increasingly effective contribution to the life chances of some of our most vulnerable young people.’


All of these policy developments reinforce the need for a strengthening of partnerships and recognition of the contribution of youth work to achieving the positive outcomes sought.
Building Partnerships

‘An excellent school actively seeks out partnerships with external agencies with the potential to be most productive in helping to provide imaginative contexts, learning experiences and opportunities for personal development which meet the needs of individual pupils and groups in all areas of the curriculum.’

The Journey to Excellence, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE)

Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3 (Scottish Government, 2008) highlights partnership working as an important element in curriculum planning, with the framework for the curriculum emphasising the need for each young person to experience a coherent curriculum which will enable them to develop their skills and attributes and reach the highest possible levels of achievement. This implies the need for partners to plan learning activities that will help young people meet the challenges they may encounter.

The national development work looked closely at partnership working between schools, youth work and other partners. Case studies have demonstrated the critical importance of leadership at both strategic and operational level in developing and sustaining partnerships.

In developing partnerships, partners have found that the following elements contribute to success:

- strong and effective leadership at both strategic and operational level
- clear understanding of roles, responsibilities and contribution, through partnership or service level agreements
- shared aspirations for young people
- the ability to fulfil commitments and achieve agreed targets
- effective systems for communication and sharing and recording information
- mutual respect and trust
- joint planning, regular reviews of progress and effective systems for self-evaluation
- responsiveness to changing circumstances
- flexibility in ways of working
- engagement with all stakeholders, including young people and parents
- opportunities for joint training and development
- secure and reliable funding streams that result in sustainable programmes.

‘The professionals within the partnership develop good communication, thus can offer a broad and more holistic service to the young people most in need of support, and reduce those who slip into crisis situations’

Headteacher

Sanquhar Academy has worked closely with community learning and development partners to provide programmes for the young people most in need of support. Good working relationships with other young people’s support agencies have also been established.

‘The key elements of the partnership are good communication, early identification of pupils requiring support, events and activities developed in collaboration with young people, access to funding, and mutual trust and respect.’

Headteacher

School staff recognised the value of young people being able to access a wide variety of opportunities both within school and in their local communities as a result of partnership working.

‘We have seen the young people developing increased confidence. They have also become effective contributors through their interaction with the youth forum and various community groups.’

Headteacher
Partnerships with colleges, youth work services, the voluntary sector and employers will open up a wide range of motivating choices based upon the experiences and outcomes to meet the needs of all young people.

*Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3* (Scottish Government, 2008)
School and youth work partnerships differ across the country, with a variety of models in place. These may be part of a strategic approach built into local authority planning systems or based on either a formal or informal agreement at local level.

School-based youth workers may be employed by a school or allocated by the local authority on a temporary or permanent basis. In some cases, local authorities have appointed youth workers as part of a pilot programme. Some authorities have entered into service-level or partnership agreements with youth work providers from the voluntary sector to provide services for young people. School staff and youth workers recognise the value of working directly with young people within schools.

‘One of the advantages of being based in the school is the scope for informal contact with young people. Workers build up relationships with young people, disseminate information on youth services and activities, and pick up on needs or concerns the young people have.’

School-based youth worker

Headteachers and others are becoming aware of the range of skills and expertise that youth workers can contribute, which includes: the delivery of curriculum programmes including ASDAN and other awards, volunteering opportunities and personal development programmes; enhancing personal support; supporting transitions; promoting the voice of young people and young people’s meaningful involvement in decision making; contributing to improved learning and teaching; and the use of youth work approaches in improving engagement with young people, families, other partners and communities.

‘Having a full-time youth worker has given the pupils a voice and made them feel the school is listening to them. It’s good for the school, because we have someone who can help and do things in a way that we are not able to do.’

Headteacher

‘We also benefit from the community-based network available to youth workers, and from continuing professional development activities that they have carried out for our staff.’

Headteacher

In addition to school-based work, we must also be aware of the need for and value of community based youth work. Community-based youth work can provide young people with learning activities which support their personal development and enable them to develop their confidence. Young people can have access to a variety of quality learning experiences and opportunities to contribute effectively within their communities through involvement in volunteering, youth forums and other activities.
Youth workers often develop positive relationships with young people and build useful knowledge of the needs of young people and the issues that have an impact on their lives and communities. By sharing information and communicating with school staff and other partners, youth workers can help support young people.

‘The street work that the youth workers carry out has offered support beyond the school day and has directed many into clubs and other support networks within the community. It has also provided intelligence for us to support our young people better.’

Headteacher

Schools working closely with youth projects and agencies based in their communities are often able to provide more vulnerable young people with access to enhanced personal support and development programmes. Youth workers focus on the needs of young people who may have opted out of formal schooling, and through positive intervention may assist them to return to school or move on successfully to further learning, employment or volunteering opportunities.

‘We enjoy great benefits from the informal contact with youth workers that the young people have had in their communities.’

Headteacher

Youth workers often work effectively with other partners, including health services, Skills Development Scotland, the police, fire and rescue services, and further and higher education providers. This can result in positive outcomes for young people, with a number of partners recognising the value of a youth work approach in working with young people.

‘Our staff work closely with youth work partners to deliver services to young people. As a result, our staff have benefited enormously from exposure to new and effective ways of engaging with young people on their terms and in their communities. By adopting youth work approaches, our staff are developing new ways of working, which is helping us deliver our services more effectively.’

Senior executive, Skills Development Scotland

Community learning and development providers can build positive links between schools and home, and encourage greater parental involvement in young people’s learning. A number of local authorities employ staff with a community learning and development or youth work background as home school partnership officers, home school link workers or parent support workers.

Community learning and development providers and partners can engage with parents to provide support and encourage their participation in family learning, adult learning and literacy programmes. As a result, parents can become more confident in their contact with schools and better able to support their children with their learning, and may take up opportunities for re-engaging in learning. Raising parents’ aspirations often has a positive impact in increasing the confidence and motivation of their children.

‘Much of the confidence the young people have gained is down to the activities generated through the home-school partnership officer and her ability to link with so many programmes and to liaise with partners beyond the school. The liaison and communication between school and parents is highly effective.’

Headteacher
Case Studies

This section of the report highlights, through a selection of case studies, the opportunities presented through effective school and youth work partnerships in improving outcomes for young people. These case studies have been identified from practice visits to local authorities. The case studies demonstrate that youth work and wider partnerships can make a significant contribution to:

- supporting transitions
- improving health and wellbeing
- developing literacy and numeracy
- promoting and recognising achievements
- community-based learning
- promoting citizenship.

In addition to these areas, youth work can provide opportunities for young people to develop their interests, skills and knowledge in arts and cultural activities, sports and outdoor learning. Youth work has an important role to play particularly in the senior phase of the curriculum, where there is a continuing emphasis on health and wellbeing, including physical activity and opportunities for personal achievement, service to others and practical experience of the world of work.

"Every child and young person is entitled to skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work with a continuous focus on literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and that these skills are embedded across all curriculum areas"

Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3 (Scottish Government, 2008)

Supporting transitions

Youth work can play a key role in supporting young people during particular stages in their lives. This support may include providing programmes for young people making the transition from primary to secondary school and from school into employment, training and further and higher education.

Programmes may be delivered by youth workers or in partnership with other agencies, and are often delivered out of school or during holidays. During these times, youth workers can build positive relationships, which can continue as young people move through education, and provide a source of support and guidance. Youth workers can also encourage young people to become involved in community-based learning programmes and in activities that promote active citizenship.

Choosing Success, MCMC Group, Girvan, South Ayrshire Council

Key partners included Skills Development Scotland, local schools, community learning and development and Ayr College. Partners worked together to identify relevant and appropriate opportunities to enable young people to access education, employment or training. Through improved co-ordination of services, support was targeted when required. Systems were put in place for tracking and monitoring progress and sharing information on outcomes.
This resulted in:

- greater choice and flexibility for young people in accessing further education courses
- the provision of an ASDAN employability qualification as part of the school curriculum
- increased numbers of young people accessing college courses
- identification of good practice within the local authority.

‘I really liked going to college. I wouldn’t have gone back to school after the summer. I can’t believe that I have been made class representative for my course.’
Young person

‘We valued the assistance and expertise we received as we tried, together, to provide solutions and strategies for young people, giving them more choices and chances when they leave school.’
Depute headteacher

‘The willingness to work together was evident and this led to better outcomes for local young people. There was an increase in the number of young people accessing college provision as a direct result.’
MCMC Group

**Bridging Support Group and Movin’ On Up, Peterhead Academy, Aberdeenshire Council**

The Bridging Support Group was run in partnership with the school and the Community Learning and Development Service.

The group offered personal support to Primary 7 pupils experiencing difficulties in their transition to secondary school, identified by headteachers and the Joint Assessment Team. Parents were involved and kept informed of progress.

Youth workers established positive relationships with the young people prior to the young people’s visit to the academy in June.

The young people were encouraged to take part in Movin’ On Up during the first week of the summer holidays. This was delivered by a multi-agency group of staff including community learning and development workers, teachers, social workers, police, health and voluntary agencies. Senior pupils also played a key role as peer mentors.

The programme covered a range of activities to develop young people’s confidence, their communication skills and ability to work in teams.

Almost all young people reported that they made new friends and felt more confident about the transition. Senior pupils were also positive about their role, which had helped develop their leadership and team-working skills. Parents and friends attended a presentation at the end, which helped parents to get to know staff and feel more comfortable about the transition.

‘The informal setting helped group leaders develop partnership working, including a greater understanding of roles and responsibilities.’
Headteacher
Improving health and wellbeing

Curriculum for Excellence emphasises the central importance of health and wellbeing to learning, indicating that planned opportunities should be provided for young people to develop their life skills such as those for independent living. All practitioners have a responsibility to develop, extend and reinforce learning in aspects of health and wellbeing.

School and youth work partnerships involve engagement with young people who may be experiencing a range of difficulties. Where young people are engaged in group work programmes, they often describe an improved ability to work as part of a team; this can lead to them being able to work better in the classroom and to improved relationships with their peers and others.

Youth work and community learning and development practitioners help address health inequality in communities. Staff and volunteers contribute to health improvement through, for example, encouraging young people to address health issues such as sexual health, drugs and alcohol misuse and teenage pregnancy.

Young people have access to good quality information, advice and guidance from youth workers. In addition, Young Scot provides a significant resource through its website.

Youth workers have an important role in enhancing personal support for young people within the school environment and communities. A youth worker can provide an additional trusting adult who often makes the difference between a young person wanting to come to school and not wanting to. Many young people describe the development of confidence and self-esteem as the most important impact of their engagement with youth workers.

‘The work carried out by youth work in school impacted most on developing confident individuals. Many young people spoke of raised self esteem, better social skills and increased confidence in facing situations both within and outwith school.’

Headteacher

Peer education for smoking cessation, YMCA Bellshill, North Lanarkshire Council

YMCA staff and volunteers delivered weekly sessions for groups of young people, in partnership with Bellshill Academy and its health nurse, to address issues including relationships, smoking, self esteem, body image, and mental health and wellbeing. Peer education was an integral part of this as young people learned to support each other, share issues and concerns, problem solve and work as a team. A variety of methods were used to encourage young people to stop smoking, such as preventative workshops and one-to-one work.

‘My confidence came out and I have more faith in myself and my school work than I had before starting work here.’

‘My school recognised the learning from this and gave me time to work with the YMCA.’

Peer educators

‘Smoking is one of the major health risks to all young people. Running these groups in the school gives the young people the best possible support and health advice on how to stop. I am totally supportive of this excellent model of partnership working.’

Rector
Health Bus, Perth and Kinross Council

The Health Bus initiative involved a partnership of health services, local authority youth services and schools. The bus visited local secondary schools at lunchtimes and provided an informal approach to engaging young people on issues such as smoking, alcohol and drugs, and sexual health and relationships. Staff used this engagement as an opportunity to consult with young people, seeking their views on issues that have an impact on their lives, and to distribute Young Scot information.

‘Working with schools was an important part of the work we did. The partnership led to closer working relationships enabling us to provide a better service. The subjects we dealt with didn’t always suit a schools setting, and youth workers provided health information and advice in an informal way.’
Youth Work Services Manager

‘In terms of sexual health and relationships, we have trained teachers, youth workers and health staff to the same level.’
Community Health Partnership Officer

Breakfast club, Royston Wardieburn Community Centre, City of Edinburgh Council

Community learning and development staff worked in partnership with two primary schools to provide support to young people experiencing difficulty in attending school. Youth workers collected participants from home and brought them to the community centre, where they received a healthy breakfast, assistance with their homework and personal support.

Participation led to young people building their confidence and self-esteem, developing their ICT skills, adopting healthier life styles, and building their resilience and independent living skills. Youth workers also helped to build links between home and school.

Information sharing, communication and joint planning and evaluation were crucial to the success of the partnership. Youth workers alerted teaching staff to any issues affecting the young people, and encouraged young people to take part in other programmes run at the community centre.

‘I can talk more openly to different people.’
‘My attendance has improved.’
‘I’m more confident among my peers.’
Young people

‘I had two young people attend and their attendance and timekeeping improved. I also noticed a marked difference in confidence in them. A nice start to the day with a good breakfast and positive encounters made a very positive difference to the young people at school.’
Teacher

Mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of young people are essential preconditions for successful learning.
The Journey to Excellence, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE)
Developing literacy and numeracy

Curriculum for Excellence identifies literacy and numeracy as foundations for all aspects of learning, and for this reason all practitioners working with young people have a responsibility to develop and extend young people’s literacy and numeracy skills across all aspects of learning. Literacy and numeracy skills provide access to the wider curriculum and increase opportunities in life and work.

‘A strong focus on literacy and numeracy is essential: all children and young people require these skills to gain access to learning and to succeed in life.’

Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3 (Scottish Government, 2008)

RADi-cal programme, Garnock Academy, North Ayrshire Council

This was a 12-week-long accredited programme which used radio to address the literacy and numeracy needs of targeted young people. It was delivered by college and community learning and development staff and aimed to:

- build confidence and improve self-esteem
- develop skills in production, writing and recording
- stimulate, challenge and increase motivation
- improve literacy and numeracy
- develop skills and attributes in preparation for work and further education.

Skills Development Scotland staff provided a session on career opportunities and training on interview techniques. Individual learning plans were used to encourage young people to reflect on their progress and the outcomes of their learning.

‘It was great because you were able to do your show on things you were interested in. Mine was rally driving.’

Young person

As a result of their participation, young people developed their confidence, improved their attendance at school, developed their literacy and other skills, and increased their motivation to learn. A group of young people agreed to set up a school radio station, undertake training and act as peer educators to train other young people.

‘The course went very well, with a positive response from the young people. We received excellent feedback from both young people and teachers. Attendance was up and the pupils progressed well.’

Lecturer
Financial awareness course and Youth Achievement Award, Lossiemouth High School, Moray Council

The course involved community learning and development staff delivering a financial awareness course to S3 and S4 pupils. The course provided a positive learning experience, helping young people develop life skills and make effective transitions post school. Young people gained Youth Achievement Awards in recognition of their achievements.

‘The youth workers made the course very lively and participative. They’re very good at listening and communicating with the young people, and they engaged in a respectful manner as well as working hard with them.’

Depute headteacher

Partners recognised a difference in the confidence of the young people as a result of their involvement. Young people have also become more effective learners in other areas of the curriculum. Teamwork and problem-solving skills have been developed through a range of group work methods. Contact and building relationships with the young people continued through detached work and community-based youth work.

‘The young people have really engaged with this course and have learned a lot, which they have taken into the community and back home to their families.’

Depute headteacher

Out of school hours learning supported study clubs, West Dunbartonshire Council

Community learning and development staff provided a volunteer tutoring service designed to improve motivation, raise self-esteem and help participants to become more successful learners. Five clubs across the authority offered young people tuition in literacy from a volunteer tutor, and sessions also included an arts workshop.

Teachers, social workers, educational psychologists and other agencies identified participants. The aim of the clubs was to encourage young people to develop a positive attitude to learning through positive reinforcement, praise and recognition of achievements. The focus of the input was agreed with the literacy staff in partnership with schools, parents and young people, and a learning plan was used to help map individual progress.

The supported study clubs were recognised by schools and parents as having an impact in developing confidence, improving relationships and developing more positive attitudes to learning.

‘She has benefited from all the hard work and input from her tutor. She takes more care of her work and has pride in what she does.’

Teacher

It has given him more confidence and at home he is starting to pick up books and read them.

He is more confident to try new things and answer questions.

Parents
Promoting and recognising achievement

Recognising achievement is an integral part of Curriculum for Excellence, with young people participating in a wide range of activities that result in skills development and personal achievement. Schools, youth workers and partners are beginning to work together to develop systems to share and recognise young people’s achievements gained in learning contexts out of school.

‘All establishments need to plan to offer opportunities for achievement and to provide the support and encouragement which will enable young people to step forward to undertake activities which they find challenging.’

Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3 (Scottish Government, 2008)

Greater recognition of achievements beyond formal qualifications helps to:

- increase self esteem, improve motivation and keep young people engaged in learning
- encourage young people to reflect on their learning
- achieve the aims, values and purposes of Curriculum for Excellence – opportunities for personal achievement are planned as an integral part of the curriculum.

‘Within the youth work sector there has been considerable progress in developing awards for young people that recognise their wider achievements. In many areas, youth workers and schools are working together productively to promote and deliver wider achievement activities, and to recognise these achievements.’


A range of youth award programmes and volunteering opportunities are delivered in community-based and school settings. These include ASDAN short course awards and certificates in community volunteering, and the Duke of Edinburgh’s, John Muir, Prince’s Trust, Millennium Volunteer, and Youth Scotland’s Youth Achievement and Dynamic Youth awards. There are also nominated awards such as the Diana, Young Scot, Humanitarian Citizen and Young Quality Scot awards.

‘The curriculum should provide opportunities for personal achievement which widen young people’s horizons and develop their confidence.’

Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3 (Scottish Government, 2008)

The importance of prior learning, and the opportunities that volunteering and award programmes provide for students to develop skills and competences, is beginning to be recognised. Employers have identified ‘soft skills’ as a gap and recognise the importance of young people’s involvement in community activities in developing more effective individuals and staff teams.
'We are consistently reminded by our members that... skills such as leadership, teamwork and enterprise are the kind of qualities that young people develop through taking an active part in their local communities.'

Iain McMillan, Director CBI Scotland (from Amazing Things: A Guide to the Youth Awards in Scotland)

Curriculum for Excellence, Duke of Edinburgh's Award Pilot Programme, Dornoch Academy, Highland Council

All S3 pupils took part in the award programme demonstrating how learning and achievement in school and in the wider community can be recognised and valued.

The project emphasised the importance of joint working, strengthened the partnerships between school and community, and provided opportunities for youth workers and teachers to work together.

‘Pupils expanded their confidence and improved their skills, knowledge and experience of group work.’

Teacher

Working with the youth development worker, the school integrated the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award into its timetable using challenge and enjoyment as principles of programme design.

‘It helped us with maths, athletic skills, cooking, as well as helping us at home, and I became able to transfer my skills and help someone.’

Young person

Many developments were a result of interdisciplinary approaches and teachers becoming involved as partners. The youth development worker was an integral part of the school team, working with colleagues to remove barriers to effective learning.

Investing in Success: local leadership course, St Aidan’s High School, North Lanarkshire Council

This course was delivered by a home–school partnership officer to senior pupils. The course was part of the school timetable and developed the essential skills and attributes of leadership to support participants to become volunteer youth workers within local projects and youth groups.

The course was recommended for young people who planned to develop careers in teaching, social work, community learning and development, or nursing.

The programme included sessions on planning, organisational and management skills and was assessed using:

- accreditation of prior learning and experience
- contribution to discussions
- reflective diaries
- personal interviews
- observation and discussion.

‘The leadership programme was something unique in my personal statement for university and is something I can take with me and use in the future.’

‘I learned to speak in public and to make presentations, and this made me feel more confident.’

Young people

Increased uptake of the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award scheme, Eco-School activities and other initiatives such as Prince’s Trust and youth programmes accredited by ASDAN also have a positive impact.

Volunteer programme and Youth Achievement Award, Peterhead Academy, Aberdeenshire Council

The programme was set up when the school pupil-support team identified a group of second year boys who were disengaging from school. The school-based youth worker organised a programme which included the young people becoming involved in their community as volunteers and setting up their own enterprise projects.

The young people developed confidence, self-discipline and awareness of the needs of others; they developed planning and organisational skills and the ability to problem solve and work effectively as part of a team. As a result, they became more focused on learning and making a positive contribution to their school and to their community. Their achievements were recognised through gaining Youth Achievement Awards.

‘The young people were successful; they were learning and achieving because they were comfortable and confident with the adults they worked with.’
Principal teacher

‘The Youth Achievement Awards accredited skills that we knew young people had, but could not necessarily demonstrate through an academic qualification. For some, that will be the real difference when they go out into the world of work to be able to show vital skills that they have and that employers will want.’
Depute headteacher

A youth worker and two guidance staff trained together and co-delivered the programme, targeting young people lacking confidence and self esteem.

‘The xl programme is an integral part of what we’ve tried to do for all youngsters through a curriculum for excellence. That is engage with young people positively, motivate them, excite them about their learning and, most of all, help them achieve their fullest potential.’
Rector

Young people had opportunities to develop their skills in working within a group and giving presentations; they discussed issues including health and wellbeing. The young people participated in a number of activities out of school and developed their confidence, improved their relationships with their peers and others, and learned how to work as a team. Parents reported positively on the difference that the young people’s participation in the course made.

‘They wouldn’t have been able to stand and speak in front of their peers and adults if they hadn’t been involved in the xl programme. If it wasn’t for xl, I’d have a job getting them to come to school at all.’
Parent

Fire Reach programme in East Renfrewshire Council

This was a partnership between Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Service and secondary schools in East Renfrewshire, involving a designated youth worker.

The project aimed to meet the individual needs of young people and targeted those in S3 experiencing difficulties such as lack of confidence, poor school attendance and behavioural issues. The programmes helped young people to:

- develop teamwork and leadership skills
- improve self awareness
- build confidence
- develop communication and problem-solving skills
• build knowledge and understanding of communities and the role of fire and rescue services and other agencies

• provide awareness of health and safety and basic first aid.

Young people participated in the course from Monday to Friday and took part in a variety of training experiences to gain skills for life, work and learning. They received certificates for completing the course and for first aid, as well as being given a portfolio of achievement that included a report from the instructor, copies of their certificates and photographs.

The multi-agency approach resulted in important benefits for young people.

‘We have noticed that the young people are more confident at school and more likely to speak out in groups and be more focused on their goals.’

Pupil support teacher
Community-based learning

A youth work approach to learning in community settings can help re-engage young people in learning and improve their chances of moving successfully into work, employment and further and higher education. For young people who have found the school environment challenging, it offers an additional way of learning, with a strong focus on meeting individual needs and working in small groups.

City Base, Perth, Perth and Kinross Council

The City Base located in the centre of Perth was run by the community learning and development service and provided opportunities for young people to take up a variety of learning and volunteering opportunities in an informal setting. Youth workers worked closely with schools in the area and identified young people who were struggling or had opted out of mainstream education.

‘If a young person is not learning within a school setting, it doesn’t mean that they don’t want to learn. We have good relationships with guidance staff in local schools and work with them very successfully.’

Project manager

The youth workers made contact with young people through home visits, and negotiated opportunities with them. The focus was on developing confidence and skills for life, work and learning. The project supported young people into work, volunteering and further education. Some young people became peer educators and helped deliver a variety of community-based programmes.

‘I came as part of my work experience and was quite shy, but my confidence increased and I’ve stayed on as a volunteer.’

Young person

Flexible learning initiative, Airdrie, North Lanarkshire Council

This initiative was part of the local authority’s commitment to promoting inclusion, and targeted young people struggling within a school environment. Young people were identified and a learning package negotiated with them to meet their individual needs. Youth workers delivered learning and personal development programmes in the @HOME Youth Centre in Airdrie. The youth workers engaged positively with the young people and provided both individual and group-work activities, which developed their interests in areas including ICT and music.

‘We worked with a young person in a very informal way on his interest in music. He went back to school to take music and then on to college to study it. He’s developed a lot more confidence in himself and is a lot more outgoing. He knows where he wants to take his music, and overall it’s been a total transformation in his attitude towards everyone and in everything he does.’

Youth worker

Young people were provided with a range of options and choices, which improved their confidence and motivation. Young people were successfully encouraged to move on to work and further education opportunities.

Fairbridge, City of Edinburgh Council

Fairbridge Scotland runs programmes for young people in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee, which target young people at risk of missing out on work and further education opportunities.

The Edinburgh programme worked with young people referred by schools and other agencies. Staff worked with young people and agreed learning and support packages to meet individual needs. Young people received one-to-one support and participated in group-work programmes to develop their confidence and self esteem and skills for life, learning and work.
‘One young man had stopped attending school six months previously but, following his access course, returned to school and is now looking forward to college and working.’

Project manager

Young people were at the centre of their learning and given appropriate praise and encouragement to reach their full potential. Parents and families were involved in celebrating and acknowledging the achievements of the young people, who received accreditation through ASDAN, with their awards presented at a celebration event. Many young people successfully reached positive destinations in work, volunteering and further education as a result of their participation.

‘One of our young people recently completed his access course and has benefited enormously from this experience. I was very fortunate to attend his graduation.’

Head of Care

Callander Youth Project Compass for Life programme, McLaren High School, Callander, Stirling Council

Compass for Life provided a support service for young people attending McLaren High School and was delivered by Callander Youth Project. The programme enhanced curriculum opportunities by providing a range of personal development and work experience programmes which developed skills for life, learning and work. Support was provided in post-school transition with a Getting Ready for Work programme.

The youth work team negotiated learning programmes with young people which highlighted individual targets. Young people engaged in a variety of programmes including Duke of Edinburgh and Youth Achievement Awards, volunteering, work experience and health and wellbeing programmes.

‘...when young people go back to school, they are achieving there too. Their attendance has improved, they perform better in class, they are sitting exams and progressing in school.’

Youth worker

‘My daughter took part in the Race for Life and did her Duke of Edinburgh’s Award. She has really gained in confidence, is more helpful, faces up to things, and deals with people in a way she never did before.’

Parent
Promoting citizenship

Youth work has an important part to play in developing young people as responsible and active citizens. Through training, supporting and developing pupil/student councils and local forums, for example, youth workers can help young people to influence decision making and help improve local services.

National agencies including Young Scot, the Scottish Youth Parliament and the Children's Parliament have a key role in raising awareness of opportunities for civic participation and supporting young people as effective contributors and responsible citizens. The creation of a youth opportunities database for young people by Young Scot helps signpost young people.

The Scottish Youth Parliament plays a key role in raising young people’s awareness of civic issues and offers young people opportunities to represent their peers and influence political decisions. Dialogue Youth/Young Scot initiatives can work successfully with young people to increase their meaningful involvement and representation in decision making at local level.

‘The curriculum should enable every young person to fulfil their potential through a broad range of challenging experiences which develop qualities of citizenship, enterprise and creativity.’

Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3 (Scottish Government, 2008)

Young Scot Schools Connections Project, North Ayrshire Council

This programme engaged with all secondary schools in North Ayrshire and supported a nominated teacher and groups of Young Scot volunteers to implement a youth information, active citizenship action plan based on the individual needs of each school.

The volunteers were experienced in engaging with young people in schools and the wider community, and they gathered information through consultations, focus groups and via the Young Scot website. This information was used to create materials and resources on a range of topics relevant to young people, including a DVD on drug use and an alcohol information guide covering peer pressure, legislation, first aid and support agencies. As a result, young people were assisted to make informed choices and become more active and responsible citizens.

‘Through my involvement in Young Scot, I have gained many life skills. I have received my Young Quality Scot Award and Millennium Volunteer Award. I am now a modern apprentice with Young Scot. I am currently going through my SVQ Level 3 in Youth Work and in March 2010 I will go to university to study community learning and development.’

Young person
‘Young Scot Schools Connections opened up a whole new part of my life. I really enjoyed being involved. It benefits others in school and the local area.’

Young person

Borders Youth Health Forum, Scottish Borders Council

The forum provided young people with an opportunity to influence the development and delivery of local health services. The forum was supported through a partnership between Dialogue Youth, NHS Borders and Borders Voluntary Youth Work Forum.

Young people had regular meetings with health staff to discuss improvements and had been actively involved in a number of projects. Projects had included the production of a DVD to help inform young people about health services, their rights and entitlements, a DVD to train healthcare staff on young people’s concerns about accessing health provision, and a project to raise young people’s awareness of mental health and wellbeing issues through a roadshow and the production of information packs.

Young people planned to expand the number of forums and to align them to school clusters. This linked to the strategic approach of the council and its partners to promoting young people’s engagement and participation in planning.

‘We want to set up a local health forum tied to schools to give a local health perspective.’

Dialogue Youth worker

Citizenship activities, such as youth forums or youth conferences, often result in young people taking more active roles in their communities and advocating on behalf of other young people.

The Impact

Effective school and youth work partnerships can lead to benefits for young people, schools, the wider community and employers. The benefits of effective partnerships include the following.

For young people:
- builds self-confidence
- improves health and wellbeing
- develops skills for learning, life and work
- helps develop literacy and numeracy skills
- increases motivation and enthusiasm
- helps thinking about the future and assists with transitions
- develops openness to new thinking and ideas
- builds relationships
- enhances employability skills
- increases knowledge and awareness of diversity and inclusion
- provides opportunities for achievement, including access to national awards
- increases participation both in school and community life.

For schools:
- improves motivation and interest of young people in learning
- extends curriculum options and choices
- improves attendance and behaviour
- reduces exclusions
- improves health and wellbeing
- improves relationships with staff and peers
- improves engagement with young people through youth work approaches
- enhances personal support
- supports transitions through and beyond school
- increases choices and opportunities in and out of school
- enhances learning and teaching styles
- enhances young people’s voice
- improves home and community links.

For communities and employers:
- provides opportunities for young people to contribute through volunteering
- supports young people to address and influence issues in their communities
- addresses health inequalities
- improves relationships between young people and adults
- enhances the voice of young people in community planning and decision making.
Moving Forward

This report has highlighted the opportunities to improve outcomes for Scotland’s young people through building effective partnerships. In moving forward, consideration should be given to:

- developing skills in leading partnerships built into initial training and continuing professional development
- establishing formal partnership arrangements between learning providers to improve the co-ordination and delivery of local services and make best use of resources
- developing effective systems within local authorities to further develop, gather, record, celebrate, recognise and accredit young people’s achievements
- developing shared understanding of the intended outcomes of learning for all young people, and planning jointly to ensure that young people achieve to the highest possible levels
- providing opportunities for teachers and youth workers to train, share knowledge and expertise, and plan and deliver programmes together
- placing young people at the centre of their learning and promoting their meaningful engagement in decision making
- ensuring that young people experience a curriculum that is coherent, with each contribution reinforcing the others
- ensuring that strategic and operational planning highlights the youth work contribution to achieving national outcomes, with a particular focus on Curriculum for Excellence and More Choices, More Chances.

‘Community Learning and Development Managers Scotland is fully committed to taking forward this key policy area and recognises the importance of this publication at a crucial time in Scottish education. We need to build on existing good practice across Scotland involving local authority youth workers, schools and the voluntary sector in the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes, while recognising the wider contributions of the youth work sector and the youth work approach in improving outcomes for young people. We recognise the contributions made by YouthLink Scotland and Learning and Teaching Scotland in taking forward this partnership initiative and look forward to working together to provide a framework for maximising the potential of our young people.’

John McKnight, Chair, Community Learning and Development Managers Scotland
Youth work adds a rich dimension to provision for young people. Youth workers bring a different skills set. It is so worthwhile for young people to be able to work with youth workers as distinct from their class teachers.

Headteacher

‘On behalf of the voluntary youth work sector in Scotland I warmly welcome this publication. It will trigger much enthusiasm amongst schools and youth work practitioners as they come together to support young people to reach their full potential. Curriculum for Excellence provides a common language and establishes shared goals for youth workers and teachers to better serve young people and provide an opportunity to embark on a journey that aspires to achieve the best for our young people.

We look forward to working with our partners in schools to take this journey forward. Our thanks must go to YouthLink Scotland and Learning and Teaching Scotland who have worked hard to take the partnership forward.’

Peter Crory, Chair, Voluntary Organisations Chief Officers Group

‘Success has come through trust among the partners. Trusting the professionalism of both sides with regular contact is crucial. I don’t see any real boundaries in terms of what we can do.’

Headteacher
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<th>Publications:</th>
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<td><strong>Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 1 – the contribution of curriculum areas</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.LTScotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/buildingthecurriculum/guidance/btc1/index.asp">www.LTScotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/buildingthecurriculum/guidance/btc1/index.asp</a></td>
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<td><strong>Getting it Right for Every Child</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.scot.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/childrensservices/girfec/programme-overview">www.scot.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/childrensservices/girfec/programme-overview</a></td>
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<td><strong>Learning and Teaching Scotland, Curriculum for Excellence, Sharing practice – Schools and youth work</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Moving Forward: A Strategy for Improving Young People’s Chances through Youth Work</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.scot.gov.uk/Publications/2007/03/08113759">www.scot.gov.uk/Publications/2007/03/08113759</a></td>
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<td><strong>Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The Journey to Excellence</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Valuing Young People: Principles and Connections to Support Young People Achieve their Potential</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.scot.gov.uk/Publications/2009/04/21153700">www.scot.gov.uk/Publications/2009/04/21153700</a></td>
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## Organisations:

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<td>YouthLink Scotland</td>
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<td>The National Agency for Youth Work</td>
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<td>@HOME Youth Centre</td>
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<td>Children’s Parliament</td>
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<td>Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)</td>
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## Award programmes:

| Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN)                  | [www.asdan.co.uk](http://www.asdan.co.uk)                   |
| Diana Award                                                                | [www.diana-award.org.uk](http://www.diana-award.org.uk)    |
| Duke of Edinburgh’s Award                                                  | [www.dofe.org](http://www.dofe.org)                        |
| Dynamic Youth Award                                                        | [www.youthscotland.org.uk/projects/dynamic-youth/dynamic-youth](http://www.youthscotland.org.uk/projects/dynamic-youth/dynamic-youth) |
Acknowledgements

Learning and Teaching Scotland, YouthLink Scotland and the Scottish Government thank all who have contributed to this report and, in particular, to the many young people who have been interviewed and who have shared their experiences with us. Thanks also to the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, Youth Scotland, Callander Youth Project, Young Scot and Renfrewshire Council for the use of their photographs.
‘We’ve seen individuals becoming confident, and I have been able to change my approach because I saw them as people who can do something successfully in other fields.’
Teacher

‘Before I started the youth project, I was starting to refuse to come to school. My teachers have commented on how well I’ve done to get back to school, become focused and actually sit six standard grades.’
Young person

‘When I got my certificate I felt good about myself, but without the help of the youth worker I wouldn’t have been able to sit the test. For someone to recognise I can do something makes me feel worth something.’
Young person

‘Before the course, every time I was asked what I wanted to do, I would say I didn’t know – but now I know. I’m confident and know what I want to be.’
Young person