

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY COUNCIL

YOUTH WORK STRATEGY

2024 – 2029



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Foreword

I am delighted to introduce Dumfries and Galloway Council's Youth Work Strategy 2024–2029. This strategy outlines the nature and purpose of Youth Work at both a local and national level, makes clear the strategic priorities and key work areas for Youth Work in our Council over the next five years and details the role of Youth Work in the delivery of services for and with young people across Dumfries and Galloway. This strategy has been developed with young people and partners from a wide range of sectors and is a reflection of local and regional needs and ambitions.

Youth Work has a significant role to play in delivering the broader vision for all Dumfries and Galloway's young people: that they are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. Youth Work opportunities can also support young people in living their lives as confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens.

Dumfries and Galloway Council's Youth Work Strategy embraces all young people, regardless of circumstance, need or issue, and should be regarded as the overarching policy for Youth Work and youth provision in the region, encompassing and informing our Council's voluntary work with young people aged 12–25.



Councillor Ian Blake,
Chair of Dumfries and Galloway Council's Communities Committee

Why Develop A Youth Work Strategy?

'Our ambition is to be a successful region, with a growing economy, based on fairness, opportunity and quality public services, where all citizens prosper. Working in partnership, with connected, healthy and sustainable communities.

The region will be the natural place to live, work, visit and invest'

Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2023 – 2028

Developing a strategy for Youth Work in Dumfries and Galloway will:

- Clarify the nature, purpose and function of Youth Work
- Define the Youth Work Offer for young people in Dumfries and Galloway
- Build upon the quality of services available for young people
- Provide a framework from which impact can be measured
- Establish a roadmap for future Youth Work provision



A one-year plan will accompany this strategy that will be updated each year to enable young people, Youth Work practitioners, partners, communities and decision makers to monitor progress made and to influence future delivery throughout the lifetime of the Youth Work Strategy.

Developing This Strategy

The Youth Work Strategy and the accompanying plan have been co-produced following engagement with young people, Youth Work practitioners, partners, Elected Members and wider stakeholders over 73 engagement sessions that took place between October 2023 and January 2024. A questionnaire to gather views was also circulated via social media and professional networks over the same period.

A steering group of young and adult volunteers from across the region was formed to co-develop the methods used during the consultation process. This group consisted of 10 young volunteers and 5 adult volunteers.

In total, 1,108 individuals have contributed their perspective, ideas and experiences to the development of this strategy.

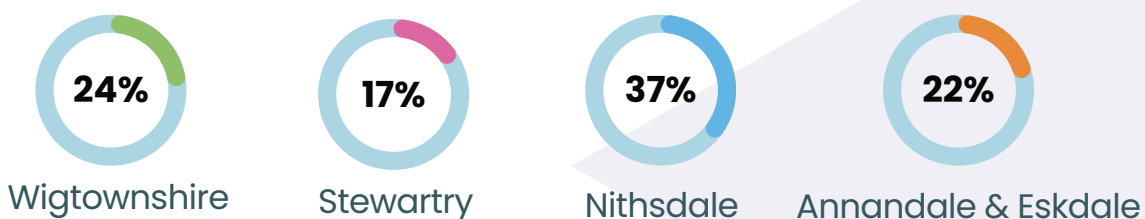
▶ 883 were young people:

- 158 identified as never having accessed Youth Work Service provisions
- 207 identified as having sporadic engagement with the Youth Work Service
- 518 identified as having regular engagement with the Youth Work Service

▶ 225 were adults:

- 55 identified as being parents or carers of young people accessing provision
- 84 identified as a Youth Work practitioners (Council and Third Sector Representatives from 12 unique organisations)
- 34 identified as being a non-Youth Work professional (Social Work, Education, NHS)
- 52 identified as 'other' this included adult volunteers, citizens, and former participants

There was a proportionate spread of young people from across Dumfries and Galloway who engaged with the consultation:



The feedback received through the consultation process has been used alongside the findings from 10,000 Voices to shape this strategy.

Introduction to Youth Work

Although this strategy is specific to Dumfries and Galloway Council's Youth Work Offer, the definitions, features and intended outcomes of Youth Work intervention and engagement have been developed by providers, practitioners and young people involved in the Youth Work sector across Scotland. This includes Public Sector providers, such as Local Authorities and Health Boards, and Third Sector Organisations such as Charities, Community Groups and Social Enterprises.

In this section we are aiming to answer the what, why, where and how of Youth Work practice, with a section dedicated to the supporting evidence for Youth Work practice.

Youth Work is a core branch of Community Learning and Development (CLD) alongside Adult Learning and Community Development. CLD is a field of professional practice that enables people and communities to identify their individual and collective goals, to engage in learning and to take action to bring about positive change.



What is Youth Work?

'Youth work is an informal education practice that supports young people's social, emotional and educational development. It can be adapted across a variety of settings, and typically engages with young people within their local community'



In Scotland, there are 3 essential and definitive features of Youth Work practice:

- ▶ Young people choose to participate
- ▶ Youth Work must build from where young people are
- ▶ Youth Work recognises the young person and youth worker as partners in a learning process

'Youth work promotes values of inclusion, mutual respect, equality and the involvement of young people in decision-making. It is about building relationships based on trust and shared understanding and using the strength of these relationships to develop a person-centred approach to the development of young people'



Young people have a wide range of rights, as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Youth Work at an international level is recognised to be a rights-respecting and rights-promoting practice that supports young people to learn about, recognise, and advance their rights.

In Dumfries and Galloway, the Youth Work Service works with young people aged 12–25 (or 11 if in secondary school) with school-based transitions work taking place with those in Primary 6 and 7.

Universal Youth Work

Universal Youth Work can be defined as open access, with an open purpose and 'curriculum'. Generally, universal provision is open to any young person within a set age range or community. The types of activities on offer through universal services will vary week to week based on the needs of the young people participating.

Universal provisions are inclusive to all young people and enables them to access non-judgemental spaces within local communities in the evenings and at weekends with their peers. For many young people, the knowledge they gain and the relationships they develop through universal services will result in them being referred or signposted to engage with targeted support organisations, services or groups where appropriate.

For many young people, Universal Youth Work is their introduction to a wider network of support, with groups in local communities acting as a gateway to regional participation initiatives, individual support and volunteering.

Targeted Youth Work

Targeted Youth Work can be defined as provision that is open to a limited number of young people based on their identity, background, circumstance, beliefs or behaviours, including provisions for young people with additional support needs and disabilities, young carers, care experienced young people, LGBT+ young people, young parents, young people at risk of offending, young people experiencing poverty and young women and young men's programmes.

Youth Work programmes and opportunities that have a specific purpose or curriculum can also be described as targeted. This includes provision with a focus on issues or experiences relevant to young people's lives, including self-esteem, relationships, self-confidence, mental health and well-being, money and budgeting, housing and welfare, drug and alcohol use, smoking and vaping, climate change, and activism and participation.

What is the difference between working with young people and Youth Work?

As there are a number of organisations, services and professionals who work with young people, this section aims to make the distinction between working with young people and working with young people using a Youth Work approach.

“When is a game of football youth work?”

If the person running the football match is doing it because they have a passion for football and wants to improve the football skills of the young players by creating a winning team and climbing the local league, then they are a football coach.

If football is the means rather than the end and the primary focus is the social and emotional development of the young person, then it is much more likely to be Youth Work.

Working as part of a team, taking on leadership roles, taking personal responsibility for their actions, understanding consequences, even thinking about gender roles and diversity issues are all elements the youth worker can explore with the young people through football. If the young people were interested in dance, drama, art, cookery or environmental issues, the worker could equally well use these as the hook too'



As mentioned earlier in the Strategy, there are 3 defining features of Youth Work practice:

- ▶ Young people choose to participate
- ▶ Youth Work must build from where young people are
- ▶ Youth Work recognises the young person and youth worker as partners in a learning process



It is not Youth Work if:

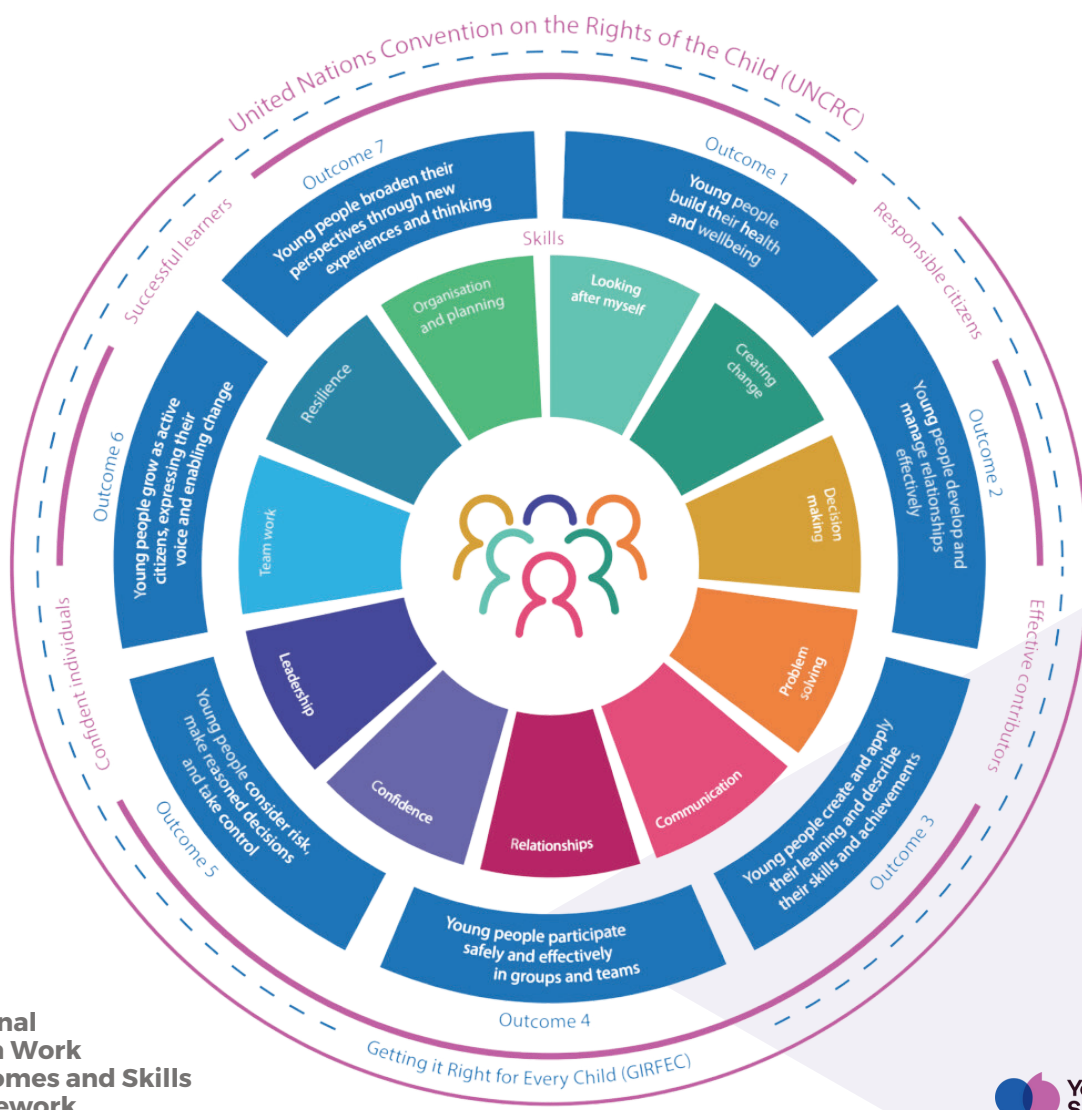
- ▶ It is a statutory intervention that the young person is required to engage with and will suffer direct consequences should they choose not to, e.g., a breach in supervision order, suspension or financial impacts
- ▶ It takes place in the home of the young person
- ▶ There are detailed reports or information sharing following discussions with the young person without their consent or knowledge, where there are no child or adult protection concerns

Why?

Young people are at the core of Youth Work delivery with the National Youth Work Outcomes and Skills Framework detailing the seven overarching impacts that Youth Work practice aims to have on young people:

1. Young people build their health and wellbeing
2. Young people develop and manage relationships effectively
3. Young people create and apply their learning and describe their skills and achievements
4. Young people participate safely and effectively in groups and teams
5. Young people consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control
6. Young people grow as active citizens, expressing their voice and enabling change
7. Young people broaden their perspectives through new experiences and thinking

All types of Youth Work opportunities aim to create spaces in which young people can gain confidence, learn and develop their skills.



National Youth Work Outcomes and Skills Framework



The eleven Youth Work skills describe key building blocks that enable young people to make progress towards the outcomes. The indicators associated with the development of these skills describe observable behaviours that help practitioners set goals and measure progress with young people.

<p>Confidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can seek out learning opportunities and support. I can participate in new opportunities and experiences. I can identify the new skills and knowledge I've developed. I can use my learning and skills in different settings. I can look for new challenges. I can ask for information and support. I can learn from my mistakes. 	<p>Resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can show determination to achieve my goals. I can adapt and be flexible as the facts / situation changes. I can keep going even when I'm finding things difficult. I can show courage to take action even when the outcome is uncertain. I can try again if I don't succeed the first time. 	<p>Looking After Myself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can identify goals for my physical / mental health and take action to achieve them. I can manage my feelings. I can ask for help if I need it. I can explain the consequences of harmful behaviour on myself. I can understand the role of peer pressure in harmful behaviour. I can understand my human rights, including those set out in UNCRC. 	
<p>Building Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can recognise and seek out positive relationships. I can make new friends. I can manage friendships. I can show respect towards others. I can see things from another person's perspective. I can engage with people outside my friendship group. I can resolve conflict peacefully within my relationships. I can understand professional relationships and boundaries. 	<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can express my thoughts and feelings to appropriate adults. I can speak in a group and share my opinions. I can listen to other people's opinions I can take time to understand what someone is communicating to me. I can recognise and address prejudice and discrimination. I can construct and defend an argument. I can ask for help if I don't understand. I can communicate effectively using a range of methods. I can use social media responsibly. 	<p>Organising and Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can set my own goals. I can take responsibility for tasks. I can break down big objectives into smaller tasks. I can plan and prioritise tasks. I can work to deadlines. I can finish tasks I start. 	
<p>Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can think critically about information. I can ask for more information and support. I can identify risk and explain it to others. I can explain why I made a safe choice. I can take responsibility for my actions. I can participate in decision making processes. 	<p>Problem Solving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can identify problems. I can break problems down into smaller parts to find a solution. I can contribute to creative solutions. I can challenge and question my own and others' opinions. 	<p>Teamwork</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can work with others on group tasks. I can support other young people in a group. I can understand the role of power within groups. I can give and receive feedback. I can follow instruction. I can be reliable. 	
<p>Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can identify my strengths. I can share my learning and skills with others. I can be a positive role model through my own behaviour. I can shape the direction or progress of a group. I can motivate others. I can delegate tasks. I can support others in their learning. I can act with integrity. I can bring out the best in others. I can engage and include a wide range of people. 		<p>Creating Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can identify new ways of working. I can understand the principles of social justice. I can recognise how my actions impact on others locally, nationally and globally. I can take action on issues that are important to me. I can play an active role in delivering change in my community. I can engage in democratic structures. I can represent the views of young people. I can influence decision-making. 	

Where?

Youth Work can happen anywhere, including:

- Dedicated Youth or Community Centres
- Community Spaces inc. Town or Village Halls, Leisure Centres and Libraries
- Education Settings inc. Schools (both as part of the curriculum and out-with the school day)
- Outdoors inc. Parks, Pitches, Woodlands, Street-based Youth Work (Detached and Outreach)
- Faith Based Settings
- Digital Spaces inc. Online Groups and Forums
- Mobile Youth Centres
- Uniformed Groups including Cadets Programmes (Police, Fire, Army, Sea), Scouts, Girlguiding etc.

'Youth Work operates on young people's own personal and recreational territory within both their geographic and interest communities'.

In order for Youth Work programmes, services and opportunities to be effective, young people have told us that Youth Work delivery spaces should be safe, accessible and inviting.

Provisions that take place in venues or spaces where young people feel unwelcome create additional barriers to engagement.



How?

Youth Work is an education practice and as a result, there is not a one-size-fits-all method of engagement that works for all young people. Through Dumfries and Galloway Council's Youth Work Service, there are a broad range of provisions for young people to participate in:

- ▶ Youth Groups, Clubs and Cafes
- ▶ Skill Based Groups inc. Arts, Music, Cooking, Drama, Sport, Gaming, Leadership, Sound and Lighting Production, Digital Skills
- ▶ Transition Groups (Junior Youth Work)
- ▶ Youth Information Services
- ▶ Issue Based Groups exploring issues relevant to young people inc. Sexual Health, Healthy Relationships, Body Image, Confidence, Bereavement and Loss
- ▶ Low Level Mental Health Support (1-2-1 Support)
- ▶ Volunteer Opportunities inc. The Toon, Young Leaders, and Steering Groups
- ▶ Participation and Democracy Projects and Structures inc. Regional Youth Council and targeted participation groups focussed on young people with marginalised identities having their voices heard, such as forums for young women, LGBT+ young people, care experienced young people and young people with additional support needs and disabilities
- ▶ Mobile Youth Work (MyPod)
- ▶ Outreach and Detached Programmes (Street Based Youth Work)
- ▶ Residential Excursions inc. Local, National and International Experiences
- ▶ Accredited Programmes inc. Participative Democracy Certificate (PDC), Youth Achievement Awards, Dynamic Youth Awards, Saltire Awards, Duke of Edinburgh's Awards, John Muir Awards, Heritage Hero Awards, etc.
- ▶ School Based Youth Work inc. Tutor Groups, Elective Curriculum Programmes
- ▶ Alternative Programmes for young people not engaging in mainstream education
- ▶ Digital Groups and Online Projects
- ▶ Consultation and Research inc. 10,000 Voices (2018 and 2023)
- ▶ Events inc. Celebration of Achievement, Youth Awards, Youth Beatz Festival inc. The Fringe, Volunteer Gatherings and #WeCare

For more information about the role of a Youth Worker, check out page **23**

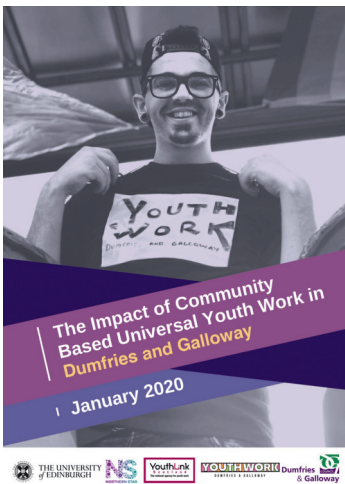
Evidenced Impact of Youth Work

At a local and national level, research has been carried out to review and determine the impact of Youth Work practice and intervention on young people, communities and the economy.

YouthLink Scotland commissioned research on the Social and Economic Value of Youth Work in Scotland that estimated that, at a minimum, **Youth Work delivers at least £7 in value for every £1 invested.**

There has been robust academic research focussing on key aspects of Youth Work practice that can be found on YouthLink Scotland's Policy and Research Impact Hub. This includes:

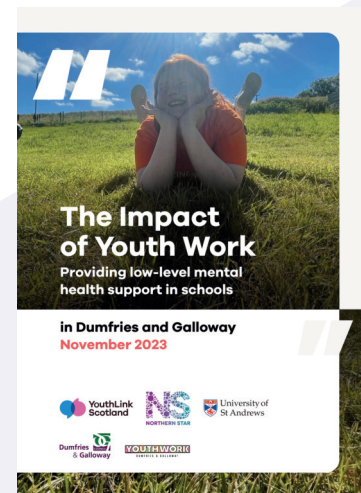
- Youth Works Role During and In Recovery From COVID-19.
- Digital Youth Work Research
- Impact Community Based Youth Work
- Impact of Youth Work Providing Low-Level Mental Health in Schools Support



In January 2020, the University of Edinburgh, Northern Star and YouthLink Scotland worked alongside Dumfries and Galloway Council's Youth Work Service to conduct research that focussed on the impact of Community Based Youth Work in a local context.



More recently, in November 2023, the University of St Andrews, Northern Star and YouthLink Scotland worked alongside the Youth Work Service to conduct research focussing on the Impact of Youth Work Providing Low-Level Mental Health Support in Schools.



Vision & Mission

Mission:

Providing accessible Youth Work opportunities and support in response to local needs for all young people.

Vision:

To be a person-centred service that works with young people where they are, in spaces that are safe and inclusive with mutual respect, rights and relationships at their core. Pro-actively developing their skills, emotions and abilities to enable them to realise their potential. We are motivated to deliver sector-leading, high-quality Youth Work practice and foster the next generation of Youth Workers.

Our Key Work Areas

Throughout the engagement process, stakeholders had the opportunity to re-imagine and re-define the overarching key work areas. As a starting point, existing work areas were highlighted and formed the basis for discussion looking at:

- ▶ Do these themes reflect your experience of Youth Work?
- ▶ What is missing or no longer required?
- ▶ What do you want Youth Work to look like in five years' time?

Following the engagement, the titles of the key work areas have remained unchanged with there being consensus amongst young people, professionals and wider stakeholders including Elected Members that these themes would ensure diversity of provision and a roadmap for future services.

The descriptors and five-year ambitions have been co-produced with young people following the consultation process.

Key Work Area #1: Community Based Youth Work

Delivery of universal and targeted Youth Work groups, projects, excursions and opportunities for young people in the evenings, at weekends and throughout holiday periods in local communities. This includes mobile, street-based (detached and outreach) and digital Youth Work opportunities for young people and youth events including Youth Beatz Festival.



Ambition:

For all young people aged 12–25 to know about and understand their local Youth Work offer and know that they have the option of participating if they choose to.

Priorities:

- Co-production of programmes with young people in local communities
- Delivery of Community Based Youth Groups
- Cooking facilities or access to food across all community based provisions
- Working collaboratively with Third Sector providers to maximise the local Youth Work offer
- Providing equitable provision across Dumfries and Galloway
- Ensuring that barriers to young people's participation are minimised or removed
- Ensuring that diversionary activities are available in local communities
- Provision of Mobile Youth Work opportunities in remotely rural areas
- Delivery of events for young people, including Youth Beatz Festival

Examples of Community Based Youth Work Opportunities:

- Local Youth Groups, Clubs and Projects
- Issue-based Programmes
- Community Events inc. Youth Beatz and Fringe Festival
- Summer Holiday Programmes including Summer Camps, Roadshows and Youth Cafes
- Skill Based Groups inc. Arts, Music, Cooking, Drama, Sport, Gaming, Leadership, Sound and Lighting Production and Digital Skills
- Issue Based Groups exploring issues relevant to young people inc. Sexual Health, Healthy Relationships, Body Image, Confidence, Bereavement and Loss
- Mobile Youth Work (MyPod)
- Outreach and Detached Programmes (Street Based Youth Work)
- Residential Excursions inc. Local, National and International Experiences

Key Work Area #2: Youth Work in Schools

Delivery of the Youth Information in Schools Project (Low Level Mental Health Support) and delivery of accredited programmes, qualifications and Youth Awards in collaboration with schools during the school day.



Ambition:

To ensure that young people have the opportunity to access support and accredited qualifications to enhance their learning within and out-with school settings.

Priorities:

- ▶ Delivery of low-level mental health project in all secondary schools
- ▶ To deliver transitions work with young people covering primary and post-secondary school phases
- ▶ To maintain Youth Work presence and accredited learning opportunities in all secondary schools, working in partnership with learning communities to identify local needs on an annual basis
- ▶ Ensuring that barriers to young people's participation are minimised or removed
- ▶ Regular review and evaluation of input to assess impact against Youth Work Outcomes

Examples of Youth Work in Schools:

- ▶ Accreditation Groups that aim to support young people to develop portfolios of evidence to achieve qualification through Youth Awards
- ▶ 1-2-1 Support programmes delivered through Youth Information Workers
- ▶ Issue Based Groups exploring issues relevant to young people inc. Sexual Health, Healthy Relationships, Body Image, Confidence, Bereavement and Loss
- ▶ Multi-Agency well-being inputs through Operation Safety and Do The Right Thing
- ▶ Delivery of the Toon on Tour through Secondary Schools
- ▶ Lunch-time Drop In's
- ▶ Transitions Projects with P7's and School Leavers

Key Work Area #3: Youth Participation & Volunteering

Delivery of opportunities for young people to get involved in decision-making through projects including Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council, Scottish Youth Parliament, Champions Board, Young Women's Network and Chameleons (LGBT+ forum). This work area includes the delivery of the Young Leader and Peer Education programmes.



Ambition:

To increase the number of volunteer opportunities for young people within their local community. To work with existing participation groups to develop the skills required to be effective in their roles, working up the ladder of participation.

Priorities:

- ▶ Delivery of annual gatherings for Young Volunteers, Young Women, Care Experienced Young People and LGBT Young People and ongoing support to networks
- ▶ Enhance external promotion of volunteer opportunities across Dumfries and Galloway
- ▶ Co-production of guidance to support services to meaningfully involve young people in policy development, service design and delivery
- ▶ Development of Young Leaders programme
- ▶ Ongoing support to Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council and Scottish Youth Parliament
- ▶ Support to Youth Management Committees
- ▶ Ensuring that barriers to young people's participation are minimised or removed
- ▶ Delivery of Youth Participation and Engagement Strategy 2022–2027

Examples of Youth Participation and Volunteering:

- ▶ Delivery of the interactive youth-led Toon Experience
- ▶ Delivery of bi-annual Youth Elections for Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council and Scottish Youth Parliament and attendance at National Scottish Youth Parliament Sitings
- ▶ Co-delivery of the following Youth Events:
 - #WeCare Gathering
 - Youth Matters Conference
 - Young Volunteer and Activist Conference
 - LGBT+ Annual Gathering
 - Young Women's Conference
- ▶ Support to young people to deliver localised community action, including those focussed on welfare, Children's Rights, climate change, youth spaces, well-being, equalities, and safety (online and in communities).
- ▶ International Youth Volunteer Projects and Youth Exchanges

Key Work Area #4: Wider Achievement

Creating opportunities for young people to achieve accredited and non-accredited Youth Awards including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Youth Achievement Awards, Dynamic Youth and Hi5 Awards, John Muir Awards, etc. within community settings. This work area includes recognition and celebration of young people's achievements through annual celebration of achievement and award ceremonies.



Ambition:

To increase awareness of the available awards and qualifications and to increase the number of young people achieving locally and nationally recognised awards, certification and qualification. To ensure that Awards are accessible to all young people, irrespective of their circumstance.

Priorities:

- ▶ Ensuring that barriers to young people's participation are minimised or removed
- ▶ Promoting the value and impact of Youth Awards to young people, parents and guardians, partners and the wider community
- ▶ Supporting professionals to utilise Youth Awards and qualifications in non-Youth Work settings
- ▶ Ensuring that young people's achievements are recognised and celebrated through Community Achievement events on an annual basis
- ▶ To co-ordinate and to support the delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award through school and community based centres
- ▶ Delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Strategy 2021–2026
- ▶ Delivery of the annual Dumfries and Galloway Youth Awards Celebration

Examples of Wider Achievement:

- ▶ Delivery of annual Community Achievement Awards celebrations in Wigtownshire, Stewartry, Annandale and Eskdale, and Nithsdale
- ▶ Delivering accreditation programmes with young people not engaged in formal learning in community based settings
- ▶ Delivery of Open Centre's for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award
- ▶ Organising training to support the delivery of Youth Awards in Dumfries and Galloway
- ▶ Dumfries and Galloway Youth Awards Celebration

Key Work Area #5: Collaboration with the Youth Work Sector

Training, advice and support to voluntary and third sector Youth Work partners and locality Youth Work partnership forums.



Ambition:

To ensure that professional development opportunities are accessible to all Youth Work practitioners in Dumfries and Galloway and to collaborate with practitioners across the public, voluntary and third sector to enhance opportunities for young people.

Priorities:

- Continuation of annual training calendar co-ordinating professional development opportunities for Youth Work practitioners
- To support the learning, development and training of the next generation of practitioners and leaders including grow your own pathways for volunteers to become part of the paid workforce
- Investment in support available to voluntary and third sector organisations
- Co-ordination of annual sector-led development day
- Collaboration with Youth Work Partners through Locality Youth Work partnership forums
- Investment in support to grassroots Youth Work organisations

Examples of Collaboration with the Youth Work Sector:

- Delivery of Professional Development Awards (PDA) in Youth Work
- Delivery of the Working at the Coalface Youth Work Practitioner Conference
- Ongoing support for locality based Youth Work through Youth Work partnership forums. These groups have collaborated to secure funding and deliver joint programmes
- Co-ordination of an annual training calendar that combines a range of internal and external training opportunities for Youth Work practitioners

This strategy is relevant to the delivery of Youth Work by Dumfries and Galloway Council. It is recognised that whilst the Local Authority is the largest provider of Youth Work in Dumfries and Galloway, **we are not the only provider.**

Youth Work Services in Dumfries and Galloway

**UNIVERSAL PROVISION WITH TARGETED WORK AIMED AT THE MOST VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE
ACROSS OUR REGION IN RESPONSE TO LOCALLY IDENTIFIED NEEDS AND PRIORITIES**

The Nature and Purpose of Youth Work

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

IT HAS THREE ESSENTIAL AND DEFINITIVE FEATURES:

- Young people choose to take part
- The work must build from where young people are
- Youth Work recognises the young person and youth worker as partners in the learning process

Revised January 2024

Key Work Areas

1 Community Based Youth Work:

Delivery of universal and targeted youth work groups, projects, excursions and opportunities for young people in the evenings, at weekends and throughout holiday periods in local communities. This includes mobile, street-based (detached) and digital youth work opportunities for young people and youth events including Youth Beatz and Fringe Festival.

2 Youth Work in Schools:

Delivery of the Youth Information in Schools Project (Low Level Mental Health Support) and delivery of accredited programmes and Youth Awards in collaboration with schools during the school day.

3 Youth Participation and Volunteering:

Delivery of opportunities for young people to get involved in decision making through projects including Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council inc. Scottish Youth Parliament, Champions Board, Young Women's Network and Chameleons (LGBT forum). This work area includes the delivery of the Young Leader and peer education programmes.

4 Wider Achievement:

Creating opportunities for young people to achieve accredited and non-accredited Youth Awards including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Youth Achievement Awards, Dynamic Youth and Hi5 Awards, John Muir Awards etc. within community settings. This work area includes recognition and celebration of young people's achievements through annual celebration of achievement and award ceremonies.

5 Collaboration with the Youth Work Sector:

Training, advice and support to voluntary and third sector Youth Work partners and locality Youth Work partnership forums.

Strategic & Priority Projects

The Youth Work Service has a series of Strategic and Priority Projects that sit behind the five overarching key work areas. These projects are reviewed on a quarterly basis and updated on an annual basis. This section lays out the purpose and difference between both types of project however the details of current projects can be found within the accompanying plan.

Strategic Projects

Strategic Projects are themed around key work areas that require regional oversight and an increased investment of time, research, training or resources in order to be delivered effectively.

Each member of staff within the Youth Work Service that has a development responsibility for services is responsible for the progress of one strategic project.

Strategic Projects can be short (under one year), medium (one to two years) or long term (three or more years).



Priority Projects

Priority Projects are based on emerging trends and needs impacting young people in Dumfries and Galloway.

These Projects have been informed by national and local research including 10,000 Voices, and have been developed based on feedback received from young people and youth work practitioners working in local communities.



Youth Work & Young People

Young people were asked to share their understanding of Youth Work and what it meant to them throughout the engagement process. Below is a collection of quotes captured throughout the consultation period.

'Youth Work is somewhere I learned to be more confident and made friends'

young person, aged 13

'I don't think enough people know about what you can get from taking part in Youth Work. I did okay at school, but it was the volunteering I'd done and the awards I gained through Youth Work that helped me to get into university and gave me experiences that I could speak about in my interviews'

young person, aged 20

'I didn't feel like I was really wanted at school or in my community – it just felt like most people thought we were going to cause trouble before anything had happened. Groups were different ... I wasn't sure at the start, but they helped me to speak with someone and change things for me'

young person, aged 14

'It's just different, people care about what I have to say and ask me how I am'

young person, aged 15

'Youth Work for me is adults respecting young people and speaking to us about things that are happening but without it being a lesson. It's having an adult you can speak to about things that are happening in your life'

young person, aged 22

'I don't know that I can put in the words the change we've seen over the last 2 years, it's made all the difference ... they just became happier in themselves and in time this spread to other parts of their life'

parent of young person aged 16

Due to Youth Work being voluntary for young people, with no requirement for them to take part, this was noted by stakeholders to be something that hugely effects the relationship between a young person and a youth worker.

'It starts from a more neutral place than other professionals can, especially professionals who are responsible for statutory interventions, e.g. social work or education. There's not an agenda, and the purpose of engagement changes with the young person'

Non-Youth Work Professional

Barriers to Engagement

As part of the focus groups and online questionnaire, stakeholders were asked to identify any barriers they felt prevented young people's participation in Youth Work opportunities.

Awareness of Opportunities

Those who took part who regularly accessed Youth Work were mostly positive when asked about how aware young people in their community were about Youth Work opportunities. However, young people with sporadic engagement and those who did not engage at all mentioned that there was limited awareness of Youth Work services amongst their peers.

Perception of Who Services Are For

In more than 30% of focus groups and around 20% of online questionnaires, 'stigma' was cited as a barrier to engagement. When explored further, this was broken down as: a belief or perception amongst young people that services are only for those who are struggling with an issue or require support. For many, they also stated that a lack of awareness about the full Youth Work offer added to this.

Geography and Rurality

The geography of the region was identified by many as being a barrier to engaging with young people who live in remotely rural communities. Initiatives including the Amazing Summer Roadshows, Mobile Youth Work and Digital Groups, were highlighted as positive, however it was felt by many that the size, population and rural nature of the region would continue to be a barrier to all service providers.

What Makes a Youth Worker?

In over 80% of feedback received from the consultation process, the relationship between Youth Workers and Young People was identified as being the most significant factor when looking at the following questions:

- ▶ What does Youth Work mean to you?
- ▶ What is your understanding of what Youth Work is?

This feedback strengthens the idea that Youth Work is an approach reliant upon relationship-based practice, rather than a set activity or programme delivered with young people. It should be noted that within the Youth Work Service there are:

- ▶ Youth Development Workers and Youth Issues Workers responsible for the programming and co-ordination of local or regional opportunities and collaborating with external partners
- ▶ Youth Workers and Youth Activity Workers responsible for the direct delivery of opportunities with young people
- ▶ Youth Information Workers responsible for the distribution of Youth Information to young people and providing support to young people in relation to low-level mental health concerns through 1-2-1's

Members of the team assume various responsibilities depending on their job roles. However, all staff, irrespective of their level or seniority within the service, are required to undertake continuous professional development relevant to the skills and competencies required for Youth Work practitioners.

In more than 60% of responses, young people identified the following qualities or attributes as something they valued within their Youth Worker:

1. Supportive
2. Trusting
3. Good Listeners
4. Fun/Funny/Sociable
5. Confidentiality
6. Respectful
7. Honest

At a local level, the Youth Work Services adhere to the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work and the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Competences and Code of Ethics produced by the CLD Standards Council.

Youth Workers were mentioned as positive role models multiple times across at least 25 focus group sessions.

Ambition:

Foster the next generation of Youth Workers through volunteer programmes for young people and adults including grow your own pathways for volunteers to become part of the paid workforce through apprenticeships and traineeships.



Where Does Youth Work Fit?

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Youth Work practice is relevant to a wide range of Children's Rights as outlined in the UNCRC; however, there are specific articles in which Youth Work has a more significant role and impact:

- ▶ Young people have a right to express their own views in 'all matters affecting' them, and those views must be given due weight – Article 12
- ▶ Young people have the right to freedom of association including meeting with friends and joining groups – Article 15
- ▶ Young people have the right to an education which develops their personality, respect for others' rights and the environment – Article 29
- ▶ Young people have the right to relax and play – Article 31

National Context:

Youth Work contributes to the Scottish Government's National Outcomes:

Children and Young People:

We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential.

Communities:

We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.

Education:

We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society.

Human Rights:

We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination.

Poverty:

We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally.

Health:

We are healthy and active.

It supports young people to learn and develop the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence to become:

- ▶ Successful Learners
- ▶ Responsible Citizens
- ▶ Confident Individuals
- ▶ Effective Contributors

Youth Work also promotes the values and principles outlined within Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), and is aligned with the wellbeing indicators: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included (SHANARRI).

The Promise refers to the commitment that Scotland's children and young people will grow up loved, safe and respected. Youth Work practice is of particular relevance to **Voice** and **People**, two of the five foundations of The Promise.

Local Context:

Youth Work contributes to Dumfries and Galloway Council's Strategic Outcomes:



Travel, Connectivity & Infrastructure:

- People have access to services that are modern, efficient and responsive



Economy:

- Our workforce and their skills base are growing
- Rural Communities and places are vibrant and thriving
- Enhancing the Region's natural capital benefits local communities and businesses
- Investment in the region benefits communities and the local economy



Education & Learning:

- We get it right for every child
- Children, young people and adults transition successfully through all life stages
- Young people and adults succeed in what they want to achieve
- Local people can build their skills and confidence
- Places of learning and inclusive, sustainable and meet the needs of local communities
- Participation in creativity and play is part of early and lifelong learning experiences



Health & Wellbeing:

- People are active, resilient and improving their health and well-being
- Help is provided to tackle the causes and effects of poverty, inequality and increased cost of living
- Prevention and early intervention assist people to have independent lives

There are a number of strategies and plans that youth work contributes to at a local level:

- Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2023 – 2028
- Children's Services Plan 2023 – 2026
- Community Learning and Development Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024
- South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy
- Dumfries and Galloway Council People Strategy 2021 – 2026
- Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017 – 2027
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Annual Education Authority Plan
- Poverty and Inequalities Strategy 2021 – 2026
- Community Participation and Engagement Strategy
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Volunteer Strategy
- Corporate Parenting Plan
- Children's Rights Report

There are 2 Strategies that the Youth Work Service lead on the delivery of:

- Youth Participation and Engagement Strategy 2022 – 2027
- Duke of Edinburgh's Award Strategy 2021 – 2026

Measuring Impact

The following measures are in place to ensure that there are robust reporting procedures in place to measure the effectiveness of Youth Work Service interventions:

- ▶ Monthly, Quarterly and Annual Key Performance Indicator (KPI) information submitted at a local and national level
- ▶ Production of an annual Quality and Standards Report detailing key data and case studies against each key work area, ambitions, strategic and priority projects that is presented to the relevant Service Committee
- ▶ HMIE Inspection Framework that evaluates and reports on the quality of Community Learning and Development (CLD) provision within local authorities, in line with The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013 and associated guidance
- ▶ Quarterly evaluation processes in place to engage young people in measuring the effectiveness of intervention and provisions
- ▶ Annual self-evaluation undertaken by the staff team and volunteers
- ▶ Bi-annual self-evaluation in place for the Locality Youth Work Partnership Forums
- ▶ Six monthly performance reports to relevant Service Committees for Dumfries and Galloway Council





DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY COUNCIL

YOUTH WORK STRATEGY

2024 - 2029

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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