



ACCESSIBLE, EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Policy 6: The Scottish Government and Local Authorities must work together and commit to a secure and multi-year funding model for the youth work sector.

Endorsed by:



What's this all about?

Young people told us about the importance of youth work in their lives. Youth work is about creating a safe and supportive environment where young people can learn, grow, and reach their full potential through fun and engaging experiences. Many young people feel that youth work offers them a safe space where they can be themselves, spend time with friends, feel comfortable, and speak to a trusted adult. Funding is essential to ensure youth work is high-quality and accessible to all young people, regardless of their background or where they live.

"Youth work changes and saves lives. If it wasn't for my youth workers when I was in my early teens I can thoroughly say I would not be alive today. The staff at LGBTYS and East Lothian alphabet youth groups saved me for taking my own life on more than one occasion. They gave me a safe space to get the help I needed and to be open about the not so great things going on at home. They gave me an escape where I could be myself without fear of judgment."

– Young woman aged 22-26, Dundee

“Youth work is so important as a preventative measure [...] It is, also, worth investing in just because; sometimes good things don't need to be economically justified and can just be a good thing. Creating spaces for young people to hang out, to learn (or not learn), to be creative, to meet new people and to just be – that's enough.”

– Young woman aged 22-26, Edinburgh

What are young people in Scotland calling for?

- **The Scottish Government must work with young people and youth work practitioners to co-design and publish a National Youth Work Strategy which recognises the value and impact of youth work, puts young people at the centre of decision-making, and promotes a diverse range of youth work opportunities for all young people in Scotland.**

“Youth Work is one of the most underrated sectors, usually doing work with children where the education system and supports within school has failed.”

– Young woman aged 14-17, North Ayrshire

- **Young people call for the Scottish Government and Local Authorities to commit to long-term sustainable funding for high-quality, consistent and accessible youth work in every community across Scotland. Funding must support targeted and universal youth work delivered by local and national youth work organisations.**

“Youth work is so important as a preventative measure (for every £1 you invest in youth work, you receive £7 back into the economy through a reduction in crime and police resource and through the upskilling and job opportunities awarded to young people) – it's worth investing in, and in ensuring that it's seen as a stable and credible career pathway. It is, also, worth investing in just because; sometimes good things don't need to be economically justified and can just be a good thing. Creating spaces for young people to hang out, to learn (or not learn), to be creative, to meet new people and to just be – that's enough.”

– Young woman aged 22-26, Edinburgh

- **Further and higher education providers and employers need to recognise non-formal education and youth work qualifications equally to formal education qualifications.**

“Yes!! Youth worker and young person here – I fully agree. I help run a small youth building in a nearby community that I used to go to when I was in my early teens. This space helped me so much and now I see the next generation of kids coming and how much it means to them. All different financial and education backgrounds but they come together in one group because they all love coming to the building. It's all youth-led and we provide learning and education on what they want to learn about, and when we have the funding, take them on residential trips to team build and learn valuable life skills.”

– Young woman aged 22-26, Aberdeenshire

Evidence and Support

- [Acting on Funding report](#) examines the current funding climate and the effect it is having on community-based young groups, alongside the work Youth Scotland and its Area Associations are doing to build capacity across the sector and support groups to become more sustainable.
 - 79% of Youth Scotland's members who attended their consultation sessions said funding was the main challenge facing their organisation. The report concludes that there is importance in implementing fairer funding practices for the community-based sector and the positive impact that this can have on young people's lives.
 - Foundation Scotland found that the [vast majority of grants in the UK are awarded on a single-year basis](#), with 77% of grants in 2021-22 having a duration of one year or less. They concluded that multi-year funding grants enable better tracking of project progress, more flexibility to adapt to challenges and greater chance to celebrate success over the years.
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What has SYP done?

Previous [SYP Consultations](#) includes [SYP's response to the Proposed Youth Work Bill \(2025\)](#). The [SYP Policy Log](#) includes investment in youth work and accessibility of youth work.