



A Lifeline in Lockdown - Amanda and Charlotte* on feeling connected and safe through Generation CashBack activities.



Based in Clydebank, Youth Scotland member group Y Sort it, supported by Generation CashBack, offers programmes and activities for young people across the local communities in West Dunbartonshire. Flexible support from Youth Scotland enabled staff at Y Sort It to adapt and upskill, so their essential youth work offer could continue throughout lockdown.

Amanda and Charlotte have regularly taken part in Y Sort It's online sessions. They told us these sessions helped them feel connected and supported in a scary and uncertain time. Through trying new activities and being involved in decision-making, their confidence has grown. They feel engaged, important and included in their community.

Amanda: Even if there isn't a call on, you could always speak to someone. It's built the relationships more. You are seeing and talking to the workers or others more than you would normally.

Expanding support systems; online sessions encouraged young people to make friends with other young people in the area and to spend positive time with family members.

Charlotte: It's helped a lot with mental health because people were struggling at the start and then after the Zoom calls, you were keeping in touch and you got to speak to a lot of people.

Amanda: My mum gets involved! She'll end up talking to people instead of me, she sings and everything. Yeah it means that she is not just seeing me all the time and she's seeing other people on the calls and getting to know the others. She asks me about who people are and she's getting to know the people that work with me.

Activity packs and online sessions encouraged the young women to try new activities and learn about important topics.

Amanda: We've done a lot cooking, quiz nights, workshops, gardening, photography, issue-based groups, we learned some Italian. I would have been so bored without the sessions. It keeps me on my toes.

Amanda: I tried gardening and photography for the first time, I wasn't a big cook, but I tried a lot of new foods that I hadn't had before... I wouldn't normally go near a vegetable but when we were doing the cooking sessions they'd give us vegetables and they'd be like try this on video so we can see your face, and usually I would actually like it!

Amanda: We've done sessions on confidence, eating disorders, alcohol and drugs... I like how eye-opening they are, I thought I knew some of this, but then you don't know that much until you can really talk about it. There is so much more to it than you think.

Feeling valued, listened to and having ownership over their youth group.

Amanda: I'm on the young person's management board. We have to make the decision about whether a session is something young people would like or enjoy. I can say how something was from a young person's perspective. It's good to know that young people have a part in the decisions. They are always open to other ideas, if you say something they will look into it. They always try what we suggest.

No longer nervous about video calls, Amanda and Charlotte are ready to take their new-found confidence into the world.

Amanda: There was people in it that I didn't know, I had seen them before but I talked to them more now than I did before. I definitely have more confidence, I didn't like going on the calls at the start because there were so many people. But I like it now.

Charlotte: I've got more confidence for CV building. I wasn't confident with it before, and a few others I knew weren't either and the youth workers told us how to build it up and it has made a big difference.

Y Sort It have supported young people to learn about COVID-19 and stay safe as the lockdown restrictions are relaxed.

Charlotte: Every week they are reminding us about our safety. People take it really well when you say 'nope these are the rules'.

*Pseudonyms have been used to protect anonymity

