

[FRONT COVER]

Impact Report 2022-23

[INSIDE COVER]

[CALLOUT QUOTE/IMAGE]

“Without [the Youth Scotland development worker] and the teams support NCDT would never been able to deliver Youth Work and activity to the scale and standard that we do. From training, to hands on support, funding and much more, Youth Scotland are never more than a phone call away for anything we need!”

- New Cumnock Development Trust, Youth Scotland Member Group

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[CALLOUT]

“The proactive and unstinting professional support, solidarity and very high standards instil a huge pride in the care and professional standards of youth work and just wanted you and the team to know it is hugely appreciated and empowering in very challenging times for us all.”

– Youth Scotland Member Group

Introduction from The Chair of Youth Scotland

I wanted to begin this year's report by thanking all staff in the organisation for the incredible effort they've made over the past 12 months. The energy, passion and commitment shown are inspiring and the 'can do culture' in the organisation is exciting to be around. We absolutely recognise that the staff are the most significant resource in the organisation, but with that comes ongoing challenges regarding annual budget funding.

A significant focus over the past year has been finance. The funding landscape has continued to be challenging and the Trustees have constantly wrestled with the right financial actions to take, to ensure we maintain services and programmes. It remains our ambition to maintain and grow the organisation and to support the team appropriately, but this is always done in accordance with the diligent use of available resources.

Third sector organisations don't have the luxury of up front fully funded settlements each financial year. The skill and challenge of forecasting income to cover annual costs is not an exact science and leads to much stress and anxiety as each month in the financial year ticks by without the successful grant application letters appearing.

We welcome and are grateful for the funding made available by a range of organisations and institutions, but I would urge them to consider the impact of delayed decision making, particularly for organisations where cash flow becomes critical if available funds doesn't cover monthly organisational outgoings.

We held our nerve as the year progressed, but have been clear as a Board that we would not shirk from making difficult decisions if required. This has led us to the beginnings of developing a new three-year financial strategy (inclusive of learning from the changing landscape), in addition to our organisation strategy. This won't result in immediate financial solutions, but it will allow us to better determine our priorities and explore alternative solutions.

I've always maintained that consolidation short term can lead to expansion long term, but continuing 'full steam' regardless, is a recipe that could bring an organisation in to serious difficulty. We have a duty as Trustees to make responsible financial decisions to ensure continuity of services for our members. To do that, we have to look after our most important resource.

William Miller

Chair of Youth Scotland

[CALLOUT] "The energy, passion and commitment shown are inspiring and the 'can do culture' in the organisation is exciting to be around."

Adapting to new challenges and the needs of community-based youth work

While the previous year saw Scotland transitioning into the Protection Level system, this year saw us transitioning out of it. While the new may have been anything but normal, community-based youth work got down to work and did what it does best – supporting Scotland’s young people in their local communities. Youth work happens at the frontline and is often ahead of the curve in knowing what the emerging issues affecting young people are and supporting them on their terms, issues such as mental health.

The emerging mental health crisis was one of the significant issues identified from the pandemic and successive lockdowns, particularly for Scotland’s most vulnerable and isolated young people. Mental health remained a regular headline in the news but youth workers were already supporting affected young people – they needed solutions. Responding to the needs of the network, Youth Scotland’s training team supported over 960 youth workers with the Mental Health Foundation Training programme and ongoing CPD, allowing them to increase their knowledge of young people’s mental health and emotional wellbeing. Furthermore, lockdowns and restrictions caused turnover in the community-based youth work sector workforce. Our Training Team played a vital role in workforce development; supporting the induction and upskilling of many new and returning youth workers through Ready for Youth Work (SCQF Level 3), our nationally recognised PDA in Youth Work (SCQF Level 6) and the ILM Leading in Youth Work (SCQF Level 9).

As inflation soared to a 41-year-high of 11.1 percent – including the price of daily groceries, clothing and fuel – the cost of living crisis began to hit hardest in Scotland’s worst affected communities. One in four children in Scotland are living in poverty and young people born in low-income communities are predicted an average lifespan almost two decades less than children born in higher income communities. These are the shocking opening lines from [Acting on Poverty: how Youth Scotland’s vital work supports the most affected communities](#) released as communities were faced with the impact of UK-wide austerity and cuts, the fallout from the global COVID-19 pandemic and the deepening cost of living crisis. Accessing funds became vital for groups and we were able to support members through the Youth Scotland Spring Fund and the Stand Up to Sectarianism programme small grants. We also supported the network to access funding through Spirit 2012 and the Inspire 22 programme and panel support to members and UK Youth for the Cost of Living Fund.

Our youth participation programmes happened this year in a big way. The official launch of the Young Islanders Network (YIN) heralded a youth-led programme to build an inclusive community amongst Scotland’s various islands. The YIN also aimed to ensure that young people had meaningful input to the National Islands Plan. Step into the Arts, a youth-led fund launched in partnership with Creative Scotland entirely youth-designed, the fund supported young people across the country to overcome barriers and pursue creative arts projects and experiences. We also enjoyed a bumper summer of events thanks to youth-led social action projects through the Inspire 22 programme; from music festivals, community events, Dungeons and Dragons clubs and more.

With a year packed with young people doing amazing things, it’s only fitting that our Awards Team built on that success, recognising so many young people’s achievements and having another year to celebrate. The Dynamic Youth Award showed the enduring value of youth awards, reaching a landmark 20th anniversary, joined by its younger sibling, the Hi5 Award in celebrating its 5th anniversary.

On behalf our network, Youth Scotland contributed to the Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment (IRQA) led by Professor Louise Hayward. The review, which published its highly-anticipated Interim Report, and proposed a revision to Scotland's Qualifications and Assessment system that aims to build on the Curriculum for Excellence and capture a wider range of student's capabilities.

Accessing funds remained a key priority for member youth groups as they fully re-opened and we were delighted to offer support through the following grant schemes which we operated in 2022-23.

- The Youth Scotland Spring Fund, funded by Scottish Government through the STV Children's Appeal, distributed £14,000 funding to 16 youth groups who made onward awards reaching children and young people affected by poverty.
- The Stand Up to Sectarianism programme, funded by the Scottish Government, distributed to £7,800 in small grants to youth groups to allow them to tackle sectarianism in their communities.
- We also supported a number of our member youth groups to access funding through our partnership with UK Youth and Spirit 2012 through our Inspire Social Action Project.

We continued to track well against our strategic ambitions as outlined in Changing Lives Through Community-Based Youth Work - A Strategy for 2020-2023.

2022-23 in Numbers

- Total Young People supported **97,018**
- Total Youth Workers **10,775** of whom **6,632** are volunteers
- Total Youth Groups **1,999**
- Total Member Organisations **590**
- Total awards **7,171**
- Young People engaged in Leadership and participation programmes **5,381**
- Youth Workers engaged in training **4,276**

What is amazing about these figures is what is behind the numbers. Behind every number there is a Young Person, Youth Worker or Youth Group who are involved in Youth Work in their community, have engaged in great programmes and achieved recognised awards. There have undoubtedly been severe challenges in the youth work sector – facing multiple and compounded crises – but community-based youth work has reacted quickly and determinedly, incorporating vital learning from the pandemic to improve how and where young people can reach us and reminding us of the sometimes intangible benefits of in-person contact and spaces.

[CALLOUT] “We have been hearing how anxious parents/carers are about how they are going to cope with the increase in energy prices [...] and the rising cost of living. Having the option to give families vouchers during this time period supports them to be able to manage the first month of increases.” - Youth Scotland member group [/CALLOUT]

Who We Are

Our Purpose

Is to grow and develop community-based youth work.

Our Mission

Is to support young people to achieve their full potential.

Our Vision

Is a country which values community-based youth work and its positive impact on young people's lives.

Our Pillars

As a national youth work organisation, Youth Scotland's work is expansive and varied, but much of what we do can be put in four key areas of community-based youth work that we call our 4 Pillars:

1. Membership: Supporting Our Member Youth Groups

Our ambition is for all young people, regardless of their circumstances, to benefit from high quality community-based youth work through the Youth Scotland network.

2. Programmes: Youth Leadership and National Programmes

Our ambition is for young people across all 32 Local Authorities to have the opportunity to grow and develop their everyday leadership skills and to use their voice in their communities through our youth participation projects.

3. Training: Training Volunteers and Youth Workers

Our ambition is to build on our reputation as the leading provider of training and capacity-building for the youth work sector in Scotland, improving the skills and confidence of those who are supporting young people.

4. Youth Awards: Accredited Youth Awards

Our ambition is that we will create more opportunities for young people to gain recognition for all their achievements through the accredited Hi5 Award, Dynamic Youth Awards and Youth Achievement Awards at SCQF levels 2–7

Supporting Our Member Youth Groups

[SUBHEADING TEXT] Our ambition is for all young people, regardless of their circumstances, to benefit from high quality community-based youth work through the Youth Scotland network. [/END]

Despite continuing challenges in the sector – and with access to meeting places – we have seen another increase in our membership. 212 youth groups joined in 2022-23. These new groups, alongside existing members, can now access the suite of advice, guidance support, resources, training and funding opportunities offered as part of the Youth Scotland membership offer. We were pleased to welcome many new rural-based groups, positively affecting provision in more of Scotland’s communities.

- We continue to have reach across all 32 Local Authority areas in Scotland, with 1,999 member youth groups (1,730 in 2021-22) providing universal youth work opportunities as well as more targeted approaches.
- Rural youth groups now represent 34% of the membership with urban groups at 66%.
- 67% of Youth Scotland members operate in SIMD 1-5 post codes.
- 97,018 young people, 10,775 youth workers – of whom 6,632 are volunteers – comprise the largest youth work network in Scotland.

Of particular note was the continued support of members through frequent communication and information. Regular practical and accessible guidance supported groups to transition back to face-to-face youth work and key funding news and support on the Cost of Living Crisis was shared frequently and pivotal reports were highlighted, such as our own [Acting on Poverty: how Youth Scotland’s vital work supports the most affected communities](#)

Our social audience achieved 7% growth and 937,794 impressions (post views), while our website users continued to rely on our advice and content with 73,398 unique visitors reading 248,690 pages. Our newsletter subscribers grew again and we issued 55 E-newsletters and bulletins to 190,333 users over the year. In total, Youth Scotland issued 8.6 distinct communications per day during 2022-23.

1,999 member groups	97,018 Young People aged 5-25	10,775 youth workers of whom 6,632 are volunteers
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- 67% of Youth Scotland member groups meet in areas of high to medium deprivation (SIMD 1-5).
- 34% urban membership / 66% rural membership.

937,794 impressions on social media	190,333 e-news and ebulletins sent	248,690 unique page views on our websites
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- £14,000 grants made to young people affected by poverty via groups funded by The Youth Scotland Spring Fund and STV Children’s Appeal.
- £7,800 in small grants made to youth groups, allowing them to tackle sectarianism in their communities through Stand Up to Sectarianism.

[CALLOUT] “You have no idea what this [funding] means to me and my kids. I was thinking I was going to have to sell my belongings just to put food on plates but now I know that the kids will be fed and I feel much more relaxed and less stressed. – Parent supported by Youth Scotland Action Fund
[/END]

It's All About Hope – Making the Most of Youth Scotland Membership to Give More Opportunities to Young People

Founded in 2021, The Destiny Project are part of the shared membership between LAYC and Youth Scotland and have seized the opportunities this has brought them. We visited CEO, Andrew Stevenson to talk community-based youth work.

'...It's about survival. We are in a cost of living crisis, we are in a situation where budgets are getting cut left, right and centre unfortunately. We're living in a world now where we just had a major pandemic, our young people in particular are the ones who are feeling isolated [and] all they want to do is feel valued. The Destiny Project stands for that, it stands for giving value, for giving them that platform to be amazing. We stand for dream, inspire, achieve. Those three little words in our minds is simply meaning hope – and it's about giving hope to the most deprived communities in Scotland.'

Andrew's own journey into youth work followed a difficult time in his own youth, before getting involved with youth work.

'So, I joined the Army Cadet Force at that time – you could say my youth work days started then! [Then]...I started doing stuff with Citadel Youth Centre. Citadel made me realise that this is what I was destined to do. I love youth work, I love what it stands for. In 2013, Citadel put me through my PDA in Youth Work. LAYC, Youth Scotland and Citadel took a real punt on me, and it's something that I will never ever take for granted. So, I did that training. [The PDA] prepared me really well...I felt that it gave me a realisation of what it meant to be a youth worker.'

Andrew's life took him into fatherhood and a period in the armed services, before ultimately returning to youth work and forming The Destiny Project in the heart of Prestonpans.

'We've got a membership with Youth Scotland, so I wanted to make good use of it. I wanted to make sure it benefited as many young people as possible. I asked if we could get involved in the Inspire project. [Youth Scotland Development Worker] came in, he delivered the programme...so from there, I asked if there was any support that could be given to the organisation.'

Our Generation CashBack programme's Grow strand is specifically aimed at supporting and enabling groups working in areas of multiple deprivation. Generation CashBack staff help support groups in tackling anti-social behaviour, delivering diversionary activity and providing activities that improve young people's mental health and wellbeing.

'The thing is, this is a town that is starting to get a high level of youth-related crime...and our police station is closing. It was on [the radio] that it's a case that young people don't have enough to do, and that's true. So, using [Generation] CashBack, we've decided to create our Young Ambassador Project (YAP). YAP is a mental health ambassador programme.'

'We're working with young people who are struggling with their mental health, which is incredibly linked to ACE's. We also work with young people with physical and learning difficulties, with which we work in partnership with the incredible Beyond Boundaries in East Lothian.'

'And then obviously there's Destiny United FC, who I co-founded with Gary (O'Connor) – Gary's expertise and experience has been phenomenal, as obviously he's got his own story. That opened up the Destiny United opportunity, and the idea is that it creates a pathway for kids that wish to be football superstars – with a youth work approach, but with an emotional support as well.'

'So, it's about giving them emotional support but it's also about giving them the employability skills behind that as well. We're working with an organisation, they're called Retrain Scotland, and what they do is provide welding skills – they're learning hands-on stuff. Then we're doing employability stuff – interview skills, CV's and all that.'

'We're all about dream, inspire, achieve. I've had my dream bit – I'm a youth worker! But I want to inspire others to do whatever they wish to do. As I said at the beginning – it's all about hope.'

The Destiny Project has been taking full advantage of their Youth Scotland membership and we asked Andrew what he'd say to groups thinking of joining or doing more with theirs:

'Don't hesitate, do it! At the end of the day, Youth Scotland is the national body in my mind for youth work in Scotland. I think it's important to recognise the fact that there's so many different talents in [Youth Scotland]...and I think, having the ethos in which Youth Scotland has, that can promote the ethos you're trying to achieve within your own organisations.'

To see about [joining Youth Scotland](#) or more of our stories on [how we support community-based youth work](#), see our [website](#)

[CALLOUT] "We stand for dream, inspire, achieve. Those three little words in our minds is simply meaning hope – and it's about giving hope to the most deprived communities in Scotland." – Andrew, CEO, The Destiny Project [/END]

Training Volunteers and Youth Workers

[SUBHEADING TEXT] Our ambition is to establish ourselves as the leading provider of training and capacity-building for the youth work sector in Scotland, improving the skills and confidence of those who are supporting young people. [/END]

Youth worker training has continued to grow in demand and delivery, with 4,276 (up from 3,912 in 2021-22) youth workers’ abilities and skills developed further to support young people’s emerging needs. Building on a mixed delivery model of online and in-person training, opportunities for volunteers and workers across Scotland to attend Youth Scotland training has increased once again.

Our training programme offered accredited and non-accredited training opportunities in Youth Awards (842 participants), Ready for Youth Work (1,150 participants), Trusted Adult (1,185 participants), PDA in Youth Work (83 participants), Leading in Youth Work (11 participants), Child Protection (553 participants) and other key training programmes, including delivering safe and effective digital youth work and specialist mental health training.

Addressing one of the prominent issues identified by young people and youth workers during and exiting lockdown, mental health training remained a central part of our training programme. Through our partnership programme with Place2Be, we continued to offer a Mental Health Foundation Training programme and ongoing CPD to over 960 youth workers, allowing them to increase their knowledge of children and young people’s mental health and emotional wellbeing.

4,276 volunteers, youth workers and managers upskilled	842 workers trained in onward delivery of youth awards	1,185 youth workers completed Trusted Adult training
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- 98% who attended Child Protection training have increased confidence and understanding of their roles and responsibilities in protecting young people
- 100% who attended Ready For Youth Work have an increased understanding of youth work.
- 92% who attended Youth Scotland training rated it very good or excellent.

960+ youth workers participated in Mental Health Foundation training	83 youth workers gained a PDA in Youth Work and 11 managers Leading in Youth Work qualifications	1,150 youth workers completed Ready for Youth Work training
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[CALLOUT] “Perfectly paced, with a variety of activities and plenty of opportunities to shared knowledge and experience.” – STEM training delegate[/END]

Essential Workforce Development Through Youth Scotland's Learning Pathway

In an ever-changing youth work landscape, we are committed to preparing youth workers and volunteers to deliver a high-quality standard of youth work services, and to creating opportunities for the youth work workforce to earn recognised, accredited qualifications in their field.

Our professional development pathway begins with Ready for Youth Work (RFYW), a practical introduction and refresher course that supports youth workers to take their first steps into the sector. From there, workers continue their learning with a variety of issues-based training opportunities and can advance along the pathway toward achievement of formal qualifications in youth work with the Professional Development Award (PDA).

We spoke with Eleanor, a youth worker at Speyside Youth, about her experience with this learning pathway. When she began as a volunteer with Speyside in 2019, she brought 10 years of experience working with young people in schools and as a long-time netball coach. However, she was eager to take advantage of the opportunity for formal training.

She started with Ready for Youth Work and said,

'I really enjoyed the course. [The Youth Scotland trainer] was fantastic, just fun and what a youth worker you'd hope would be... Then I did the Child Protection [Child Protection Awareness training] and that was a little bit more sobering...it was like oh my goodness am I equipped for this? Can I handle these issues that might come up?'

Eager to continue learning, Eleanor took up additional training opportunities, including courses on self-harm awareness and the impact of smoking and vaping on mental health. She said,

'It's nice to have the option to broaden my knowledge base on these things.'

She soon went on to earn the Professional Development Award (PDA), a nationally-recognised SQA qualification that includes formal assessments, a practical placement and an assessed observation of delivery. She commented that this course helped her feel more prepared and her supervisor, Julie, noticed a big difference as well.

Julie shared that the PDA had a powerful impact for both Eleanor and another Speyside youth worker, Mandy:

'The PDA supported seeing that both Eleanor and Mandy had the core skills and knowledge of youth work. The largest knock on effect has been in confidence for both Eleanor and Mandy. Both were nervous and unaware of their skills and abilities for their observed practice sessions but both done really well...For Eleanor in particular it was great to see her natural skills and ability, particularly in joining things up, come through in the lead up to and delivery of the observed practice session.'

Kelvin, a Relief Youth Worker at Moray Council, also followed our learning pathway from Ready for Youth Work through the PDA. He started his journey as a volunteer with Elgin Youth Café while working full-time as a technician:

'My supervisor suggested the Ready for Youth Work course, and this was the perfect entry into Youth work for me. I wanted to understand more of what was expected from me, and how I could use my life experience and knowledge for the benefit of young people at the club.'

He shared:

‘Overall, both courses gave me a greater insight into the sheer, massive scope of youthwork. From RFW which gave me a great introduction, followed by the PDA which went into greater depth on all the subjects.’

He and Eleanor also reflected on how the PDA provided an opportunity for co-learning and practice-sharing.

‘The people on the PDA were from hugely different backgrounds...it was good to see a different perspective and some of them have a huge amount of experience and it was lovely getting their ideas and their takes on things.’ —Eleanor

‘I made contacts in areas of youth work I was previously unaware of, and since have been able to use my contacts from my ‘regular’ job to hopefully help another youth worker.’ —Kelvin

In their final reflections, Kelvin and Julie commented on the impact of the training pathway:

‘Every day is a learning experience in youth work, and the Youth Scotland team have put together courses that give a great insight into all areas, and allow you to develop your knowledge in an organic way that complements your own youth work.’ —Kelvin

‘We have been able to home grow Youth Workers from volunteer to paid staff. But this has also been an important way to give back to our volunteers by giving them the opportunity to gain the foundations of youth work and gain accreditation.’ —Julie

Find out more about our [training pathway](#), [essential training](#) and more on our [website](#).

[CALLOUT] “Every day is a learning experience in youth work, and the Youth Scotland team have put together courses that give a great insight into all areas, and allow you to develop your knowledge in an organic way that complements your own youth work” – Kelvin, Ready for Youth Work and PDA in Youth Work recipient.

Youth Leadership and National Programmes

[SUBHEADING TEXT] Our ambition is for young people across all 32 Local Authorities to have the opportunity to grow and develop their everyday leadership skills through iLead and other youth participation projects. [/END]

Through our iLead and STV Grow programmes and Generation CashBack Lead strand, young people have been offered a range of activities to meet their emotional needs, build their confidence and develop new skills. Our Area Co-ordinators in Ayrshire and Forth Valley and our National Youth Scotland staff continued to support the transition from online to in person and act as examples of good practice, producing positive outcomes for young people, whilst also building the confidence of the local workers and volunteers shadowing them.

The Inspire 2022 programme delivered a summer and autumn of youth-led, social action events. Young people across Scotland designed positive activities for their own communities, bridging community divides and giving young people a voice. We also launched Step into the Arts, a youth-led fund, in partnership with Creative Scotland, and entirely youth-designed. The fund operated two strands: First Steps into the Arts – for young people who have some, a little or no experience with the arts, and want to explore them further and Next Steps into the Arts – for young people who have experience in the arts, want to improve their practice, and may be considering a creative career.

The official launch of the Young Islanders Network (YIN) ushered in the ambitious youth participation programme, funded by the Scottish Government, that was envisaged as a means for young people living in Scotland’s island communities to come together, share their experiences and contribute to the National Islands Plan. In its 15th year, the demand for Generation CashBack support continued to rise and youth groups provided much needed warm spaces and meals to young people across Scotland. Generation Cashback Development Officers continued to support youth groups through capacity-building support for workers and direct delivery to young people.

1,293 young people participated in the Generation Cashback programme	804 participated in the Young Islanders Network programme	1,442 participants involved in our STV Grow programme
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- 93% of young people participating in Generation CashBack reported improved wellbeing (against SHANARRI indicators).
- 98% participating in Generation CashBack reported a positive impact on their behaviour.
-] 59 Young Islanders Network champions, representing their communities and youth groups.

299 young people took social action through the Inspire 22 programme	255 young people participated in Y2Be Mental Health Peer Mentoring and Community Wellbeing programme	66 participants were supported to tackle issues in their community through Stand Up To Sectarianism
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[CALLOUT] “It was definitely a success! We’re proud of the amount of people who got involved – 148 children took part and they all had at least one adult with them. We know when we went to TweedLove festival when we were younger we were always looking for free and great stuff to make it worth being there, and this definitely ticked that box, people found it really engaging.” – Inspire 2022 group[/END]

Supporting youth-led events through the Inspire 2022 programme

Inspire 2022 was a youth-led, events-based social action programme that empowered young people from our member groups to design positive activities for their communities.

Delivered in partnership with UK Youth and made possible by funding from Spirit of 2012 and the #iWill Fund, this programme offered young people ages 11 to 25 the opportunity to plan and create their own community events. Participants started their journey with an interactive training session where they worked together to identify issues in their local area and come up with a plan to help. Then, their team pitched the idea to a judges' panel and were granted up to £800 to make their event a reality.

To date, this programme has supported more than 50 Inspire 2022 teams to design and deliver events across Scotland. Some of the most popular social action themes included promoting mental health, physical health and wellbeing; addressing loneliness and isolation; celebrating LGBT+ pride and providing support during the cost-of-living crisis.

Young people have created community fun fairs and Christmas markets; led pride marches with information-sharing for LGBT+ young people; hosted all-ability inclusive sports days; led talks in schools to educate other young people about eating disorders, anxiety, drugs and alcohol; offered dance and DJing sessions to newly arrived Ukrainian young people; hosted intergenerational parties to connect young people and isolated elderly people from local care homes and so much more.

For one team from Ochil Youth Community Improvement (OYCI) in Tillicoultry, Inspire 2022 was an opportunity to make a difference for the environment. A young person from the team shared,

'We were inspired to run our event because we wanted to help reduce plastic pollution, because we love nature and animals.'

'We got people from our local community together to pick up litter in the woods behind Lornshill High School. We chose that place because we spoke to Clackmannanshire Council and they said that was a particularly bad area for litter. We borrowed litter pickers and gloves from Keep Scotland Beautiful and created branded reusable water bottles to keep everyone hydrated and raise awareness about plastic pollution. We also gave everyone reusable straws and straw cleaners as a gift. We met, gave everyone a safety briefing, and then spent two hours clearing litter. Then we had pizza as a reward.'

Reflecting on the success of the project, the young leaders commented,

'We collected over 30 bags of litter and the woodland area looked completely different once we had finished. Everyone who came felt really proud and enjoyed the pizza.'

They also spoke about the impact, saying they hoped,

'Dog walkers might now feel safer to take their dogs for a walk in the woods [and] the people who came to the litter pick might do more to help the environment.'

For young people on the Indigo Youth team, Inspire 2022 was about connection. These young leaders wanted 'to bring the community together and get them all to meet new people.'

They described their event as 'a community gathering to bring all the people in the community together and have a fun time and a fun day.'

Parents, children and young people from across the community came out to enjoy face painting, cakes and sweets, a bouncy castle and garden games. On the day, the young leaders reflected on their success: 'It was a team effort, we all kind of had our own little ideas and when we pieced them together it created a giant thing, and this is where we are today.'

Another team from Fairway Fife created a special Awards Night to celebrate young adults with learning disabilities, their peer mentors, families, carers and friends.

The event had nearly 150 people in attendance, including Judie McCourt from the People's Postcode Lottery who agreed to help with the evening's hosting. A youth worker from the event shared how proud they were of the young leaders and said,

'We have received so much positive feedback from everyone saying how great it was to be out together and seeing our young members having fun together. It has really had a positive mental impact on all of our families. They were seeing (most for the first time) their son or daughter out socialising with their friends at night, without fear of "sticking out" or "being different" Everyone was able to relax, enjoy their evening and feel a sense of joy...Such an amazing feel good night.'

You can learn more about the [Inspire 2022 programme on our website](#) and check out the other [youth participation programmes](#) we have on offer.

Accredited Youth Awards

[SUBHEADING TEXT] Our ambition is that we will create more opportunities for young people to gain recognition for all their achievements through the accredited Hi5 Award, Dynamic Youth Awards and Youth Achievement Awards at SCQF levels 2–7. This will support national efforts to close the poverty related attainment gap and increase young people’s skills for learning, work and life. [/END]

In 2022-23, Youth Scotland Awards were delivered by a network of 250 Awards Groups supported locally by 111 Award Delivery Hubs (78 in 2021-22). We have seen successful growth of the Awards in 2022-23 with completion figures on target for a 20% rise on the 2021-22 figures (7,171 across Hi5, DYA and YAA compared to 6,000 in 2021-22). New registrations have increased with a 20% increase in secondary schools coming on board as Hubs and an 80% increase in charities registering as Hubs.

In a landmark year for Youth Scotland’s Awards, the Dynamic Youth Award showed the enduring value of youth awards, reaching a landmark 20th anniversary, joined by its younger sibling, the Hi5 Award in celebrating its 5th anniversary. Despite the challenges in the sector, these awards remained hugely popular and grew in popularity by 20% in their anniversary year.

Impact statements from young people, collected as part of the award process, show that 87% of Hi5 Award recipients, 79% of Dynamic Youth Award recipients and 79% of Youth Achievement Award recipients reported improvements in their experiences and outcomes as a result of completing their challenges.

7,171 young people gained a SCQF levelled youth award	842 practitioners trained to deliver Youth Scotland awards	32 Local Authorities awards coverage, through 111 Awards Delivery Hubs and 250 Awards Groups
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- 33% of young people achieving our awards live in communities considered amongst the 20% most deprived in Scotland (SIMD 1-2).
- 20% growth of awards participants in a single year.

3,854 Hi5 Awards, at SCQF level 2	3,003 Dynamic Youth Awards, at SCQF level 3	314 Youth Achievement Awards, at SCQF levels 4 – 7
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[CALLOUT] “If you ever have the opportunity to go for a Hi5 Award with your child, it’s something you need to grab with both hands...because the difference we saw was amazing and I think if we didn’t have the opportunity for Hi5, [he] wouldn’t be as outgoing and confident as he is now. – Hi5 Award participant’s parent[/END]

Awards – Year of Achievement

In November 2022, the Dynamic Youth Award (DYA) celebrated 20 years of supporting young people to take the lead in their own learning, offering them a framework to set their own challenges and record and reflect on their achievements.

Against the backdrop of ongoing education reform and the Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment in Scotland, youth awards like this (as well as the Hi5 Award and Youth Achievement Award) offer a clear and meaningful way to encourage and celebrate the achievements of every young person. Accessible and inclusive, Dynamic Youth Awards follow a plan-do-review structure that gives young people aged 10 and above the chance to develop their skills and confidence, empowering them in the learning process and supporting them to become leaders in their groups and communities.

For the YMCA Tain Youth Café, the impact made by these awards became clear when it started its Holiday Club in the summer of 2022. Through the Club, young people of varying ages gather together to enjoy a number of fun, skill-building activities during their time off from school. This presented an exciting opportunity for the programme to start a joint DYA and Hi5 Award offer, creating a collaborative environment where young people were encouraged to support each other in their learning.

We connected with Kats Macleod, the Awards & Hub Co-ordinator for the Café, to learn more about this experience.

She said, 'The youngsters thoroughly enjoyed all of the activities on offer and they all discovered that they were good at something...whether it be baking, being creative, being sporty, being good at Circus Skills...They also discovered that not everyone has the same skills, not everyone likes the same things, some people struggle in social situations...but that you can help others with something that they lack confidence in.'

She explained that the Café supports two age groups, which helped create the structure of the joint DYA and Hi5 Award programme:

'We have secondary-aged youth (our fabulous Youth Leaders) who are in charge of each station (whether it be baking, arts and crafts or games) and as part of that they are completing their Dynamic Youth Awards.'

One young person from the Club said, 'I enjoyed helping the kids with their activities and I learned how to encourage them.'

Another commented, 'I enjoyed teaching the youngsters how to ride a scooter and skateboard and teaching them different games. I learned how to work in a team better.'

Kats added, 'For me it was lovely to see the youngsters being guided through their Hi5 Awards by youth who were also working through and achieving their own Dynamic Youth Awards.'

She recalled, 'One of our Youth Leaders assisted me when the Hi5 Awards were being completed. She worked individually with each child and guided them through writing up their reports. I have to say it was lovely seeing her working with the children and seeing her come to the realisation that it is a role that she wants to pursue when leaving school.'

A few hours south of the Tain Youth Café, another young leader also found an opportunity to build his skills and give back to his community through the Dynamic Youth Award. Sean, a young person from SAPC Community Sports Hub SCIO in Glasgow, decided he wanted to use his DYA to make a difference.

Sean said, 'I arranged a raffle so that I could raise money for a food bank near my school.'

He explained that he had never done something like this and learned a lot: 'I used my pocket money and did lots of chores around my house to save money to buy a "Build a Bear" for the raffle prize. I made a poster with the raffle draw date and information on it and then sold lots of tickets. I picked out a winning ticket and delivered the bear to the winner and then gave all the raffle money to the food bank.'

He said, 'I also learned that lots of families don't have much money to buy food and food banks are really happy to get donations. I liked that I could help families that need it.'

To learn more about how our suite of youth awards can be used to help young people develop skills, confidence and leadership, [check out our website](#).

[CALLOUT] "'One of our Youth Leaders assisted me when the Hi5 Awards were being completed. She worked individually with each child and guided them through writing up their reports. I have to say it was lovely seeing her working with the children and seeing her come to the realisation that it is a role that she wants to pursue when leaving school.'" – Kats youth worker at YMCA Tain Youth Café

Partnerships

We have continued to develop new and existing partnerships in 2022-23 supporting community-based youth work delivery across Scotland. We are especially grateful to the following partners:

Scottish Government – The Young Islanders Network

The Young Islanders Network (YIN) empowers young people living in our island communities to have their say on the implementation of the actions in Scotland's National Island's Plan. The YIN officially launched in Orkney with young people in August 2022, following an initial successful pilot project.

STV Appeal and Place2Be

We have now completed the final year of our Growing Community-Based Youth Work programme, funded by the STV Children's Appeal. During the course of the three-year programme, our aim was to demonstrate the impact of community-based youth work in helping young people overcome issues of poverty and the vital role which youth work has in promoting a prevention agenda.

We have also completed Year 2 of our connected partnership project with the mental health charity, Place2Be which is also funded by the STV Children's Appeal. This project is building the skills and resilience of the youth work workforce, including peer mentors, to support young people's mental health in the community.

Scottish Government & Inspiring Scotland - Generation CashBack

Youth Scotland continued to work in partnership with The Boys' Brigade, Girlguiding Scotland and Scouts Scotland in 2022-23, during the third year of the 3-year CashBack for Communities Phase 5 grant from the Scottish Government. The consortium, led by Youth Scotland, built the capacity of 135 youth groups across Scotland, offering financial support, training for workers, and tailored advice and resources. The programme reached 3,267 young people over the course of the year, 67% of whom are based in SIMD 1-2 areas.

Other Partnerships and Collaborations

Other collaborations during 2022-23 include the partnership with Education Scotland in the delivery of STEM training workshops continued in 2022-23. We developed a new Inspire partnership with UK Youth and Spirit of 2012 providing young people with skills and funding to plan and deliver social action events in their local communities which built social cohesion. The delivery of Youth Scotland's youth awards for young people continued across Scotland in partnership with local authorities, schools and third sector partners. We also worked with several Scottish Government directorates and agencies, other voluntary sector organisations and several other public and corporate sector agencies in the delivery of our programmes and outcomes for young people and youth workers.

We also continued our strategic partnerships with the Social Enterprise Academy; UK Youth; and with the 5 Nations of national youth work organisations in the UK and Ireland.

Future Plans

As demand for Youth Scotland's services continues to grow, we remain responsive to the needs of our membership, youth work leaders, youth workers and young people.

As we enter a new strategic period for Youth Scotland, our purpose remains clear: to grow, develop and support community-based youth work. It is crucially important that young people are able to access safe, quality youth work in their communities. Youth Scotland's support and capacity building approach helps to realise a vibrant and diverse network of member youth work organisations ready to stand beside young people as they manage the difficult transitions in life.

Recent surveys and consultations tell us that Youth Scotland's offer – through our 4 Pillars – is still relevant for our members, youth workers and young people. We will continue to grow, develop and support the network via these pillars but also turn our eye to the future to ensure Youth Scotland remains a charity fit for the future and relevant to our membership, youth workers and young people. Youth Scotland's next strategy will have a focus of future sustainability and place young people's voice at the heart of all we do.

As we continue to horizon-scan a shifting landscape, the people who make community-based youth work happen on the ground are at the heart of our thinking. Youth Scotland is therefore laser focused on the workforce, both voluntary and paid; with over 10,000 workers in our network, we remain committed to ensuring the next generation of youth workers will be confident and competent providing the essential safety net of trusted adults in communities across Scotland.

We have recently articulated many of the challenges that workforce is facing in our new report, [*Acting on Workforce Development: How Youth Scotland's vital work provides support and training for the community-based youth work sector*](#) This latest issue-based impact report, the companion to [*Acting on Poverty: how Youth Scotland's vital work supports the most affected communities*](#) represents our ongoing commitment to represent and advocate for our members. These reports articulate a faithful coverage of the issues grassroots groups are facing in the sector; something we will continue to produce each year.

Mike Strang

Chief Executive

[CALLOUT] “We will continue to grow, develop and support the network via these pillars but also turn our eye to the future to ensure Youth Scotland remains a charity fit for the future and relevant to our membership, youth workers and young people.”

Acknowledgements and Thanks

We acknowledge the support of the Scottish Government for ongoing provision of core funding from the Children, Young People and Families Early Intervention Fund (managed by Corra).

We would also like to say a huge thank you to all our funders and supporters of Youth Scotland projects and programmes including:

- Core funding from the Children, Young People and Families Early Intervention Fund from Scottish Government and managed by the Corra Foundation.
- Funding from the Scottish Government CLD Team in support of our co-ordination role in the Awards Network.
- Generation CashBack, funded by Scottish Government Cashback for Communities and managed by Inspiring Scotland.
- Continuation of our training and capacity building support for youth workers, funded through the Scottish Government's CLD Team and the National Voluntary Youth Work Organisations Support Fund (managed by YouthLink Scotland).
- The Young Islanders Network, funded by the Scottish Government's Islands' Team.
- The Stand Up to Sectarianism programme, funded by Scottish Government's Equalities Division.
- The Growing Community-Based Youth Work programme and the Y2Be youth work and mental health programme both funded by the STV Children's Appeal.
- STEM training for youth workers funded by Scottish Government and managed by Education Scotland.
- Cyber Skills Resilience Programme funded by YouthLink Scotland.
- Scotland The Big Picture Rewilding Partnership, funded by the Scottish Heritage Lottery Fund.
- Participatory Grant-Making Pilot Project, funded by The National Lottery Community Fund.
- Henry Duncan Young Grantmakers programme, funded by Corra Foundation.
- All programmes managed in partnership with UK Youth. Including UPS Road Code funded by UPS; Google Be Internet Citizens funded by Google; Inspire 2022, funded by Spirit of 2012.
- What's Your Big Idea?! Youth microgrant scheme through support from the Audrey Milan Fund.
- Youth Scotland Spring Fund, funded by the STV Children's Appeal and the Scottish Government.

The Trustees would also wish to thank the Meikle Foundation for their donations in support of our work. As always, we would like to make a special thank you to our Area Associations across Scotland, who we work in partnership with as part of the Youth Scotland Network:

- LAYC in Edinburgh and the Lothians
- Lewis and Harris Youth Clubs Association
- Orkney Association of Youth Groups
- Youth 1st in Fife
- YouthBorders
- Youth Highland

And finally, to all our members, volunteers and young people, with whom we achieve such amazing change and positive outcomes for young people across Scotland.

[INSIDE BACK COVER]

[callout quote/image]

“[Youth Scotland] brought much needed support, guidance and knowledge to a group of young people who are either waiting for mental health input or not eligible for mental health services for various reasons e.g. addiction. It also upskilled youth workers and parents who are two groups of people who are often left supporting young people when services are unavailable.”

– Youth Scotland member group

[BACK COVER]

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