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Training to be a trusted adult

Youth Scotland offers a wide range of continuous professional learning and training for youth workers, volunteers and leaders. Trusted Adult Training is a suite of modules to help support young people's health, wellbeing and development. It includes sessions on sexual health awareness, internet safety, understanding autism, forming youth advisory boards and much more.

In this case study, Carolyn, Jack, Sarah and Carrieanne from Haldane Youth Services share their experiences of Youth Scotland's Trusted Adult Training. Haldane Youth Services are a charity based in West Dunbartonshire, working to make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people aged 7 -18 who live within and around the Mill of Haldane. They have four key projects: Mini Hoppers (P1 - P3); Hop, Skip, and Jump (P4 - P7); Project 7 (P6 - P7 transitions); and Ur Turn (S1 - S6). They also have a new 16+ project, The Hub, and they run holiday projects for all age groups. As Youth Scotland members, Haldane Youth Services can access Trusted Adult Training and a range of other opportunities free of charge.



It gives them another space to have those more adult conversations. And again, it's all on the prevention side using the whole family approach as well.



Holistic support for young people

Haldane Youth Services have approximately 200 young people registered with their services. They provide activities every day of the week and think holistically about children and young people's development, tailoring the support they provide to each stage. They are particularly aware of supporting transitions, for example between primary school and senior school, or the end of school.

"In Mini Hoppers we run various activities mostly to get them working together, making friendships, and building their self-confidence. Arts and crafts, Lego... Then it's trying to kind of challenge them and move them on to the next step."

"In Hop, Skip and Jump the young people take the lead on designing all the programme activities. We work with multiple different groups of young people - we call it a design team. So the young people bring forward their issues, their proposal ideas... so that they're learning and engaging in the way they want to."

"For Project 7 we work with the young people who are a wee bit more nervous about the transition from primary to secondary. Cooking seems to come up quite a lot. And I think that's where food poverty is showing more of an impact through the service. You're seeing that there's always a constant need there for a food provision."

"Ur Turn is for young people that are kind of in that in-between stage. So a lot of them might be in high school looking at their next step, so we try and focus on their own issue-based topics and career-based topics. It's all these things where they are going out in the world and it's trying to make sure they're ready."

"With the 16+, there's still a need for them to be attending a group so that's where The Hub comes in. It gives them another space to have those more adult conversations. And again, it's all on the prevention side using the whole family approach as well."

The staff team's journey

Carolyn is the Project Manager, Jack is a Project Assistant, Sarah is a Youth and Play Worker and Carrieanne is a Youth and Outreach Worker. They are passionate about the work Haldane Youth Services delivers and love working together.

"I come from Haldane - it was my local area as a young person. I became a volunteer at Haldane Youth Services and my journey began then. I volunteered probably for about nine years and then the position came up... and I've worked my way up from there!"

"I've been here [in Haldane] my whole life. I came [to Haldane Youth Services] when I was younger so I knew exactly what it was all about. I was always interested in doing work with kids. When the Haldane Youth Services job popped up I thought, yeah, this is kind of the change, the difference I want to make in my life."

"I've got six kids and all of my kids have all come up through the service. And I had went to college and done my HNC in early education childcare and then a position came up and I applied for it! And every day is different in here, and it's great to see the journey of each young person."

"I was coming to the family fun days and I was helping out with activities and the position became available. I was interested in youth work as it's something that I haven't done before. I'm definitely glad I got it!"

"Overall, we've had an amazing journey and we're all still growing as well."



So a lot of young people don't get many opportunities to learn and build skills outside the things that we are putting on.



Addressing needs in the community

Haldane Youth Services is a lifeline for young people and families. The team see many young people who are still recovering from the impact of COVID lockdowns, struggling with social anxiety, their mental health and emotional regulation. They also support families who have been hit hard by the cost of living crisis.

“We’re still seeing the repercussions of COVID. Down the line you would think it would start to disperse but you still see the ripple effect... They weren’t getting the social aspect and they’ve cut themselves off. Everything was all communicated through phones... but they’re not physically looking at each other and talking to each other.”

“So where the young people are from is an area of high poverty... So a lot of young people don't get many opportunities to learn and build skills outside the things that we are putting on.”

“Working with the younger young people... they've not found how to self-regulate with emotions... A lot of them display challenging behaviour, but it's just because they've not found that social skill of regulating their emotions because they've been at home.”

Building social skills and supporting wellbeing

The team have a particular focus on improving the young people's mental health and wellbeing and supporting them to understand their emotions and communicate better.

“We also talk through emotions. We go through all different emotions. It's okay to feel like this and what coping strategies to use and stuff like that. We do a check-in and a check out on wellbeing at the start of every session.”

“With the group games it can be really hard because not a lot of them have found the social skill of getting put out in a game. So obviously working with them, doing more games and saying like 'it's all right to be out, you're in the next round'.”

“We have our sensory room that's available if a young person comes in and they've had a rough day at school or they're just dealing with their emotions. We take them up in a small group so they have someone listening to them.”



I love Youth Scotland. I've always found them a great support through my own personal journey...



Prioritising learning and development

The Haldane Youth Services team are committed to learning new skills and developing their youth work practice. In the last year, team members have taken part in Youth Scotland Trusted Adult Training covering: involving young people in decision making, self-harm awareness, understanding autism, promoting positive mental health, nutrition and health, alcohol awareness, behaviour that challenges and Child Protection Officer training. Previously team members have also completed Ready for Youth Work and the Professional Development Award in Youth Work. They all take responsibility for their own development, but also work together as a staff team to identify training needs.

"I love Youth Scotland. I've always found them a great support through my own personal journey and so I've always pushed my team forward. I've encouraged my team to go for training."

"We do have like weekly meetings where we might identify an area within the week or something that we've noticed... That's where we have our opportunity to find anything that can further enhance our own knowledge and then we're able to have these conversations with young people. It can go from mental health, to sexual health awareness, to alcohol training."

"It's also relationships with families... We've noticed a lot of families are scared to put their young person who has autism into a little group or club because they don't know how to manage or regulate. So an autism awareness training came up, I educated myself on that a lot more. And now we have seen a rise in young people attending our service who have been diagnosed with autism or are on the waiting list [for a diagnosis]."

"We're inclusive to everybody, so it's just doing the training and make yourself more knowledgeable, that's why it's important."

Pursuing and implementing knowledge

The team feel they have learnt valuable lessons from Youth Scotland's Trusted Adult training that have enhanced their youth work practice.

"A lot of the trainings that they go for focus on mental health and wellbeing and that is implemented hugely in every single one of our sessions. It is getting them to that place where they are constantly using every trick in the toolbox."

"Conversations you might not have previously been too confident in discussing because personally you're not too knowledgeable in it, but then it [the training] gives you that increased confidence to actually go out and have that conversation, even though it can be a bit challenging."

"It's that big mashup of all the training all the time because I can use things to have those difficult conversations about alcohol or health or using things from the behaviour that challenges training."

"Now I've changed my role so I've went through my Child Protection Officer training and I've done my Risk Assessments training, and my Bored Meetings. And it just gave me that next level confidence - it means that somebody can come and ask me and I'm able to share my knowledge."

"If you're new to the job role, they always make it fun. And that's what being a youth worker is all about."

"What they're [the team] learning, they're sharing back into the team. But not only that, they're actually passing that on to the young people that they can carry forward through their lives too, which is amazing to see."



Youth Scotland has a fantastic way of teaching but also gives the opportunity to learn from others.



High quality training and peer to peer learning

Haldane Youth Services staff have appreciated the approach of the Youth Scotland trainers, as well as the opportunity to connect with other youth organisations across Scotland.

“Youth Scotland has a fantastic way of teaching but also gives the opportunity to learn from others. See having that conversation with people from other groups you learn so much from each other - it's not just young people who peer-learn! As I said, they [Youth Scotland] have been a fantastic support to our organisation and I love them!”

“The workers are very encouraging in the training sessions. If you've just started or if you have been in the job role a wee bit, when you get put into your teams they still get everyone's opinions which is really good because everyone's got different ways of dealing with things... They encourage everyone to take part.”

“We've actually had the pleasure of having Allan [Youth Scotland staff member] who lived quite close and he would come out and do sessions within the organisation which was a fantastic opportunity. Our young people got involved with the festival makeup as well as the team - they were all glitterfied!”

“With Youth Scotland trainers, obviously the best thing is that it's not a case of 'it's a PowerPoint presentation of regular slides and then we're done'. It's a case of... 'I'm going to tell you what this is. I'll explain what this is. And if you have any follow-up questions, we'll spend the time with the questions'. Then there's always the extra bonus at the end of a training session - it's always asked 'if anyone needs me I can stay behind and you also have my email to get in contact.'”

A hybrid approach

The team felt that in person and online training both have their benefits and that having both options in the Youth Scotland training programme worked well.

“I like a mixture of both. I think it's great to be able to learn in person because you're getting to sit down and talk and interact. But you can do that through the online too, and online can be more convenient to how busy your schedule is.”

“I think in-person is great but not everyone can get to where the training is, so for that purpose, it's great to be online because you can get to chat with other youth workers from all over Scotland.”

“

I had never had any experience working with anyone who's neurodiverse prior to this job. But now I feel very confident – I can kind of understand the way they may be feeling.



Seeing lasting changes

They reflected on what they have taken forward from the training that they attended. Being more confident in their youth work delivery was a key recurring theme.

“I definitely just have the confidence now to go out, have the conversations and actually put into practice what I've been learning. So it does increase knowledge, and it's made me more confident compared to maybe two and a half years ago when I first started.”

“When you first start out in youth work, if you haven't done this kind of job before, you definitely need to build confidence. Using stuff from the training... like we do it every day and we don't even realise it!”

“Definitely confidence in our leadership roles. It makes you more assertive. And you become more knowledgeable and share your practice as well with others.”

“What we try and talk to young people about is that we actually do all the things ourselves. If we were not willing to do it ourselves, we can't expect the young people to do it. Just like the young people, we learn every day. We work as a team. And we bring everything we've learned forward into the service.”

“I had never had any experience working with anyone who's neurodiverse prior to this job. But now I feel very confident - I can kind of understand the way they may be feeling.”

“I've also done 'What's the Harm' [self harm awareness training] and the mental health training where I maybe haven't talked with older groups about that stuff before. Now they come in here and I can have that conversation when it is open and you are asking the questions that best benefit the young people.”



The network
of youth groups



I think it's important to listen to what others are looking for because obviously that's why we still do have so many children and young people coming through the service because they feel that they're getting listened to.

Ambitious for the future

Looking to the future, the staff team are hoping to continue to grow Haldane Youth Service's reach and support more young people in the community. They know that continued learning will be part of that growth, so they can pass knowledge onto young people and keep improving their offer.

"We are a small organisation with a huge impact, and we want that impact to be more - we want to reach more young people. We want to adopt more of a whole family approach. We already do that, but we want to do it more."

"With our young volunteers, trying to get them to complete [Youth Scotland] Youth Achievement Awards because it's something they could be doing with all the hours that they're doing. They could be working towards the platinum at this rate!"

"We want to reach out into the community and be very much the heart and the soul. Just now people want our new Hub with the prevention side - we want that to succeed."

"I think it's important to listen to what others are looking for because obviously that's why we still do have so many children and young people coming through the service because they feel that they're getting listened to. So even in the community as well with certain topics like if there's something people want to know about or need, we can then see what we can do."

The team plan to attend further training with Youth Scotland and will also encourage new staff and volunteers to do the same.

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At school you're around a bunch of people where you kind of need to be who they want you to be. Whereas at Ur Turn we are all so different that you can kind of... We're all a bit – 'you know' – so we can be around our kind of people. Whereas at school, from like first year you're split off into the 'society' names for you. When we're here there's not the popular people and the people that are left out – we are all together.



A safe space for everyone

Youth Scotland offers a wide range of continuous professional learning and training for youth workers, volunteers and leaders. Trusted Adult Training is a suite of modules to help support young people's health, wellbeing and development. It includes sessions on sexual health awareness, internet safety, understanding autism, forming youth advisory boards and much more.

In this case study, Amelia (16), Samantha (16) and Fraz (15), share their experiences of attending the Ur Turn (S1-S6) youth group at Haldane Youth Services every Wednesday, as well as taking part in holiday projects and trips. They reflect on the importance of the group and the strong relationships they have built with their youth workers. Their youth workers have completed a range of sessions from Youth Scotland's Trusted Adult Training suite, which they can access free of charge with their membership.



...as I got to know people in the club and stuff like that, it became something I really do look forward to every week.



Joining the youth group

Samantha has been attending Ur Turn for a year, Amelia for two years and Fraz for almost 10 years! When they first heard about the group, they all wanted to give it a go.

"I found out through my friends, actually... Wednesday night's usually boring, usually sitting on my phone scrolling TikTok, and then my friend was like, 'oh, there's a youth club'. And I've went to like a youth club before, but then it got shut down, but they were saying that like you can do all this stuff and you can go on residential and I'm like 'oh my goodness. I want to go!'"

"I ended up going through the nursery when I was really little. I just went because I thought it sounded like a bit of fun when I was young, so then I just kind of stayed with it since."

"So I found out and at first I kind of, I didn't go as much but as it became more and more fun, as I got to know people in the club and stuff like that, it became something I really do look forward to every week."



Activities and opportunities

The group do a range of activities when they meet on a Wednesday night, as well as going on trips and taking part in holiday projects.

"You can do all kinds of things like... crafts, we sometimes go on trips but obviously they aren't on Wednesdays, karaoke... yeah a lot of crafts and baking and cooking and stuff like that. We play pool. It's really fun."

"Well, recently we've just done a trip where we went to see a bunch of MSPs and stuff. It's like a politics thing."

"We went to Youth Beatz [youth festival in Dumfries and Galloway]. They had producers and stuff, DJs and stuff like that. Rides! It was amazing!"



Challenges in the local area

Outside of Haldane Youth Services, all three of the young people agreed that there wasn't much available for young people. They also mentioned other challenges in the local area with addiction and anti-social behaviour.

"This is like the only thing we kind of have. I guess there's also the dance club just down the street, but that costs, yeah quite a bit. So this really is the only thing we kind of have. There's no much."

"It difficult to stay away from the bad stuff because there's nothing really to do so people get in about the wrong crowd because they have nothing else to do."

"If I'm being completely honest here, I live two minutes up the road and as soon as it turns dark you're not really to be out in the streets - you need to be home after it turns dark... Unless you're here [at Haldane Youth Services]."

"There's a lot of addiction round here. There's also a lot of alcoholics around."



With new members too where they'll try and actually help them kind of get their voice up instead of letting them kind of drown in the back.



A sense of belonging

The young people feel close to their friends that attend youth group with them. They find the group a much more welcoming environment than school, one where everyone belongs.

“Our friends are here and the staff are nice so it's kind of like kind of like a family-based group – we're all kind of like a little family. So I look forward to it because I get to see everyone... a lot of people that go to the group, we're all from different schools. So we don't get to see each other. But the group kind of allows us to interact.”

“We get to see our friends. Obviously, like Amelia said, we don't get to see each other every other day. So being able to come over and see the people that we like is really helpful for you to look forward to.”

“At school, and I'm going to try to say this in the nicest way I can... At school you're around a bunch of people where you kind of need to be who they want you to be. Whereas at Ur Turn we are all so different that you can kind of... We're all a bit - 'you know' - so we can be around our kind of people. Whereas at school, from like first year you're split off into the 'society' names for you. When we're here there's not the popular people and the people that are left out – we are all together.”

Including everyone

The young people appreciate the effort that their youth workers go to in planning activities, as well as the things they do to make everyone feel welcome and ensure everyone's voices are heard.

“They're really friendly and you can tell that they put a lot of work into the meetings. They don't just... like with the baking they don't just put the box on the table and then go sit down they help us and they tell us stuff and they interact with us. They're really kind. They try their best to make us, you know, do what we want to do. We get asked a lot what we want to do...”

“When you have conversations, they make sure everyone's involved but obviously not if you don't want to talk, they won't make you, but like they start off conversations and then two people will talk and then they'll become friends like they'll kind of make those connections.”

“I only joined about a year ago and what I found was that the leaders were trying to help me especially get like acclimated... so they would help me join in and they would let me speak and stuff like that because I was the most recent to join. With new members too where they'll try and actually help them kind of get their voice up instead of letting them kind of drown in the back.”

“I feel like as you get older, like every year they go for that wee bit more independence to do more, independence on what you like and things... when you're little, they keep a very close eye on you but when you're older they give you more freedom.”



...Because obviously they do make it very clear that we can go to them and that they are a safe place.



Trusted adults

The group agreed that they all felt comfortable talking to their youth workers about any issues that were concerning them. This included exam stress, planning for their future, understanding addiction and mental health struggles.

“100% I’m comfortable talking to them. Absolutely, yeah.”

“So a while ago there we did have a meeting about mental health, and as I said it had to come down to addiction a lot of it. There was a lot of discussion afterwards about how we could go forward to kind of talk about these things and help people who need it and obviously we do have people that kind of struggle with some of this and we need to make sure that they have a place that they can feel at home at and feel safe at.”

“If you’re stressed out, if you talk to them about it, they’ll help you find a compromise. Like, I had like an issue where like my school... I wasn’t able to get all my Highers in order to do the course I want to do but then I was able to find another way so that I could do that course. But even just like talking to them helped me feel a lot more calm about it.”

“A lot of it comes down to exam stress because it all does happen kind of along the same time. So as well as talking to each other, we know it’s safe to talk to the youth workers about that. It does help a lot you know.”

“We did have someone in to help us create a CV, and I’ve actually just used that CV to apply for a job and I’ve actually got a reply for that! Because I had no idea. I had like no idea how to write a CV and I thought it was kind of like a personal statement and then I like googled it and it was like a lot more that!”

Youth worker training

The young people thought it was important for their youth workers to access training.

“It’s important for them to get first aid training at any point just in case someone gets hurt and in case there’s nobody there to deal with it. So it’s better if someone is trained and knows how to do it.”

“It’s also really important because obviously like we covered there is people our age who really do need that support and it isn’t always as easy as just asking how you’re doing and stuff. You do really need youth workers doing that training to kind of go through and talk to them... Because obviously they do make it very clear that we can go to them and that they are a safe place.”

“If you go to them about something like your mental health or something... they may not be able to manage that without knowing how they can support us in a respectful way and like a safe way so the training can... help them know how to respond to that.”



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Find out more at:

[www.youthscotland.org.uk/
training](http://www.youthscotland.org.uk/training)

The value of youth work

For each of the young people, Haldane Youth Services holds a special place in their life, and they were excited to share the impact the group has had on them.

"It does help with community and stuff like that. There isn't very much to do around Balloch and quite frankly, like I said, this is something that I do look forward to every single week, as do probably most of us."

"I think we all do need that community and not all of us get to have the opportunity to do that. So I think that having that just for people... it's so important."

"We already have so little. This is just kind of the one thing that we actually get to have for us because obviously like there's a certain age range so we don't come here and have to worry about like turning the corner and then there's going to be like a super old person, you know? It's like a safe place. Yeah, massively a safe place."

Youth Scotland's Training Offer

Youth Scotland offers a wide range of continuous professional learning and training across Scotland for youth workers, volunteers and leaders. Our core training offers an accredited learning pathway for youth work practitioners - from volunteers, just starting out, to managers who have been involved in youth work for years; there is something of benefit to all. Supporting this is our Trusted Adult Training, a suite of training modules to help support young people's health and wellbeing. From sexual health awareness to social media and internet safety.

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