



YouthLink Scotland: Briefing

UK Budget (30/10/24)

What does the UK budget mean for Scotland?

Any parts of the [UK Budget](#) that refer to areas devolved to Holyrood. For example, in health, education or justice, the UK Government apportions funds for the Scottish Government to spend to prioritise within the Scottish context.

Was youth work mentioned in the UK budget?

Youth work was mentioned in the context of funding allocations and some policy initiatives to support young people. Highlights include:

- **Housing** – increased allocation – an increase of 5% to the housing budget in Scotland. Youth work plays a [transformative role in tackling poverty](#). Our recent joint policy briefing on [youth work's role in tackling homelessness](#) with our members' The Rock Trust outlines specifically the areas we can focus this commitment on to level more for the youth work sector and create a better understanding of youth work and housing and the impact of youth work services in this public policy space.
- **Increased Funding for Local Authorities:** There were commitments to provide additional resources to local councils, which *could* benefit youth services.
- **Youth Employment Programmes:** Initiatives aimed at improving employment opportunities for young people indicated a push for skills development and job readiness – something YouthLink Scotland and our members have pursued for some considerable time. YouthLink Scotland has worked with the youth work sector to develop a clear, impactful model that allows youth workers to develop and [track](#) critical skills with the young people they work alongside.
- **Mental Health Support:** The budget included measures to enhance mental health services for young people, directly impacting youth work by addressing critical support needs. [Research](#) in Scotland supports the view that youth work is crucial in public health, particularly in helping young people's mental health and well-being.
- **Community Engagement:** There was an emphasis on funding community projects involving young people, enabling collaboration between youth organisations and local communities.

It remains to be seen how these measures will specifically affect youth work. However, we can use these broad commitments to influence across our channels through our verbal and written advocacy to position youth work more strongly.

What are our partners saying, and how can we help?

Some [sector disappointment](#) is that youth services and prevention have not been prioritised. This is relevant to youth work because we know investment in youth work services prevents more costly interventions in the long term. At the upcoming [National Youth Work Conference](#), we look forward to learning and examining how youth work's early interventions prevent and repair fractures in our communities as we continue amplifying the case for the social return for spending in youth work.

Changes in employers' National Insurance have [drawn consternation](#) in the voluntary sector in Scotland, noting that while there is a welcome increase in Employment Allowance that will protect smaller organisations, these changes will significantly impact many voluntary sector employers. Employing more than 133,000 people across Scotland- 5% of Scotland's workforce (and a significant proportion of those in the youth work sector) - the voluntary sector is a significant employer.

The sector is already strained by rising costs, increased demand, and a pessimistic funding landscape with funding cuts announced on a near-weekly basis; it cannot afford additional financial pressures. Many have already had to subsidise public services with their funds, and increasingly, we hear of enforced [closures of organisations](#).

The National Living Wage has seen a welcome uplift. The UK and Scottish governments must also ensure that all grants and contracts with the sector cover the total costs of employing staff on an ongoing, multi-year basis. The Scottish Government and independent funders must do the same on the journey towards Fair Funding for the voluntary sector. YouthLink Scotland has long supported this message. See our [recent response](#) to the social justice committee regarding key policy lines and the [NVYOS network statement](#).

The extension of the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#) is welcomed as an innovative source of funding for community organisations, delivering to people and communities in Scotland. However, it is disappointing that the budget has been cut by a third.