

# COVID-19 Education Recovery: Youth Work

Update June 2020

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**Youth work – A Guide for Schools** explains how youth work can help schools to close the poverty related attainment gap and improve outcomes for all children and young people. Youth work is particularly well placed to support improvements in:

- Overcoming barriers to learning
- Parental engagement and family learning
- Youth participation and pupil voice
- Wider learning and achievement
- Employability and skills development

This update provides additional information on opportunities to collaborate with youth work in the COVID-19 Recovery Phase. It is intended to support education authorities and school leaders, reflecting Scottish Government guidance on working with partners, to plan and deliver **Curriculum for Excellence in the Recovery Phase**, and ensure **continuity of learning**.

Youth work, both in the voluntary and statutory sectors, can continue to support children and young people in various ways, including:

- **Health and wellbeing**
- **Children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds**
- **Transition**
- **Delivering a blended model of learning**

## Collaboration with youth work during the Recovery Phase

The following are some of the ways youth work could support education recovery. School leaders should work with a range of youth work partners to explore what is possible within their school and community.

### Health and wellbeing

Youth work provides opportunities for children and young people to improve and manage their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, including developing resilience and optimism for the future. Youth workers offer trusted, supportive relationships in both a one-to-one and group setting. This is likely to be particularly important to help children and young people engage effectively in learning during the Recovery Phase.

During lockdown, youth workers may have identified newly vulnerable children, young people and families, as a consequence of COVID-19, and provided practical and emotional outreach support. Working in partnership with youth workers can support a holistic approach to meeting ongoing needs.

### Supporting learners from disadvantaged backgrounds

Collaboration with youth work will be crucial to continue work to close the attainment gap and maximise engagement with learning during recovery. Youth workers deliver support and interventions to close the poverty related attainment gap, both in schools and in the wider community. Consideration of the role of Scottish Attainment Challenge activities beyond the schools gates is likely to be critically important to support vulnerable learners within a blended model of education.





**Pupil Equity Funding: national operational guidance 2020** contains information on funding available to work with partners, including youth work, to support learners in the Recovery Phase. Support and advice on Scottish Attainment Challenge activities through youth work, in both the statutory and voluntary sectors, is also available from **YouthLink Scotland**.

## Transition

In considering support for transition, education authorities and school leaders may wish to consider the support available through youth work. Where positioned to, this may include activities during the school summer holidays and those which focus on key transition points such as school leavers. During the Recovery Phase, ongoing relationships with a youth worker, as a trusted adult, can support children and young people to build resilience and engage with a blended model of learning.



## Delivering a blended model of learning

Youth work, in both the statutory and third sector, has a skilled and PVG checked workforce that delivers progressive learning experiences. These experiences support children and young people to develop a wide range of skills and capacities for learning, life and work, which contribute to the **curriculum**.

Schools may wish to consider where collaboration with youth work can enrich and enhance delivery

of a blended curriculum offer that takes account of individual circumstances, including opportunities outside of school. This may include increased opportunities to be physically active, engage in outdoor learning and recognition of wider learning and achievement including youth awards. For some young people, learning through youth work may continue to form a significant element of their blended curriculum offer, providing tailored experiences to develop and achieve.

Youth workers, including youth award providers, support children and young people to demonstrate their learning, skills, knowledge and understanding. This is likely to be useful to schools in considering alternative approaches to evidence during the Recovery Phase.

Collaboration with youth work, including those in the outdoor learning sector, may also allow schools to explore arrangements that expand or maximise the use of spaces and workforce.

## Benefits of collaboration with youth work

### Improves health and wellbeing

- Supports children and young people to manage the transition to a blended model of education, including help for those at key transition points
- Addresses the impact of COVID-19 on young people's health and wellbeing, including developing resilience and remaining positive about the future
- Helps children and young people to improve and manage their physical and mental wellbeing
- Provides opportunities to connect with friends and youth workers to form supportive, positive relationships
- Helps young people stay connected, stay safe and stay healthy

### Helps young people to thrive and fulfil their potential

- Provides opportunities to learn and achieve, with a focus on mitigating the negative impact of COVID-19 on education and continuing to deliver equity and excellence
- Where positioned, continue developing the young workforce, with advice and support for school leavers and young people affected by the impact of COVID-19 on the job market
- Provides opportunities to develop skills to live, learn and work
- Supports children and young people to express their right to be heard and be part of decisions that affect them.

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## Support and further information

Schools may have youth workers working directly in the school, but there are also many youth work organisations that operate locally outwith the school. The local youth work offer is often co-ordinated by local authorities through a statutory CLD plan. This is likely to include services available through local authority youth work, national and community-based third sector voluntary youth work organisations, including outdoor learning and youth award providers.

You can also find out about opportunities to collaborate with youth work by contacting **YouthLink Scotland**. YouthLink Scotland has a dedicated team working closely with Scottish Government Learning Directorate, through the Scottish Attainment Challenge

Policy Unit, and with Education Scotland's Regional Improvement Teams. YouthLink Scotland's Scottish Attainment Challenge team can offer practical support to develop collaboration with youth work. Examples of existing partnerships can also be found on the **YouthLink Scotland** website.

The Awards Network <https://www.awardsnetwork.org/> is a great resource to find out about the different youth work awards available in Scotland. Youth awards provide valuable opportunities to recognise personal achievement, both in and outside of school. Many youth work practitioners work closely with these organisations to embed recognition of achievement into their programmes.

**For further details please contact Marielle Bruce, Youth Work and Schools Manager: [mbruce@youthlinkscotland.org](mailto:mbruce@youthlinkscotland.org)**



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