



# **Youth and Children's Work Strategy for Edinburgh 2017-20**

**"A commitment to the future of youth and children's work in Edinburgh"**

**March 2017**

# Contents

Foreword.....	3
1 Introduction .....	5
2 What is Youth Work? .....	6
3 Why is Youth Work Important? .....	8
4 Outcomes for Children and Young People .....	9
5 Youth Work in Edinburgh .....	11
6 Improving Youth Work in Edinburgh .....	13
7 Implementation Strategy.....	15
8 A Framework for Implementation.....	16

# Foreword

This strategy was developed by the Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium as a partnership between statutory and voluntary sector providers of youth and children's work. The strategy provides a potential framework for the delivery of children and young people's services, requiring statutory and voluntary providers to actively listen and involve children and young people in the shaping of services, whilst improving collaborative working to maximise the impact of available resources in order to offer better opportunities and outcomes for our young people.

Youth and children's work has a crucial role to play supporting many of the children and young people in Edinburgh to achieve their full potential. Through informal and non-formal learning approaches, effective practice can help build the capacity and resilience of children and young people, enabling them to gain confidence, develop self-assurance and change their lives for the better.

The direction set within this strategy and the actions supporting its implementation seek to strengthen the value, status and positive impact of youth and children's work and maximise the contribution it can make to the strategic priorities of the City of Edinburgh Council.

I have for many years been involved in youth work, both as a professional career, and during my time as an Elected Member. I know the crucial role youth work plays in supporting many of our Capital City's children and young people to achieve their full potential. Our youth work providers throughout Edinburgh work continuously and tirelessly to build their capacity and resilience, and to help change their lives for a better future. We must continue to invest in these services and our future generations.

I am very grateful to all those who took time to engage and share their views in the development of this strategy and welcome its introduction and the difference it aims to make to youth work provision in the city.

Councillor Cammy Day  
Convenor of Education, Children and Families Committee  
City of Edinburgh Council

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Youth work has a long and proud history in Edinburgh going back several generations. Through youth work, countless thousands of children and young people have played their first game of five-a-side football, had their first group discussion about relationships, experienced their first trip abroad, taken sides in their first political argument, developed the confidence to volunteer in their local community, or simply enjoyed for the first time a safe space to be with their friends free from adult interference!.

In a climate where the bottom line threatens to take precedence over the quality of public services, it is all the more important for us to have a plan for how we can work with young people to create exciting and engaging youth work activities across the city. Without ignoring the reality of increasingly tight budgets, youth work has the capacity to be an energising force in young people's lives. The role of thousands of youth work volunteers make a major contribution here.

Groundbreaking research carried out jointly by Edinburgh University and the Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium in 2015 ('Universal youth work: a critical review of the literature') has identified the power of universal youth work to impact positively on young people's health, educational attainment, and employability. This research provided the evidence for what most youth workers already knew intuitively. It is now more important than ever to maintain this type of open youth work in our city.

The City of Edinburgh Council is committed to developing its service delivery through its new locality structure, geared around four geographical quadrants. This means that there will be a growing focus on the local needs of citizens across the city and how these can be best served at local level. We will actively take account of this, as we believe that universal youth work has a vital role to play in local communities - providing a springboard for young people, a sign of adult support within communities, and visible evidence that the city cares about its younger citizens.

We hope you will share our enthusiasm for young people and the youth work which supports them.

Simon Jaquet  
Chair  
Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 **We aim to improve the lives of children and young people aged 5-25 so that they can become confident, happy, fulfilled adults, who contribute to their communities.**
- 1.2 This strategy aims to give direction to those planning and delivering youth and children's work provision and replaces the previous framework for improving youth and children's work in Edinburgh, *Believing in Young People (2009)*. It has been co-produced by a wide range of statutory, voluntary and uniformed youth work services through the Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium (EYWC)<sup>1</sup>. The starting point was YouthLink's *National Youth Work Strategy 2014-19*<sup>2</sup> and the *Statement of Intent for Youth Work in Edinburgh (2015)*. It has also been informed by the views of young people in three significant consultations:
- An online survey of views on youth work completed by 437 young people
  - Structured interviews with 92 young people who engage in youth work across the city, commissioned by EYWC
  - A postcard survey of 90 young people conducted by Leith Youth Services Network
- 1.3 Through the implementation of this strategy youth and children's work providers throughout the city will work in a strategic partnership to develop a consistent offer of high-quality youth and children's work for children and young people in Edinburgh. To achieve this, youth and children's workers will need to be recognised for their distinctive professional skills and expertise, and the impact of youth and children's work will need to be evaluated to ensure the best possible outcomes for our children and young people.
- 1.4 Youth and children's work in Edinburgh has a long history and deep roots. 'Youth work' in Edinburgh often in fact refers to youth and children's work in that traditionally universal services would be offered from 5 upwards. Youth and children's work can encompass a huge variety of work, from children's clubs and play, youth cafes and drop-ins, targeted work, through to employability, accredited courses and volunteering. For the purposes of this document, when we refer to 'youth work' in Edinburgh we are referring to 'youth and children's work'.

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<sup>1</sup> The Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium (EYWC) provides strategic and operational support to youth work services in Edinburgh across the voluntary, statutory and uniformed sectors.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.youthlinkscotland.org/Index.asp?MainID=19180>

## 2 What is youth work?

2.1 The YouthLink Scotland *Statement on the Principles and Purposes of Youth Work (2005)*<sup>3</sup> defined youth work by the following three essential features:

- **Young people and children choose to participate**  
Young people and children take part voluntarily, not least because they want to relax, meet friends and have fun. The young person can decide at any time whether to engage or to walk away.
- **The work must build from where young people and children are**  
Youth work operates on young people's and children's own personal and recreational territory. The young person's and child's life experience is respected and forms the basis for shaping the agenda in negotiation with peers and youth workers.
- **Youth work recognises the young person and the youth worker as partners in a learning process**  
The young person is recognised as an active partner who can, and should, have opportunities and resources to shape their lives. The relationship and dialogue between the young person and youth worker is central to the learning process.

2.2 The youth work services who met together to co-produce this Strategy identified a further four key features of youth work in Edinburgh

- **Youth work takes a non-formal/informal educational approach**  
Informal opportunities to support young people's wider learning and development lie at the heart of the youth work. These should reflect the needs of young people and demonstrate an inclusive approach, enabling young people to try out new things, and develop wider perceptions about their community and a "world view".
- **Youth work promotes the participation of young people**  
Youth work practice is committed to a participative way of working which encourages and enables young people to share responsibility and become equal partners in decision making. Youth workers empower young people by helping them to exercise their rights, express their views and to understand their responsibilities, encouraging them to become active citizens.
- **Youth work supports young people to become more resilient**  
By engaging in youth work young people can learn to take greater control of their lives and be supported to recognise and resist the damaging influences which may affect them. This supports them to become more independent and resilient during the key transitions from childhood to adolescence and youth into adulthood.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.youthlinkscotland.org/Items/View.asp?ItemID=3204&MainID=7616&ID=245>

- **Youth work regards young people as assets not problems**

Youth work practice is aimed at enabling children and young people to identify and develop their own aspirations. Youth workers start from a value base which sees young people as an asset to be nurtured, not a problem to be solved.

### 3 Why is youth work important?

- 3.1 Youth work provision is central to achieving the City of Edinburgh's ongoing commitment to help every child and young person to reach their potential, as set out in the seven Strategic Outcomes of the *Integrated Children and Young People's Plan 2015-18*.
- 3.2 In particular, the informal educational opportunities afforded by universal youth work have a central role to play in helping young people achieve the four capacities of the **Curriculum for Excellence (Strategic Outcome 2)** as highlighted in the *National Youth Work Strategy* (p.12). The youth work approach is especially suited to engaging with young people at risk of disengaging from formal education, improving **Positive Destinations (SO6)**. Youth work provides a range of activities to promote **Health and Wellbeing (SO4)**, and reduces risk taking behaviour by giving young people trusted adults to talk to outside of school and home. The relationships which youth workers build with young people at risk, on a voluntary basis, enables them to intervene at an earlier stage than other professionals, in improving the life chances of **Children in Need (SO3)**. Youth workers need to be valued and resourced, therefore, as a key member of the Team Around the Child, in the **Getting It Right For Every Child** approach.
- 3.3 On a wider level, a well-resourced and supported youth work sector is essential to enabling the city of Edinburgh to comply with a range of legislation promoting the education, health and well-being of young people, including the **Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014**<sup>4</sup>, the **Equality Act 2010**<sup>5</sup> and the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**<sup>6</sup>.
- 3.4 Youth work also supports the broader European agenda – the **EU Youth Strategy (2010–2018)**<sup>7</sup> which aims to provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and in the labour market. It also addresses the **Council for Europe's Agenda 2020**<sup>8</sup> aim for the successful integration of all young people into society, ensuring young people have access to quality education and enabling them to contribute to the development of society.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/contents/enacted>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/UN-Convention/>

<sup>7</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth\\_strategy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth_strategy/index_en.htm)

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/IG\\_Coop/Agenda\\_2020\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/IG_Coop/Agenda_2020_en.asp)



## 4 Outcomes for children and young people

4.1 There are many outcomes that children and young people can achieve when participating in youth work. In the three recent consultations, young people were asked why they attended youth work services. Responses across the three consultations were broadly similar, and can be grouped around three main themes:

- Activities (their quality and range)
- Place to socialise (meet or make friends)
- Supportive Staff (friendly and easy to talk to)

4.2 Expanding on these three themes of Active Participation, Social Development and Emotional Support, some of the specific outcomes children and young people can be expected to achieve are:

### **Active participation:**

- Children and young people enjoy and achieve
- Children and young people make a positive contribution
- Children and young people have their voice heard
- Children and young people enhance/develop their practical skills
- Children and young people learn to manage risk.

### **Social development:**

- Team building
- Communication
- Decision making
- Influencing others
- Leadership skills

### **Emotional Support:**

- Increased levels of confidence and self-motivation
- Improved self-awareness, motivation and self-worth
- Ability to develop and sustain relationships
- Empathy and consideration for others
- Children and young people have greater resilience.

4.3 YouthLink Scotland (2016) also identified the following core **Youth Work Outcomes**<sup>9</sup>:

- Children and young people are confident, resilient and optimistic for the future
- Children and young people manage personal, social and formal relationships
- Children and young people create, describe and apply their learning and skills
- Children and young people participate safely and effectively in groups
- Children and young people consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.youthlinkscotland.org/Index.asp?MainID=20153>

- Children and young people express their voice and demonstrate social commitment
- Children and young people's perspectives are broadened through new experiences and thinking

4.4 These youth work outcomes also contribute to developing the core capacities identified by the **Curriculum for Excellence**<sup>10</sup>:

- Successful Learners
- Effective Contributors
- Active Citizens
- Confident Individuals

4.5 These outcomes also impact on the indicators of wellbeing in the **Getting It Right for Every Child**<sup>11</sup> national practice model:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Achieving
- Nurtured
- Active
- Respected
- Responsible
- Included

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/national-practice-model>

## 5 Youth work in Edinburgh

- 5.1 In 2015 the Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium brought together statutory and voluntary sector youth work partners to develop a *Statement of Intent for Youth Work in Edinburgh*. This *Statement* identified the following key features of youth work practice in the city.

### **Youth work in Edinburgh includes communities of locality and interest**

- 5.2 Youth work takes place on young people's territory, in their own communities. Many youth work services in the city are based in geographical communities, providing a base for children and young people in the area to come together. Other youth work services are based on communities of identity, enabling young people from a defined group, such as LGBTI Youth, to come together from across the city. Some services are defined by both locality and identity, for example, a youth club for girls living in Pilton.
- 5.3 Research undertaken with 437 young people across the city in 2015 confirmed the value of all these forms of community based provision. While the majority of young people expressed a preference for attending services in their "own street or local area" (61%), or their "own part of Edinburgh" (29%), it was noted that respondents from equality groups, including LGBT and BME young people, were more likely to want to travel to the city centre.

### **Youth work in Edinburgh includes universal and targeted provision**

- 5.4 Universal services are openly accessible to any child or young person within a specific community, whether this is defined by geography, identity or both. Targeted services are designed to meet the needs of specific children and young people who have been assessed and referred as requiring a service. The Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium recognises the value of both forms of youth work. The Critical Review of Literature on Universal Youth Work<sup>12</sup> commissioned by EYWC in 2015 summarised research confirming the benefits of universal youth work for improving the educational attainment, employability, health and well being of children and young people. At the same time, in the context of Getting it Right for Every Child, youth workers have an important role to play, alongside other professional such as teachers and social workers, in meeting the identified needs of individual children and young people.
- 5.5 Indeed, one of the distinctive features of youth work services, as they have developed in Edinburgh, is the integration of universal and targeted provision within many successful youth work services. Youth workers regularly attend Child and Young Person Planning Meetings at local schools (formerly Pupil Support Groups) where they identify children and young people who would particularly benefit from a youth club, and offer them extra support to attend. Conversely, children and young people who already attend a youth club will often speak to youth workers about

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.youthscotland.org.uk/news/universal-youth-work-a-critical-review-of-the-literature.htm>

problems they are having at school or in the community, prompting the service to offer them extra support outside the club (self-referral). Partnership working between agencies is also necessary; as per GIRFEC good practice, ensuring children and young people attending a targeted service can be supported to attend a universal youth club, if they wish to attend one. Similarly, children and young people identified in the latter as needing extra support can be referred to an appropriate targeted or specialist provision.

## **Youth work in Edinburgh includes work with children and young people**

- 5.6 The *Statement of Intent for Youth Work in Edinburgh* defined the age range of youth work service users as “children and young people of school age”, while recognising that work “often continues into early adulthood”. In practice, youth workers in Edinburgh work with children and young people from 5 to 25. This definition, which is broader than Youth Link Scotland’s *Statement on the Principles and Purposes of Youth Work (2005)*, was made in recognition of the tradition of valuable youth work practice with children of primary school age, in both statutory and voluntary sectors across the city. Consequently, the EYWC firmly believes that the principles of youth work practice have been shown to be effective with this lower age range, and that building effective relationships as early as possible in a child or young person’s development is in keeping with the priority given to “improving support at an early stage” in the *Edinburgh Integrated Children and Young People’s Plan*.

## **Youth work in Edinburgh takes place in a wide range of contexts**

- 5.7 Youth work in Edinburgh happens in many different places, including dedicated youth centres, other community venues, schools and outside spaces. Youth work is a particular facet of work in schools in Edinburgh with youth work being seen as an essential way of preventing statutory measures using an early intervention approach. Youth work in Edinburgh has also always been delivered by a wide range of agencies, including statutory Community Learning and Development provision, third sector projects in which qualified, paid staff are assisted by volunteers, and uniformed organisations which are entirely reliant on volunteers. Representatives from all these sectors are members of the Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium and have contributed to the development of this Strategy.

## 6 Improving youth work in Edinburgh

- 6.1 The co-produced 'Statement of Intent for youth work in Edinburgh' identified improvement themes, which should be taken forward in a new youth work strategy for the city.

### **Enable children and young people to contribute to the development of youth work services in the city**

- 6.2 Build on the recent consultations conducted by EYWC and City of Edinburgh Council to ascertain the views and wishes of children and young people across the city.
- 6.3 Establish regular youth and children's consultations in every neighbourhood in the city to enable children and young people to influence the delivery of youth work services in each locality.

### **Widen access to youth work opportunities across the city**

- 6.4 Map current youth work services across the city to identify gaps in provision, and develop new initiatives to fill these.
- 6.5 Identify and address barriers to participation in youth work services for equalities groups, including young people living in poverty, young parents, young people with disabilities, Looked After and Accommodated young people, young people from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and young people who identify themselves as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Intersex (LGBTI).

### **Publicise the youth work 'offer' to all young people**

- 6.6 Create a common 'brand', which will promote all youth work opportunities across the city as part of an integrated 'offer'.
- 6.7 Develop a strategy to market this 'offer' as widely as possible, including online platforms, written publicity, schools, and street work.

### **Develop the skills of the youth work workforce**

- 6.8 Ensure accredited progression routes, such as the PDA in Youth Work, for youth workers to develop into professionally qualified staff.
- 6.9 Develop a shared approach and standards for the recruitment, training and support of youth work volunteers across the city.

### **Improve the monitoring and evaluation of youth work services**

- 6.10 Develop shared systems of data monitoring across the city, enabling a more accurate picture of youth work service users, by both postcode and identity (gender, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation etc.).

- 6.11 Assess the impact of youth work services to ensure compliance with the Equality Act regarding age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.
- 6.12 Develop and disseminate models of good practice for measuring and demonstrating the outcomes of youth work practice across a range of service settings.

### **Improve collaboration between youth and children's services at city wide, locality and neighbourhood levels**

- 6.13 Build on the work of the EYWC to further develop youth work across the city .
- 6.14 Build on the work of local youth work forums, such as the Leith Youth Services Network, in co-ordinating service delivery and staff training across neighbourhoods.
- 6.15 Develop new sub groups to oversee the implementation of the Youth work Strategy in each locality.

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- 6.16 The three recent consultations also invited young people to say how youth work services could be improved. Again, responses were broadly similar across the three consultations, with the most popular themes being:
  - More trips/activities
  - Better publicity
  - Open more often/longer
- 6.17 These responses suggest that young people are broadly happy with the **range of services and types of activity offered by youth work providers** in the city, as two of their top priorities (1 and 3) are essentially 'more of the same'. As many young people themselves were aware, both of these would also require more funding. The other main improvement is better publicity (2), which is addressed in the third improvement theme above.

## 7 Implementation Strategy

### Driving Improvement

- 7.1 The Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium (EYWC) will oversee the implementation of the Youth work Strategy across the city.
- 7.2 In order to fulfil this role, the EYWC will continue to include representation from across the statutory, voluntary and uniformed sectors. It will also be important to ensure representation from city wide organisations, as well as from all four localities. In order to ensure a strategic fit with the implementation of the Integrated Children and Young People's Plan, the EYWC will have representation on the Children's Partnership.
- 7.3 Individuals/Sub groups will be tasked to drive the delivery of the Improvement Themes identified in the Strategy:
- Widening Access
  - Marketing and Information
  - Workforce Development
  - Evaluation and Monitoring
  - Youth Engagement
  - Improved collaboration

### Local Relevance

- 7.4 The Youth work Strategy will be implemented primarily at a locality level. Each locality will develop a Locality Improvement Plan, which will be informed by the geographic spread of identified needs and resources already deployed in the area. It will be vital for these LIPs to include a strategic aim for improving youth work in the locality. These strategic aims will be informed by regular programmes of consultation with children and young people.

### Accountable to children and young people

- 7.5 Children and young people will need to know that their views have been heard and that services are relevant to their needs. Regular feedback to young people in the locality areas will be a feature of the implementation strategy.

## 8 A Framework for Implementation

