



**“This world demands the qualities of youth: not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will, a quality of imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the love of ease.”**

**Robert F. Kennedy**

# Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| CashBack for Communities.....  | 1  |
| Introduction.....  | 5  |
| Background.....  | 6  |
| CashBack for Communities' Outcomes.....  | 14 |
| Evaluation Phases.....   | 16 |
| Phase 1.....   | 16 |
| Phase 2.....   | 17 |
| Phase 3.....   | 17 |
| Results.....   | 18 |
| Findings.....  | 19 |
| A. Work with Young People and Others.....  | 19 |
| CB1. Young people have places to go where they feel safe and comfortable.....                              | 19 |
| CB2. Increased participation in positive community-based activity.....                                     | 20 |
| B. Facilitate the personal, social and educational development of young people.....                        | 24 |
| CB3. Increased opportunities to try new things.....  | 24 |
| CB4. Increased opportunities to develop interests and skills.....  | 24 |
| C. Promote inclusion, equity and young people's interests and wellbeing.....                               | 29 |
| CB5. Increased participation by difficult to engage and equalities groups.....                             | 29 |
| CB6. Increased involvement in structured pro-social and healthy activities.....                            | 29 |
| CB7. Greater confidence and self-esteem among young people.....  | 29 |
| Conclusion.....  | 37 |
| Appendix 1: National Occupational Standards of Youth Work.....   | 41 |
| Appendix 2: A comparison of Male and Females before and after the CashBack funded youth interventions..... | 42 |

## Table of Figures

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Figure 1: CashBack for Communities Outcomes and Indicators that YouthLink Scotland accounts for.....                             | 14 |
| Figure 2: CashBack for Communities and Youth Work Functions.....   | 15 |
| Figure 3: Numbers of participants achieving Cash Back for Communities Outcomes .....   | 18 |
| Figure 4: Comparison of Before and After ratings for before (2015-16) and after (2016-17) the CashBack funded interventions..... | 26 |

## Introduction

[CashBack for Communities](#) is a Scottish Government programme which invests funds recovered from the proceeds of crime into free activities and programmes for young people across Scotland.

Since 2008, £92 million recovered under the Proceeds of Crime Act has been committed to the CashBack for Communities Programme and other community initiatives. The programme has funded 2 million activities and opportunities for young people. The [Youth Work Fund](#) is an important strand of the CashBack for Communities initiative where YouthLink Scotland works with local panels to distribute small grants that help build the capacity of young people and the youth work organisations that support them.

Catch the Light was asked to evaluate the benefits of the Youth Work fund over a three-year period. By focusing on six case studies, the evaluation seeks to engender *a deeper understanding of ways in which CashBack for Communities outcomes are achieved in youth work settings*. Consequently, the report features a discussion on the *distinctive characteristics of youth work*.

The following report therefore describes the background, sets out the evaluation methods and presents the findings.

## Background

Inspiring Scotland is the body responsible for overseeing the CashBack for Communities programme on behalf of the Scottish Government. It has developed a logic model which charges funded organisations with the following goal:

*“To expand the horizons of young people, families and other community members and increase opportunities to develop interests and skills in enjoyable, fulfilling and supportive ways, though sporting, cultural, educational, developmental and social activities.”*

Three evaluations of the Youth Work Fund have gone before. Catch the Light previously confirmed that CashBack for Communities funding gives a lifeline for many youth organisations struggling to sustain important local services during this ongoing time of austerity, where many organisations have experienced year on year cuts to funding.

YouthLink Scotland - the sector's umbrella body has administered the CashBack for Communities fund in a way that reflects youth work principles and practice, which is respected among recipients. The £500,000 made available in 2012/13 was distributed to 175 groups to engage 33,000 young people in positive youth work activities. Therefore, the small-grants distributed succeeded in reaching high numbers of young people during this period. YouthLink Scotland's devolution of decision-making to local panels allows for funding to be prioritised according to local knowledge and strategies. In a few cases partners have innovatively agreed a collaborative programme of youth interventions for their area. In the spirit of youth work's commitment to advancing democratic participation, some panels involve youth representation.

This report portrays six examples of ways youth work organisations are making good in a challenging climate. In using a case study approach the evaluation identifies individual and collective changes that occur as young people, youth workers, youth interventions and their external environments interact. In turn, this gives the wider youth work sector new tools to track and report on the impact of their work while giving funders new ways to interpret the sectors' contribution.

Funds allocated from 2015 to 2017 were followed in this study. Chosen for the range of urban or rural contexts and the diversity of youth work approaches deployed, the six organisations are:

- **The Attic** – youth drop-in facility, Brechin, Angus
- **Regen:fx** – youth regeneration project in Larkhall, South Lanarkshire known as ‘The Street’
- **LGBT Scotland** – local services based in Dundee, Dundee City
- **Temple Shafton Youth Project (TSYP)** – Youth Club, West of Glasgow, Glasgow City
- **Vogrie Project (Let Nature Nurture)** – Outdoor environmental education project, Midlothian
- **I-Zone**<sup>1</sup> – detached youth work and youth hub, Greenock, Inverclyde

Below is an overview of each of the case studies organisations. The pages also show a total of the CashBack funding they received over three years, and the number of young people that benefited.

---

<sup>1</sup> **The I-Zone** is part of Inverclyde Council’s wider youth work services. The team decided not to apply for additional rounds of CashBack funding as they were aware that smaller organisations were struggling to attract funding and they stepped down to allow those organisations to gain access. Nevertheless, Inverclyde Youth Work Services remained part of the evaluation case studies so that their story was continued beyond CashBack funding.

# The Attic



£12,110



359 young people

YouthLink  
Scotland  
The national agency for youth work



The Attic provides young people with a safe, welcoming, fully equipped drop-in facility free from drugs and alcohol. It is open to young people over the age of 12 years. It is open four nights per week from 6.30PM to 10.15 with free entry and membership to local young people.

Young volunteers work to gain experience of youth work and are accredited through the Saltire Awards scheme. Together with adult workers they create a family-like atmosphere that is informal but with constant attention to setting high standards with good behaviour and attitudes expected from all members. Activities undertaken are aimed at improving the well being and social education of young people transitioning into secondary school and onto further education, training and employment.

A key part of the Attic's approach is its strong community connections. Young people are encouraged to do voluntary activities that make a difference to community life in a rural Angus town. From delivering Christmas cards to assisting at community events, the profile and relationships between young people and the wider community are constantly worked on. This in turn leads to more local investment in youth activities and the creation of experiences, training and work opportunities for young people to benefit from.



WEBSITE

[www.theatticbyp.typepad.com/](http://www.theatticbyp.typepad.com/)



# Regen:fx



2014-17  
£13,818

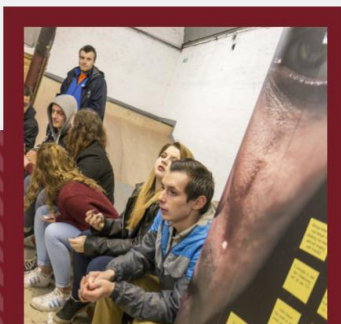
2014-17  
810 young people



Regen:fx Youth Trust develops and delivers youth diversionary programmes that reduce youth disorder in communities. Targeting 'hots spots' identified as having high incidence of youth crime young people are engaged in a range of positive activities designed to develop personal and social skills.

Acclaimed for its innovation and powerful impact, 'The Street' was developed to tackle some of the consequences of poor decisions and negative behaviours that affect young people in adolescence. Situated in a large industrial warehouse, groups attend a full re-enactment of crime scenes and risky situations that are commonly encountered. The scenes use all the hi-tech effects of stage and screen with trained actors playing real life stories to make scenarios as realistic and impactful as possible. The workshops challenge participants to consider the causes and short to long-term consequences of every decision faced in those crucial moments.

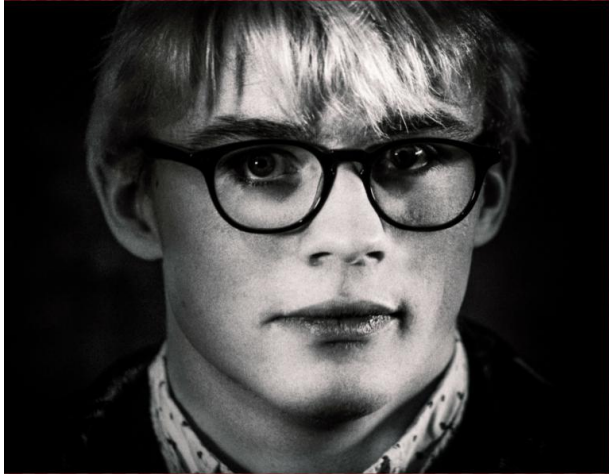
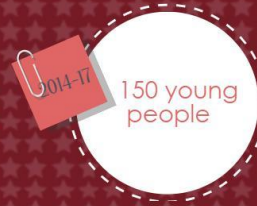
What's more the scripts, acting and back-stage roles are all carried out by young people that have themselves experienced, or been at risk of involvement in offending and anti-social behaviour. Their positive contribution to Regen:fx therefore becomes an important part of their own diversionary path towards more positive life choices. Crucial to 'The Street's' success is the support and back-up provided by highly skilled and experienced youth workers. Workers are adept at using dialogical techniques to raise questions about behaviour, morals, attitudes and decision-making so that many of life's risks are laid bare and discussed whilst making sure visiting groups leave with insight and confidence to make sound judgements in difficult situations.



## WEBSITE

[www.regenfxhub.org/regenfyouthtrust.org](http://www.regenfxhub.org/regenfyouthtrust.org)

# LGBT Dundee



LGBT Youth Scotland is the national youth organisation leading on the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people in Scotland. It supports the development of local support services providing specialist youth work and youth support groups, training and outreach. It also works in partnership with a wide range of local services to make them more inclusive and accessible to LGBT young people.

In acknowledging their own sexual identity young people fear rejection from families, friends and communities. This increases the challenges of navigating their way through adolescence and into adulthood. The Allsorts group in Dundee provides individual support, group support, training and wider awareness raising on issues relating to rights, responsibilities, health, mental health and life choices. We support young LGBT people to raise their voices, raise their resilience and raise awareness of themselves and of improving equalities within the wider community. The evaluation shows strong improvements were made in sociability and mental well-being.



## WEBSITE

[www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/dundee](http://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/dundee)

# Temple Shafton



2014-17  
£16,086

2014-17  
737 young people



Temple Shafton Youth Project (TSYP) is a local youth project that firmly places young people at the helm to lead all the youth programmes and projects which run throughout the year. Responding to demands to be open when and where young people need us, our open door policy means young people can come to the drop-in on any of the 6 nights we are open. Importantly this includes Saturday and Sunday evenings when most other provision locks its doors. Young people drop-in to do their homework, use our IT equipment or just to keep warm, safe, meet friends and chat to youth workers. Our youth workers are trained to recognise signals of risks and to take an active interest in the day to day details that young people are ready to share. Why is that young person not smiling? Why are they not wearing a jacket? Why were they not here this week? These small observations lead to an environment where workers assist young people with family problems, financial hardship, relationships and difficulties at school.

At the same time TSYP promotes opportunities that let young people enhance positive learning, skills, knowledge and experiences. We offer accredited learning through Dynamic Youth Awards and Duke of Edinburgh Awards up to Gold Level with costs subsidised making it accessible to young people that experience high levels of deprivation. We go on residentials, expeditions and international exchanges. We run workshops in a variety of skills from knitting to kyaking with many of our young members going on to become trained and qualified youth workers.



WEBSITE  
[www.tsyp.co.uk](http://www.tsyp.co.uk)

# Vogrie Project



2014-17  
£8,518

2014-17  
60 young people



This project has become known as "Letting Nature Nurture" in recognition of its impact. We have learned that being in the outdoors, away from the day to day challenging environments which many young people face nurtures young people's positive characters, strengths and skills.

The project was sparked by a discussion with young people engaged in CLD services in Midlothian. Young people identified as being at risk of offending and other negative social outcomes were being referred to our services yet our previous offering needed to do more to successfully capture and sustain their involvement. Recognising that so many individuals attended on empty stomachs, making good food available was an important foundation.

Building on this we explored ways to develop social skills, gain Duke of Edinburgh accreditation and develop vocational skills. On taking account of our surrounding countryside we realised that connecting with our parks and outdoor environments would create innovative learning opportunities that were underutilised, with surprisingly few young people having visited them.

Young people are regularly collected by mini buses and taken to different woodland locations where they learn to safely use the tools and crafts needed for working in horticulture and woodland management. Through team and individual coaching and mentoring, relationships are formed with youth workers seeking to nurture positive characteristics such as respect for self and others, risk management, time keeping, commitment, team work, and a love of nature and the great outdoors. Social time and interaction occurs round our communal camp fire - a key focal point which maintains positive group working.



## CONTACT

[www.midlothian.gov.uk](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk)

# I-Zone



2014-16 £12,037

2014-16 156 young people

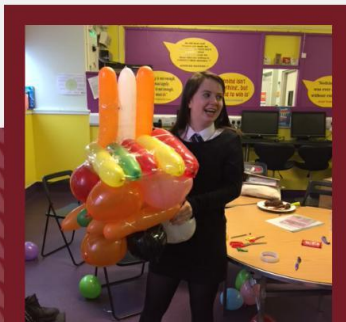


Greenock's I-Zone provides a safe place for young people to participate in pro-social activities, gain access to advice and information and get support from youth workers to deal with the impact of poverty, education, work and relationships.

The engagement process uses an approach called 'detached youth work'. Instead of waiting for young people to turn up at our premises workers proactively walk the streets, talking to groups of young people that are often disengaged from mainstream life. This is backed up with mapping activities and keeping a contact diary. The work is designed to counteract consistent reports in research which highlights that groups regularly hanging around in urban areas is a common predictor of delinquent and antisocial behaviour.

Detached youth work is therefore a high intensity form of youth work, that can only be undertaken by workers with sufficient levels of training and experience. It is nevertheless one of the most effective ways of reaching young people that are least likely to find their own way into regular after school programmes. After forming relationships with particular groups and individuals, street workers seek to move young people off the street by taking them to the I-Zone where they can try out a wide range of activities and access one to one support to deal with the multiple issues that hold them back from achieving their full potential.

The I-Zone did not apply for CashBack funding during 2016-17, however they continued to act as one of the case studies for this evaluation.



## WEBSITE

[www.inverclyde.gov.uk/community-life-and-leisure/community-learning-development/youth-work/i-youth-zone/greenock-i-youth-zone](http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/community-life-and-leisure/community-learning-development/youth-work/i-youth-zone/greenock-i-youth-zone)

# CashBack for Communities' Outcomes

Figure one details the outcomes (left hand column) and indicators (right hand column) which YouthLink Scotland reports on to Inspiring Scotland.

Figure 1: CashBack for Communities Outcomes and Indicators that YouthLink Scotland accounts for

|   |  |
|---|--|
| CB1.Young people have places to go where they feel safe and comfortable   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Young people are relaxed in the youth club environment</li><li>•Young people understand and adhere to the ground rules of the club.</li></ul>                                 |
| CB2.Increased participation in positive community-based activity          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•An increased number of young people accessing the youth work opportunities on offer</li><li>•New members join the group</li></ul>   |
| CB3.Increased opportunities to try new things                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•The youth work programme contains a variety of new opportunities for group members</li><li>•Young people are supported to take on leadership roles within the group</li></ul> |
| CB4.Increased opportunities to develop interests and skills               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•The youth work programme offers a range of engaging skills based activities</li><li>•An increased number of young people actively participate in new activities</li></ul>     |
| CB5.Increased participation by difficult to engage and equalities groups  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Greater diversity of young people accessing activities.</li><li>•The demographics of group reflect the demographics of the youth population in the local community</li></ul>  |
| CB6.Increased involvement in structured pro-social and healthy activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•An increased number of young people engage in the programme opportunities</li><li>•All available learning opportunities are utilised by young people</li></ul>                |
| CB7.Greater confidence and self-esteem among young people                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Young people are willing to try new things</li><li>•Young people take on leadership roles within the group</li></ul>  |

Figure two groups the outcomes into three main youth work functions (A, B and C), as defined in the National Occupational Standards of Youth Work<sup>2</sup> [see figure 2]:

Figure 2: CashBack for Communities and Youth Work Functions



The standards underpin all professional training in youth work across a wide spectrum of roles from volunteer youth worker to youth work manager. The close alignment shown here sets a contextual case for Youth Work being a wise investment for CashBack for Communities. Some of the features which distinguish it from other professions that may engage with young people are:

- **having a dedicated focus on young people;**
- **specialising in personal, social and educational development, and**
- **being inclusive without being predicated on a singular interest, skill or capacity**

Youth Work, therefore has an intrinsic bias towards achieving the defined CashBack for Communities outcomes. It has a critical role in enabling young people to pursue their personal and social interests in sports, arts, education, outdoor and leisure activities or simply to pause and do nothing as may at times be necessary. Consequently, the report presents evidence of youth work's unrivalled contribution to CashBack outcomes, that has capacity to improve and extend beyond current achievements.

---

<sup>2</sup> View the National [occupational standards in Youth Work](#)

# Evaluation Phases

There were three main phases of evaluation:

- **Phase 1** – familiarisation with case study groups, including induction, observation visits, interviews and an audit of CashBack applications and reports
- **Phase 2** – introducing a model called Compass Advantage to review and measure the social and emotional progress made by young people
- **Phase 3** – case study interviews with workers and young people and an audit of funding reports.

## Phase 1

Phase one began by bringing all case study organisations together for a briefing on the proposed methods. Thereafter, Catch the Light conducted observations of practice in each organisation. The purpose of these was to talk to youth workers and young people about the nature of the evaluation, the approaches they adopted and identify ways their work was likely to meet the CashBack for Communities outcomes. At the end of phase one, there was an audit of the reports submitted to YouthLink Scotland which detailed the following:

- **Funding Awarded** – the amount awarded in that round which ranged from £3,508 in Temple Shafton Youth Project (TSYP) in Glasgow to £7,678 for the I-Zone in Inverclyde
- **Expenditure per participant** - the amount expended on every young person taking part to indicate if it was a high or low intensity intervention
- **Purpose** – the purpose intended for the grant (which is usually only a small proportion of a wide range of other investments)
- **CB Objectives – the areas** - the specific CashBack objectives such as access and participation or learning and progression
- **Youth Work Functions** - which youth work function is being demonstrated
- **Achievements** – what was achieved by the organisation and participants
- **Attainment** – which awards and accreditation were attained
- **Outputs** – the number of participants engaged and the number of sessions or hours delivered
- **Outcomes** – the CashBack outcomes and indicators the work corresponded to
- **Example** – an example of ways the outcomes were achieved



Information from the joint briefing, individual visits and end of year reports was brought together to produce a [web resource](#) where information on the case study organisations and the evaluation work is curated.

## Phase 2

The second phase of the review focussed on a self-evaluation framework that was developed to assess the impact youth work interventions have on the case study participants. The self-evaluation is structured according to eight abilities defined in the Compass Advantage<sup>3</sup> framework. The abilities were assessed on a scale of 1 (Not Good) to 5 (Highly Advanced) to indicate changes in progress that can be attributed to the youth work interventions. Individuals were identified from this process to provide stories that would be gathered as part of the follow-up interviews. The framework gave a means to articulate both the abilities that youth workers are develop in young people as well as a way of understanding different approaches and the variety of effects on different categories of young people.

## Phase 3

Interviews were conducted with youth workers and young people, to build a narrative of ways in which different youth work approaches influenced the changes observed during phase two. Accordingly, the findings communicate compelling examples of youth work's capacity to support CashBack for Communities in achieving its medium and longer-term aims, as presented in the findings.

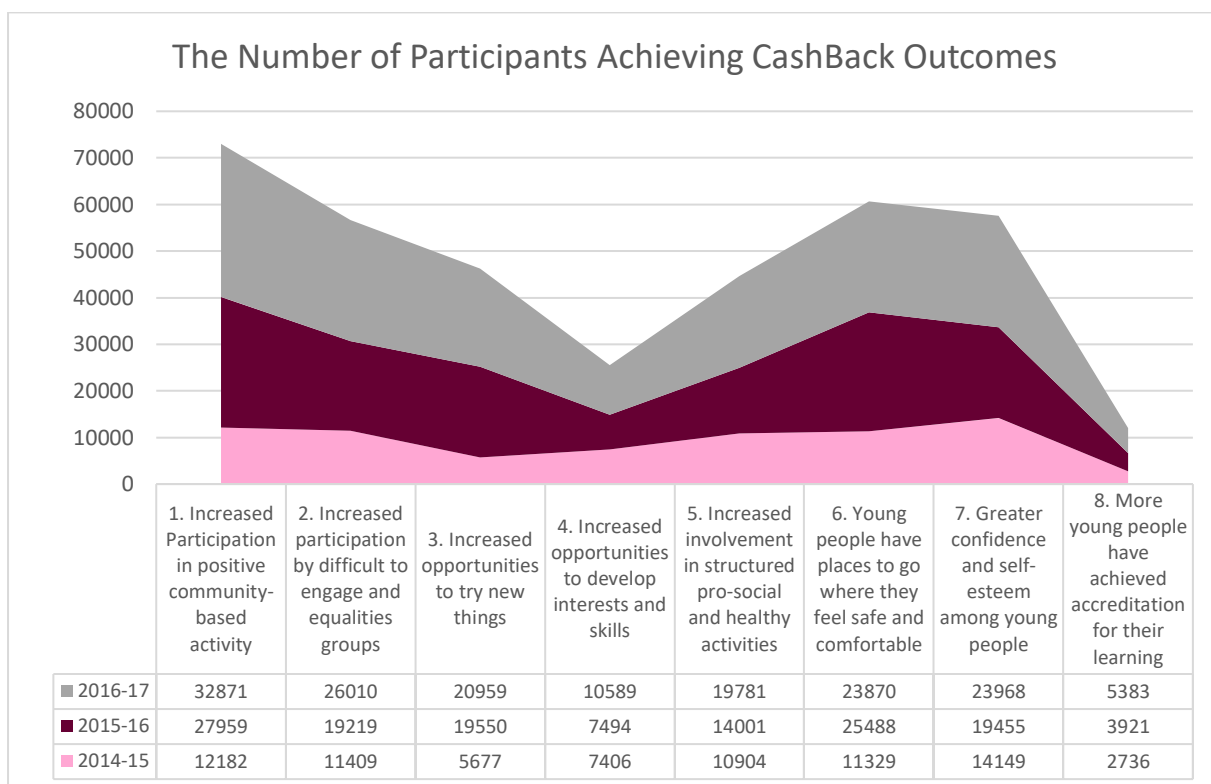
---

<sup>3</sup> The Compass Advantage: A Model for Positive Youth Development by Marilyn Price Mitchell PhD.  
[Web: <http://www.rootsofaction.com/explore/> ]

# Results

The end of year returns submitted to YouthLink Scotland show that high numbers of participants are reported to have achieved the CashBack for Communities outcomes [See figure 3].

Figure 3: Numbers of participants achieving Cash Back for Communities Outcomes



The chart shows that over the three years 73,012 young people have increased their participation in positive community based activity. The second highest impact was that 60,687 young people had places to go where they felt safe and comfortable. In third place, 57,572 young people are reported to have greater confidence and self-esteem.

Nevertheless, a difficulty with this form of self-reporting, is that there is no way of explaining how this impact has been made. Consequently, the case study approach sought to understand the narrative behind the data. The case studies therefore probe into why those three outcomes showed the greatest numerical impact and whether lower impact regarding 'increased opportunities to develop interests and skills' (25,489) is a weakness in youth work delivery or if there are other possible reasons.

## Findings

The findings are presented under the headings of three Youth Work functions and their corresponding CashBack for Communities outcomes. The functions are A - Work with Young People and Others; B - Facilitate the personal, social and educational development of young people and C - Promote inclusion, equity and young people's interests and wellbeing.

### A. Work with Young People and Others

#### CB1. Young people have places to go where they feel safe and comfortable

One of the documented success factors of youth work is the need for young people to be assured of their physical and emotional safety. Robertson<sup>44</sup> described youth clubs as a place where young people can gain real power and ownership as well as a place to excel, explore their true characters and have fun. Youth workers in our case studies identified the importance of open access, coupled with the freedom for participants to choose their own levels of engagement:

*"I think firstly for us it's the free admission...And it's a drop-in centre so you can come and go as you please. We don't make young people stay, they're not committed to doing something, everything is optional." (The Attic, Youth Worker)*

*"This is definitely a safe place for young people. They can come in here and have a laugh with staff and other young people. For the hour and a half, they're in here they don't have to worry about anything outside." (TSYP, Youth Worker)*

Robertson alludes to a youth work tactic of liberating young people from settings such as school or home where they have reason to feel unsafe. This example from the LGBT group in Dundee reveals that coming together with other LGBT young people removes hazards they face in a mainstream society that can be less tolerant of their differences:

*"The loneliness I felt was extremely stressful and this affected my mental health. When dealing with issues of gender identity there are dangers around as you look*

---

<sup>44</sup> Robertson, S. (2000) 'A warm, safe place: an argument for youth clubs' : Reproduced for Infed with kind permission from Youth and Policy. First archived May 2002. [Web: [http://infed.org/archives/e-texts/robertson\\_clubs.htm](http://infed.org/archives/e-texts/robertson_clubs.htm) ]

*to connect to the outside world. You're subjected to name calling and physical abuse. As you look for connections it leads to using the internet and social media which isn't the best thing and you can very easily be exposed to dangerous situations. Now I feel liberated, empowered and happy. 'Allsorts' offers a safe place for young LGBT people, a place where I can be myself without judgements being made." (LGBT Dundee, Young Person)*

Safe places in youth work are not therefore limited to a building or youth centre. Outdoor learning is equally valid. In the Vogrie Project participants regularly met in a woodland area, where the outdoor setting and workers' non-judgemental approaches made participants feel safer than when they are in a formal school setting, as this participant enthused:

*"The Vogrie Project gave me new skills and motivation to move on to other things in rural skills work. I didn't know I would like it as much as I did [because of negative experiences in school]. The staff were amazing and accommodating and very down to earth. They made sure you got the most out of what you were doing, and made learning outdoors fun." (Vogrie Project, Young Person)*

Therefore, youth work has a high impact on this outcome due to providing a safe-haven indoors or outdoors, offering safety from abuse and the safety of trusting relationships with adults and peers.

## **CB2. Increased participation in positive community-based activity**

When reviewing the number of participants and the amount of grant offered, there is no apparent connection between them. In most cases the numbers remained reasonably steady, while the CashBack grant fluctuated up or down [see figure 3].

Figure 3: Year on Year breakdown of the number of participants and the amount of grant awarded

|   | Vogrie Project | The Attic | LGBT Dundee | Regen:fx The Street | Temple Shafton YP | I-Zone |
|---|----------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------|
| <b>Total Number of Participants</b>         |                |           |             |                     |                   |        |
| <b>2014-15</b>                              | 17             | 107       | 50          | 364                 | 205               | 134    |
| <b>2015-16</b>                              | 25             | 115       | 44          | 238                 | 245               | 22     |
| <b>2016-17</b>                              | 18             | 137       | 56          | 208                 | 287               |        |
| <b>CashBack for Community Grant Awarded</b> |                |           |             |                     |                   |        |
| <b>2014-15</b>                              | £4300          | £3980     | £1800       | £5390               | £3508             | £7678  |
| <b>2015-16</b>                              | £1920          | £4030     | £4940       | £3892               | £5846             | £4359  |
| <b>2016-17</b>                              | £2298          | £4100     | £4070       | £4536               | £6732             |        |

Potential explanations for the relative stability is that the CashBack pots are being combined with other resources, as organisations find ways to continue to provide local youth services against a backdrop of cut-backs.

Data from applications and end of grant reports, confirms that more than 90% of the funding was used for sessional staffing budgets, leaving little if any for activities and resources. Most organisations received less than they applied for and had to supplement the remaining costs from other sources of income. This includes examples of participants organising their own fundraising to pay for activities.

Farthing<sup>5</sup> argues that the true merit of participation depends upon the type of society we want for young people in the first place. Effective youth work practice moves young people along a continuum of participation from what Hart's<sup>6</sup> ladder of participation defines as tokenistic, towards gaining more power and control over the democratic decision-making and becoming active citizens.

<sup>5</sup> Farthing, R (September 2012) 'Why Youth Participation? Some Justifications and Critiques of Youth Participation Using New Labour's Youth Policies as a Case Study'; Youth & Policy No 109 [Web: [http://www.youthandpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/farthing\\_why\\_youth\\_participation.pdf](http://www.youthandpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/farthing_why_youth_participation.pdf)]

<sup>6</sup> Hart, R. (1992) 'Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship' Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre [Web: [www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/childrens\\_participation.pdf](http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/childrens_participation.pdf) ]

One example of this came from Inverclyde, where such engagement has led to this young person being offered a place at Dundee University to study politics.

*"I have been coming to I-Zone for about 4 years...When I started here I was quiet, shy, and not sure of myself. The staff have pushed and supported me to do things I didn't know I was capable of. They gave me consistent feedback about how well I was doing and guidance to help improve myself. I am really interested in politics and that is something I would never have thought. But by giving me the opportunity and supporting me to get involved in various groups I want to have a career in politics. I am part of the Youth Council that makes sure young people in Inverclyde have a voice in decision making." (I-Zone, Young Person)*

The concern among CashBack's 'Youth Work Fund' recipients is that the outcomes give the impression that there is more weighting on the numbers of participants involved than the added benefits of their progressive approach to participation.

An added challenge for the case studies is they all claimed in their application that the CashBack for Communities funds were necessary for sustaining ongoing youth work activities rather than starting anything new. Organisations therefore feared being penalised for any downward trends resulting from reduced overall investment. These youth workers explained how CashBack funding is used to add extra hours to existing services:

*The impact of CashBack means we were able to reach the more excluded and vulnerable young people at weekends when they most needed support".*

*"Without it we would lose two nights of provision where we'd have to just close the doors, and let down 70 plus young people."*

While this youth worker raises how important a lifeline it is for the young people as well as the organisation:

*The impact over the years of this CashBack funded project both on young people and the local communities is phenomenal and we often hear young people say that 'if the group wasn't there I wouldn't be here'. I would really like to thank CashBack for their continuing support of our work in the city." The funding really does save lives."*

This comment highlights the mixed emotions over the pros of receiving the funds and the cons of it being so small:

*“To be honest it’s such a small amount of money therefore it doesn’t have a great impact. What it does help with is contributing to paying for a part time sessional member of staff. We have been running for six years and we have always had a cocktail of funding so, every little bit helps and we are eternally grateful.”*

By doing whatever they must to sustain what youth services they have, the data masks the real extent of what CashBack for Communities funding affords the organisations concerned. Nevertheless, the case studies gave clear evidence that they proactively engage young people in a progressive process of participation. Some, such as the Vogrie Project do this intensively with small groups of young people while others such as TSYP and the Attic provide more open forms of access to large numbers of young people and build up more progressive engagement from where the young people begin.

**Although the numbers of participants are not necessarily rising each year, there is evidence that youth workers build ladders of opportunities for young people to progress along and achieve positive goals. Increasing participation appears to be dependent on a range of factors such as how intensive the approach is, how many participants are expected to engage, how long participants engage for and the extent to which wider funding targets and matched funding is secured. Locked into a regime of multiple funding sources, there is no straightforward way to distinguish the youth work participants being funded by CashBack for Communities funding from other sources of investment.**

## B. Facilitate the personal, social and educational development of young people

### CB3. Increased opportunities to try new things

### CB4. Increased opportunities to develop interests and skills

Contrary to the national results on outcomes (see page 18), evidence from case study participants is that youth work gives numerous opportunities for young people to try new things and develop their interests and skills. Expectations over what those opportunities, interests and skills should be is less clear.

Smith<sup>7</sup> wrote that both in schools and in youth work there are many confusions and tensions over the use of the term personal and social education. In grappling with these the Education and Skills Committee of the Scottish Parliament recently called for evidence on the topic.<sup>8</sup> Smith concluded that whilst the term once offered a promise of a better way to define youth work, it now requires a wholesale restructure.

Paying heed to his advice, the case study evaluation drew upon the Compass Advantage framework devised by Marilyn Price Mitchell (PhD) in the U.S. The eight abilities in the framework are deemed in research as essential to the successful development of young people. These are:

- **Curiosity** - Ability to seek new knowledge, skills and ways of understanding the world – critical thinking & a love of learning.
- **Sociability** - Ability to understand and express feelings & behaviours that facilitate positive relationships - active listening & self-regulation.
- **Resilience** - Ability to meet and overcome challenges in ways that maintain or promote wellbeing - confidence, perseverance & initiative.
- **Self-Awareness** - Ability to examine and understand who we are relative to the world around us - self-reflection, gratitude & mindfulness.
- **Integrity** - Ability to act in ways consistent with the values, beliefs and morals we hold - courage, honesty & authenticity.

---

<sup>7</sup> Smith, M (2001) 'Beyond social education'; Infed [Web: [http://infed.org/archives/developing\\_youth\\_work/dyw5.htm](http://infed.org/archives/developing_youth_work/dyw5.htm) ]

<sup>8</sup> See the full report here: <https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnep.azureedge.net/published/ES/2017/5/22/Let-s-Talk-About-Personal-and-Social-Education-1/7th%20Report,%202017.pdf>



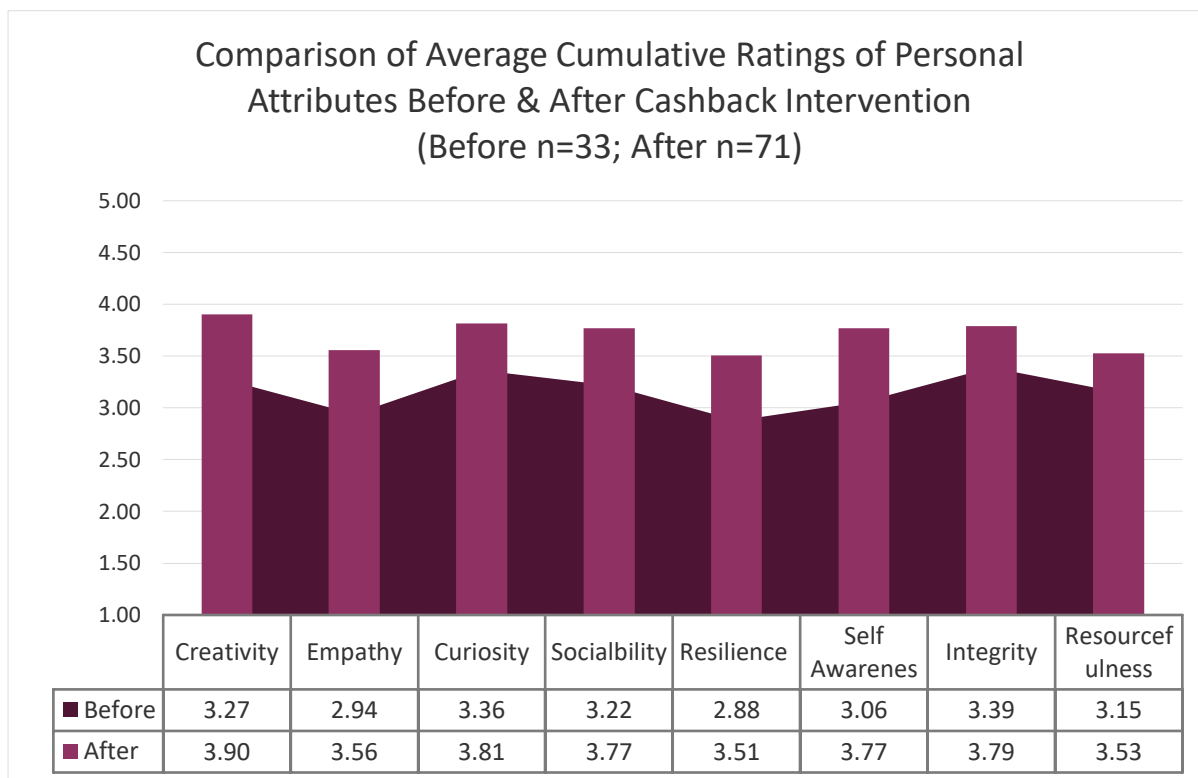
- **Resourcefulness** - Ability to find resources to achieve goals, solve problems & shape the future - plan, organise and make decisions.
- **Creativity** - Ability to generate & communicate original ideas and to appreciate the nature of beauty.
- **Empathy** – Ability to recognise, feel and respond to the needs and suffering of others

Whilst not intended as a measurement tool, a self-evaluation form was created in accordance with the eight abilities, with scores from 1 (Not Good) to 5 (Highly Advanced) to give a proxy indicator of progress among participants from 2015-16 (before the CashBack funded intervention) and 2016-17 (after the CashBack funded intervention).

Three of the case study organisations provided baseline data during the 2015-16 round of the Youth Work Fund, with responses from 33 participants. All six case studies gathered responses from young people towards during the 2016-17 round of the Youth Work Fund, with data from 71 participants. The missing data from three organisations makes the before and after analysis less reliable for comparison than hoped. Nevertheless, the findings reveal trends which are worthy of attention and would benefit from exploring in future.

To try new things and get maximum benefit from the opportunities on offer young people need to be open to change and be ready to take risks. This requires developing young people's intrinsic abilities defined within the Compass Advantage framework. Average scores indicate an overall improvement in all eight abilities. Before the CashBack intervention, the average cumulative score across all abilities was 25.3 from a potential maximum of 40. This rose to an average of 29.6 after the CashBack interventions (an improvement of 4.4 points) [see figure 4].

Figure 4: Comparison of Before and After ratings for before (2015-16) and after (2016-17) the CashBack funded interventions.



Key determinants of young people’s capacity to try new things and develop new skills include creativity, self-awareness and curiosity. Notably, all three resulted in the greatest levels of improvement in the self-evaluations. **Creativity** – an outlet for young people to play, experiment and use their imaginations; **self-awareness** – which requires self-belief, gratitude, hope, mindfulness and self-reflection and **curiosity** – which requires critical thinking, inquisitiveness a love of learning and open-mindedness; appear to combine in the way young people are influenced by youth work.

Feedback from the self-evaluations is that **creativity levels rose the highest of all by 45.1%**. Those rating their creativity levels at 4 or 5 before the CashBack funded intervention stood at 28.1% and rose significantly to 73.2% after the CashBack funded intervention. The self-evaluation results showed the second highest improvement of 34.7% in relation to self-awareness, with 28.1% of young people rating themselves at levels 4 or 5 before the CashBack funded intervention, rising to 62.8% afterwards.

In Regen:fx there is deliberate use of a creative process. The core crew consists of a specialist drama worker, youth workers and team of young people. Together they write a

variety safety scenarios that are performed in a large customised warehouse setting known as 'The Street'. The scripts focus on real life issues such as theft, knife crime and drug and alcohol abuse.

It is little wonder then, that when the Regen:fx responses were filtered out, all participants rated 'creativity' at level 4 (41.7%) or 5 (58.3%). This is a significant improvement of 83.3% on results before the CashBack funded youth work interventions, when only 16.6% rated creativity at 4 (8.3%) or 5 (8.3%). 'Self-awareness' also stood out, with all Regen:fx participants giving it a rating of 4 (16.7%) or 5 (83.3%) after the CashBack funded youth interventions. This is equal to a 50% improvement on the 50% giving a score of 4 or 5 before the CashBack funded youth interventions.

This young person described the awareness raised in her through a combination of the creative process, the topics covered and the informal approaches used by staff:

*"The approach taken by staff is different from other types of learning. You are learning and being educated. However, this is done through eye opening topics that involve you in your learning. You can see and experience what's happening [as part of the life-like interactive safety scenarios the group performs to other young people] ... Your confidence grows through the way the staff treat you. You get praise when you do things well and it's genuine praise. If you need support it's always there. Staff help you learn that you have a choice to make the right decision, but one of the best things is it's okay to make mistakes." (Regen:fx, Young Person)*

The quote also indicates recognition of an inter-connection between the playfulness required in creativity and making critical choices required by curiosity. Gray<sup>9</sup> claims that mastery of fear is one of the benefits of play that allows young people to "play at the realities of life". This is effectively done on two levels with young people in Regen:fx. The creative process causes the crew to reflect on what they themselves would do in similar situations, as these Regen:fx participants explained:

*"Acting is something I've never done before. It's made me think more creatively."*

*"This opportunity has let me try scriptwriting and this has made me more creative."*

---

<sup>9</sup> Gray, P. (Ph.D.) (Dec. 2008) 'Value of Play 111: How Children Confront Life's Challenges'

*“Acting in ‘The Street’ has improved my confidence and creativity, as I get to see the real results of the things I make up.”*

The crew then invite other youth groups and schools to come and take part in their performance sessions, where peer groups are walked through the street’s life-like sets and engage in discussion with the character-actors in the crew. Visiting groups know the tragedy unfolding in the performance isn’t real but they are provoked into imagining what it would really be like, playing out appropriate and inappropriate responses and thinking through the consequences. This is an innovative and powerful way youth work can enable young people to creatively confront life’s challenges, where they can raise awareness of real risks and get in touch with their genuine responses without being made unsafe.

Meanwhile the other case studies all uncovered similar changes, regarding improved self-awareness and curiosity, as these examples reflect:

*“This group has taught me not to take drugs because they’re bad and you can faint or take a fit and the police or ambulance can’t get there on time.” (Inverclyde, Young Person)*

*“When I found a letter outside and posted it – it’s the skills I learned in the group that led to this.” (Inverclyde, Young Person)*

*“I feel that all the activities we do has helped give me a better idea about work and what I need to do. I am more curious about things.” (TSYP, Young Person)*

Differences arose when comparing self-awareness scores for male and female participants from all six case studies. More than a third (36.4%) of females scored 4 or 5 for ‘self-awareness’ before the CashBack youth interventions. This rose to 67.9% after the CashBack interventions -an improvement of 31.5%. Meanwhile, a fifth (21.1%) of males scored 4 or 5 for self-awareness’ before the CashBack funded youth interventions, rising to over a third of males (38.3%) scoring 4 or 5 after -an improvement of 17.2%.

**Case study evidence consequently confirms that the improvements youth work makes to young people’s creativity, self-awareness and curiosity drive their capacity to try new activities and develop new interests and skills. Indications are that where the youth work process deliberately emphasises one or more of the abilities as with creative methods in Regen:fx, this is reflected in higher levels of improvement.**

### C. Promote inclusion, equity and young people's interests and wellbeing

CB5. Increased participation by difficult to engage and equalities groups

CB6. Increased involvement in structured pro-social and healthy activities

CB7. Greater confidence and self-esteem among young people

Literature on youth work raises concerns that targeted work disposes of the collective associations or communities which youth work exists to protect and serve. The ideological dilemma is that it creates a stigma, affirms dominant prejudices and denies access to young people with 'social and cultural capital'.<sup>10</sup>

A benefit of the CashBack funding, is that so far it has not imposed targets or restrictions although it does ask for data on levels of participation from excluded groups. A challenge for reporting on the involvement of young people from difficult to engage or equalities characteristics is that the end-of-year reports were inconsistent, as not all organisations provided the data. Youth organisations would benefit from improving their equalities reporting. Not least, because the data assembled and the work observed indicates these organisations have strengths in reaching out to some of the most hidden and vulnerable groups.

Naturally, the LGBT Scotland 'Allsorts' group in Dundee exists specifically to target young people identifying as LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender). The interviews illuminated why having an exclusive group is crucial to members. Although it seems dramatic, there were cases where it has transformed the lives of young people feeling suicidal, or suffering severe mental illness, as this participant openly confessed:

*"When I was, younger I was bullied....so bad that on one occasion someone attacked me and broke my neck. A friend recommended the group to me. At that time, I was in a very dark place emotionally. I was insecure about my sexuality. I was also unsure about talking to people in social situations. Now I am much more confident about my sexuality and emotionally I am more stable. I have managed to drastically improve how I am in social situations and I really enjoy helping others in the group. The opportunities given to me have pushed me to improve and Allsorts has given*

---

<sup>10</sup> Jeffs, T and Smith, M. (2002, first archived in 2004) 'Individualization and youth work': Infed [Web: [http://www.infed.org/archives/e-texts/individualization\\_and\\_youth\\_work.htm](http://www.infed.org/archives/e-texts/individualization_and_youth_work.htm) ]

*me the motivation and the desire to become a youth worker. I know that if Allsorts wasn't here and I didn't get the support they've given me I'd be dead." (LGBT Dundee, Young Person)*

Progressing from negative to positive self-perceptions is somewhat influenced by changes in **empathy** and **sociability**. Our findings from the self-evaluation identified that empathy and sociability improved for participants from all case studies. More than a quarter (28.1%) rated their levels of empathy at 4 or 5 before the CashBack funded youth interventions, which rose to more than half (51.5%) after the CashBack funded youth interventions – an improvement of 23.4%. The example above reflects a common pattern where joining a youth group or activity at a time of individual need, leads to wanting to find out how to help others in similar circumstances. As this youth worker explained, coming together gives opportunities to reflect on common values and virtues:

*"We wouldn't hit them with what we think or know [from experience] all at one time. We take them on a journey of self-exploration and get them to a point where they realise they do the finding, they come up with the solutions. Because us telling them wouldn't be appropriate or as valuable to them- that's the clever youth work. Here at The Street we create the opportunity for young people across communities to come together in a common purpose. It's a good place for people to reflect on their behaviour. The experience of the Street lets them reflect with their peers on their actions and their life." (Regen:fx, Youth Worker)*

At 18.8%, the rate of improvement was lowest regarding **sociability**, with 45.2% rating their sociability levels at 4 or 5 before the CashBack funded youth intervention, rising to 64% after. Although results varied from group to group. For instance, the Dundee LGBT group demonstrated greater strengths in improving sociability as none of the members rated it at level 4 or 5 before the CashBack intervention. However, all 100% of their respondents scored 4(50%) or 5(50%) after this phase of CashBack funding.

Describing the youth work techniques used to transition young people from personal trauma to pro-social behaviour, is challenging. This youth worker described summed up their actions as having the right presence at the right time:

*"I remember one person in the group who came and sat there not doing anything. They were sitting against the wall, not looking, or acknowledging anyone, just staring at the ground. I thought that there was obviously something going on. So,*

*I just went and sat down beside them, stayed there for a while not saying anything. I didn't go in and start spearing them for information or start a conversation because that was clearly not what they wanted. Sometimes it's just your presence that's needed. Just being...there...acknowledging their existence. It's that validation that makes the difference. There's a sort of sixth sense of knowing when to intervene and I think this is unique to youthwork." (LGBT Dundee, Youth Worker)*

Although it is less explicit in other case studies, there was evidence that **all six actively promote the inclusion of excluded groups** in adherence to their youth work values. TSYP is a long-established hub in the heart of an urban area of Glasgow in the worst 10% decile on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. It demonstrates that to develop the self-regulation young people need to have good sociability, workers fill gaps where positive adult relationships are missing from young people's lives. Over time, workers direct young people towards becoming more connected to their peers and wider community, as this young person commented:

*"I have been coming here since I was 4. I wouldn't say I had a bad childhood but I did have really bad anger issues. I would never have thought I'd ever be a youth leader, I didn't think I had the temperament for it. I would kick off at everything, but [one worker] would constantly take me aside and talk to me. He was interested in me, he listened to what I had to say, he took risks by giving me responsibility. And now because of what he done I turned my life around. Now I am living my dream and draw on my experience to help and support the young one who come here." (TSYP, Young Person)*

This story is typical of examples of youth workers developing **resourcefulness** through making young people more responsible for themselves and others. Results from the self-evaluation indicate that before the CashBack funded youth interventions, 34.4% of young people rated their resourcefulness levels at 4 or 5; which rose to 60% after the CashBack funded youth interventions – an improvement of 25.6%.

Females showed the most significant improvement of all in relation to resourcefulness, with as few as 9.1% scoring 4 or 5 before the CashBack interventions, which rose to 64.3% afterwards - an improvement of 55.2%. compared to only 5.4% improvement among males.

Inclusive practice that develops sociability and resourcefulness, is by no means limited to urban areas of deprivation. In the rural town of Brechin where the Attic is located, members

typically find refuge from trouble at home or school. Once relationships grow, previously negative energies are converted into something more useful, as cited here:

*This young girl doesn't enjoy school and fails to engage with teachers. She doesn't like authority. She has a terrible temper which is made worse by things going on in the home. The case was in the process of being referred to Social Work. Through our conversation with her she said she'd like to work with vulnerable adults or children. We explained that there were several things she needed to work on including her temper and attitude before that would be possible. So, with our support her behaviour has improved and she is much better at controlling her temper. We gave her an opportunity by working as a volunteer in the project to prove that she could take on responsibility and be trusted. We asked her if she could prove to us that she could stick in at school, not get excluded, get off her behavioural sheets and give her mum a break. Her Mum was on anti-depressants and was so bad she wouldn't leave the house because of the depression caused by her relationship with her daughter. We listened to her issues, her aspirations and talked through how this could be achieved. We started by giving her little jobs to do, things that were achievable. We gave her responsibility and constantly praised her for her effort and achievements. We also supported her to attend a smoking clinic so she could stop smoking. Whist she hasn't stopped, she has cut down and the praise she got from everyone made her proud of herself for making the effort. Now school is much better, she doesn't get excluded, she is off the behaviour sheets and Mum is like a new person. She's no longer on Social Works "radar". (The Attic, Youth Worker)*

Despite reservations about targeted forms of youth work, there are examples where this is an effective tactic. The Vogrie Project in Midlothian has a referral system, where young people at risk of exclusion or truancy from school or not in work or education; are referred to them. This young person explained why youth work's approach of being more respectful and interested in individual participants makes way for developing a sense of **integrity** where they can leave an old version of themselves behind and become a more authentic version of who they want to be in future:

*"I hated school and always got into trouble. Eventually I was kicked out. My life was like totally a mess. I would just sit about playing on my computer. When I came*



*here I was nervous because I didn't know anyone. [The worker] helped me through this. He introduced me to everyone and made me feel easier. The difference here is the adults respect you, you can have a joke with them, not like teachers that just talk down to you and treat you like sh\*\*\*. The workers will listen to you and help you do stuff you're interested in. They also push to try new and different things. I am interested in sport so through [the youth worker] I am planning to help coach an under 12's football team and hope to go to college to get a sports coaching qualification. Since coming here I am not the wee sh\*\*\* I used to be and my behaviour has improved. I am now more optimistic about the future." (Vogrie Project, Young Person)*

Results from the self-evaluation indicate that **there was an improvement of 27.3% of young people rating their integrity levels at 4 or 5 after the CashBack funded youth intervention**, with 37.5% rating their integrity at 4 or 5 before the CashBack funded intervention, rising to 64.8% afterwards.

A dominant theme running through the case studies, is that **youth work services are a safety net for those falling through gaps of mainstream school**. This appears to be especially significant among young people experiencing life traumas that school systems are unable to cope with, as this youth worker laid bare:

*"So, if you're talking about a young person that's walked away from their dysfunctional family, maybe there are drug issues or nobody's working...there are pieces being dropped. Teachers don't have the time or inclination to do any of that. It's not the police's job because no crime's been committed and social workers are over stretched so there are bits falling all around this young person. However, Youth Workers are in the fortunate position where we have the time to look and see the bigger picture. To look between the cracks and see the how and the why all this is happening to them. We look at how we best support the young person to fill in some of those cracks-not just applying an Elastoplast but taking it deeper. All true youth work and community development should be doing that." (Regen:fx, Youth Worker)*

This explanation also gives insight into factors which weaken young people's levels of **resilience**. Overall, **there was a 26% improvement in the proportion of young people rating their resilience at level 4 or 5**, which stood at 21.9% before and 47.9% after the

CashBack funded youth interventions. Therefore, youth workers are engaging with young people to re-build the pieces of the jigsaw so that they can get on with their lives and be more resilient to the risks they face, as these young people testify:

*"I've started to calm down and respect what teachers say. I don't take part in any carrying on with my friends. I don't get wide with teachers and I keep my head down." (Vogrie Project, Young Person)*

*"This group is useful because it gives you confidence and makes you think of the outside world, like what could happen to you if you drink underage or take drugs. And it helps you stay in school rather than skipping school. It helps your confidence cos you have to stand up and speak in front of people." (Inverclyde, Young Person)*

*"I used to get bullied in Primary School and this continued to 1st year in High School. It stopped for a while. However, it picked up again near the end of 3rd year when I was jumped walking home from school. I spoke to the youth worker about it and he supported me by talking to me about why bullying happens and explained it's not my fault. It's taken a wee while but I am not so timid now and I don't hide. I will answer questions in the class and I learned to trust people. I now take on a peer education role here with the younger ones." (TSYP, Young Person)*

*"I've been in the care system since I was 10 and I have been moved around a lot. I have had 5 different Social Workers who keep moving on to other jobs or work in different councils Because of that I didn't have a lot of trust in adults...Because of what I witnessed with my mum I have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and I've been to CAMHS and Children First for counselling. Don't get me wrong they are really good services but here when you talk to the youth workers it's like you're not talking to a professional it's like talking to your pal...The workers in here have helped me so much over the years. They make me feel welcome and I can talk to the workers about anything. They understand you...They will always do what they say they're going to do.....I can trust them. The youth worker's door is always open. There's time I will come in just for a chat because I don't want to go home etc." (Inverclyde, Young Person)*

Conscious that their role can be misunderstood by other professions, youth workers recognise that breaking down barriers ensures that agencies work in partnership to ensure

young people get the right support; while accessing a wider range of experiences and support, as this youth worker acknowledged:

*"Where youth work approaches differ from more formal learning is we can be more flexible in our approach. Teachers are constrained by adherence to a curriculum and test results. Youth work makes a valuable contribution to the Curriculum for Excellence because we can mould what we do using experiential learning and engaging young people in practical activities. We can adopt our practice and deliver learning opportunities in a range of settings whereas teachers are constrained in the four walls of a classroom. We can take them to National Parks, local garden centres, get them to do charitable work, volunteering or activities they're interested in. We use I-Zone as a place to bring in young people and do group work and leisure activities. A challenge we face, particularly with teachers is we are stereotyped and often labelled as "you're just a youth worker". But after a period of engaging with young people they see the success we have in achieving positive outcomes and their attitude changes and they see that you are as educated and professional as they are and there are huge benefits in working together. It is important to be aware that at times as youth worker I may not be the most appropriate person to give advice or support to a young person, however because of the trust that's built up I can advocate on a young person's behalf or signpost them to other services." (Inverclyde, Youth Worker)*

Therefore, youth work does not operate in isolation, but forges close partnerships with schools and other professionals to effectively promote inclusion and young people's interests and wellbeing. This youth worker alludes to the situations that make it difficult for some young people to fit into mainstream approaches to learning:

*"The biggest challenge for most of the young people is they've never had a routine in fact their lives are lived 'back to front' i.e. they stay up all night and sleep all day. Building a relationship based on mutual trust is important. We will tell young that were not teachers and it's OK to make mistakes. We will share our experiences of life and some of the things we had to go through. It's important to connect with young people on a variety levels. For example, one day I brought in a bundle of old superhero comics and one young person had an interest in this. We had a great*

*conversation and I let her keep one. That helped to break down barriers.” (Vogrie Project, Youth Worker)*

The example also gives a sense that the workers reveal a lot of themselves in building the dialogical relationship. Providing such valuable alternatives to school positions youth work as a vital cog in the wheel of achieving the Scottish Government’s ‘Raising Attainment for All’<sup>11</sup> policy, which states:

*“We have a strong shared commitment to raising attainment for all and closing the attainment gap between children and young people who are most and least advantaged. This includes the commitment to work together to identify innovative solutions to further improve outcomes for children and young people and this work is part of the delivery on that commitment. We know the reasons for this gap are complex and require partnership working over a range of related areas in order to make progress in this vital area for the country’s economic and social wellbeing.*

As well as the personal and social development of young people that don’t cope well at school, evidence in the end of year reports confirms that youth organisations provide a range of accredited learning such as Youth Achievement Awards, which are aligned to SCQF, Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, Food Hygiene Certificates and Saltire Awards for volunteering. As such, there are tangible benefits youth work can contribute to closing the attainment gap.

**Hence, the breadth of experiences and depth of meaningful relationships formed through youth work is instrumental in achieving increased participation by difficult to engage and equalities groups. The evidence from case study organisations is that those young people can build their resilience and begin to get more actively involved in pro-social and healthy activities. As a result, the young people join with peers and positive adults in nurturing a greater sense of integrity and self-esteem that has alluded them in mainstream settings, and is a particularly effective alternative to school. Meanwhile there is the added benefit for gaining accreditation for the skills and experiences gained.**

---

<sup>11</sup> View [here](#):

## Conclusion

As in previous evaluations, this report reiterates an acknowledgement among recipients that CashBack for Communities funding is a lifeline in times of austerity. Yet once dispersed the small grants made through the 'Youth Work Fund' form a minor portion of a complex cocktail of funding that local youth organisations accumulate to sustain their core services to young people. This makes it difficult to establish the direct causal relationship with CashBack funding because there are invariably a range of other funders investing in the work being described. Nonetheless youth organisations are unfalteringly grateful for being able to keep workers employed for extra hours, opening the doors for slightly longer and subsequently sustaining transformative opportunities and experiences that are not accessible to young people in mainstream institutions.

The case studies give an insight to youth work professionals with a range of knowledge, skills and experience on how to support young people's successful transitions into adult life. This report therefore calls attention to the benefits youth work brings to giving democratic power and control to our young people, as follows:

## Space

- Whether indoors or outdoors, youth workers actively make spaces accessible and give young people choices over how, when and why they engage with them. Drop-in facilities like The Attic, TSYP and I-Zone are invaluable to their communities.
- The spaces liberate young people from negative forces of bullying, authority, addictions, identity issues, negative behaviours and disruptive homes.
- Offering outdoor opportunities like at the Vogrie Project helps to separate young people from negative norms. A bespoke venue like The Street in Regen:fx gives young people creative control over their environment.
- Focusing on exclusive group membership, as in LGBT Dundee offers protection from prejudice.
- The spaces offer a haven, safety from abuse or prejudice and the comfort of positive relationships with peers and adults.

## Participation

- Participation in youth work goes beyond tokenistic measures of rising and falling numbers towards youth initiated decisions and responsibilities.
- This includes involvement in peer education, involvement in volunteering and active citizenship and involvement in youth forums and councils.
- Evidence suggests that progressive participation leads to enhanced outcomes in life, learning and work for young people taking part.
- Numbers are being sustained through attracting other funding that allows services to continue. However observing a continuum of progression would be a more meaningful measure of effective youth work.

## Being

- Through setting a proxy measure against the Compass Advantage framework there is evidence that youth work makes considerable advances in young people's intrinsic abilities.
- The greatest improvements were noted regarding creativity (45.1%), self-awareness (34.7%) and curiosity (31.5%). Organisations like Regen:fx promote higher levels of creativity due to their deliberate use of a creative process. Males made more improvements in self-awareness than females.
- Improvements in creativity, self-awareness and curiosity help determine whether young people try new things and how well they develop new interests and skills.
- Case study organisations appear to be effective at engaging with excluded and hard to reach sections of the youth population, although recording and reporting on equalities could improve in future.
- Positive changes in empathy (23.4%) and sociability (18.8%) are more evident among those that feel isolated when they join the youth work activity, such as in LGBT Dundee.
- Progress is made by transforming negative feelings and experiences into something useful. Resourcefulness levels therefore improved by 24.6% (55.2% for females). Integrity also improved by 27.3% as young people are supported to leave their pasts to form more authentic versions of who they wish to become in future.
- Youth work often attracts young people whose lives are disrupted or they have experienced some form of trauma. Youth work involves using a variety of tactics to rebuild young people's resilience. Self-evaluations show resilience improved by 26%.

## Learning

- Young people were acutely aware that youth work offers them a more accessible alternative to mainstream school and other more structured options.
- Youth work's approach to learning is engaging and experiential, while paying close attention to individual and collective needs and building positive long-term relationships.
- The progressive process makes young people more aware of themselves and the world around them. It gives democratic rights to choose how, when and why they participate and to what extent.
- Youth workers are certain that their professional qualities are often misunderstood. Their ability to step back, observe and *be there* for the young people is crucial to the relationship. It is knowing how and when to intervene that is most effective.
- Once barriers are removed, youth work is a vital cog in the education, safety, wellbeing and nurturing of Scotland's young people. Supporting young people in their transition into adulthood is most effective in close partnership with others.

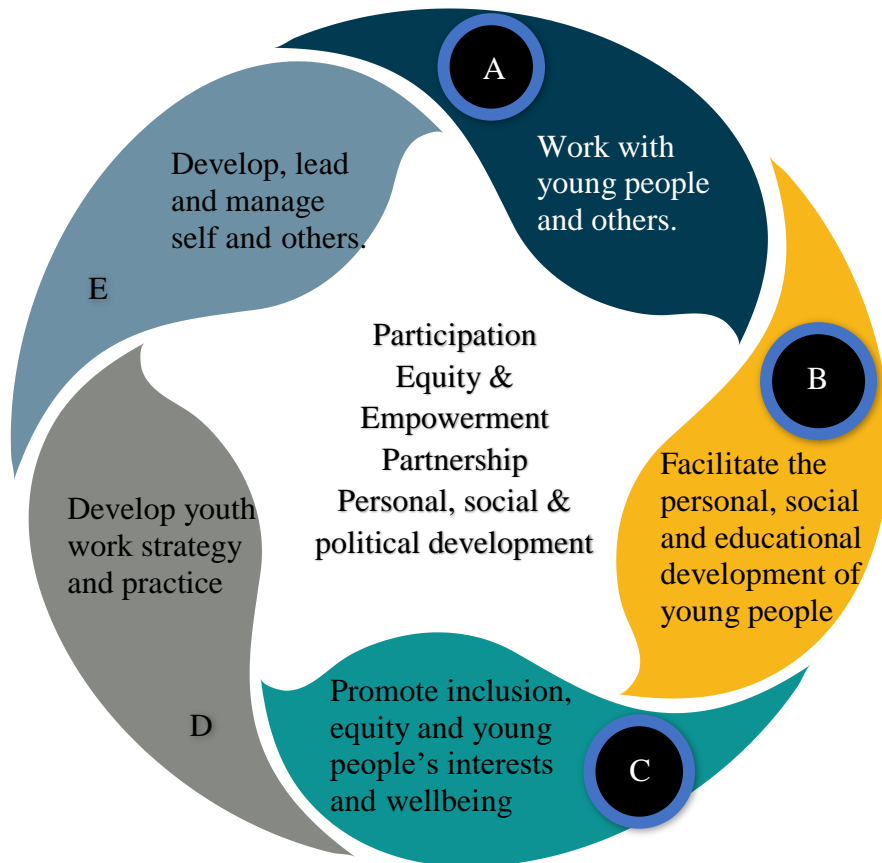
A key theme permeating from the findings is that youth workers develop a 'sixth-sense' which focuses on validating the young people for who they are and who they want to be. This is made possible for youth workers because they are not hemmed in by the stringent targets and goals that teachers and other professionals are required to meet. It allows youth workers to become the 'one-good-adult' relationship that is missing for many.

In conclusion, there is compelling evidence that youth work is making an indispensable contribution to achieving CashBack for Communities outcomes. In a shared commitment to improving the lives of Scotland's young people, there is more that can be achieved in their interests. Youth workers can be more stringent in monitoring and reporting on the equalities aspect of their work. Frameworks such as Compass Advantage can be used to develop and reflect critically on youth work practice. Outcomes can be streamlined to reflect a progressive process that pursues the true meaning of democracy and active citizenship for the common good.



# Appendix 1: National Occupational Standards of Youth Work

This is a copy of the National Occupational Standards of Youth Work. Each function is divided into a set of indicators defining recognised good practice. In the CashBack for Communities evaluation we focus on functions A, B & C.



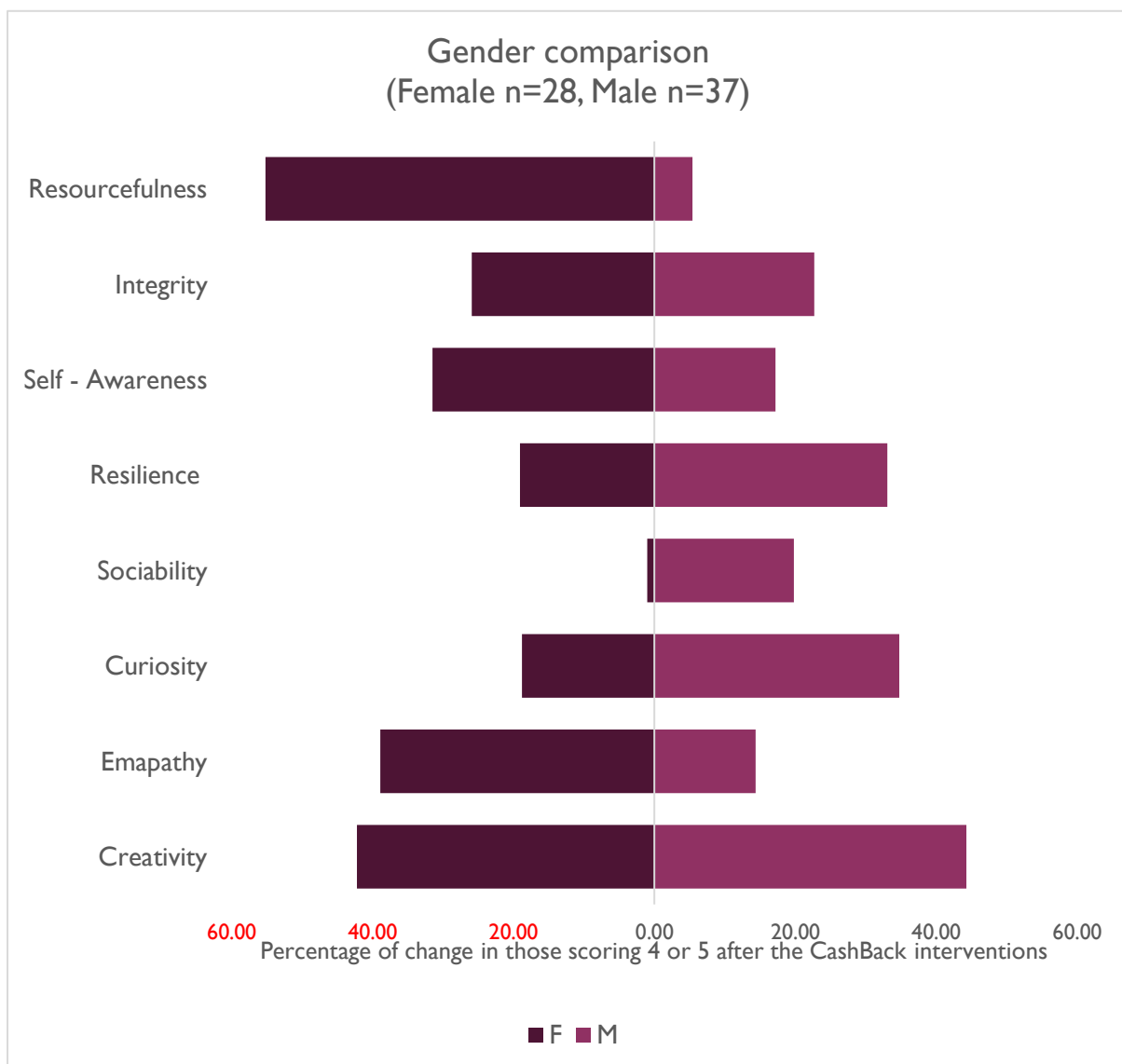
|   |
|---|
| A. Work with young people and others  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•A1 Build relationships and engage with young people</li> <li>•A2 Engage with the local community</li> </ul> |

|   |
|---|
| B. Facilitate the personal, social and educational development of young people  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•B1 Facilitate learning and development of young people through youth work</li> <li>•B2 Plan and implement learning activities in youth work</li> <li>•B3 Promote young people's self-awareness, confidence and</li> </ul> |

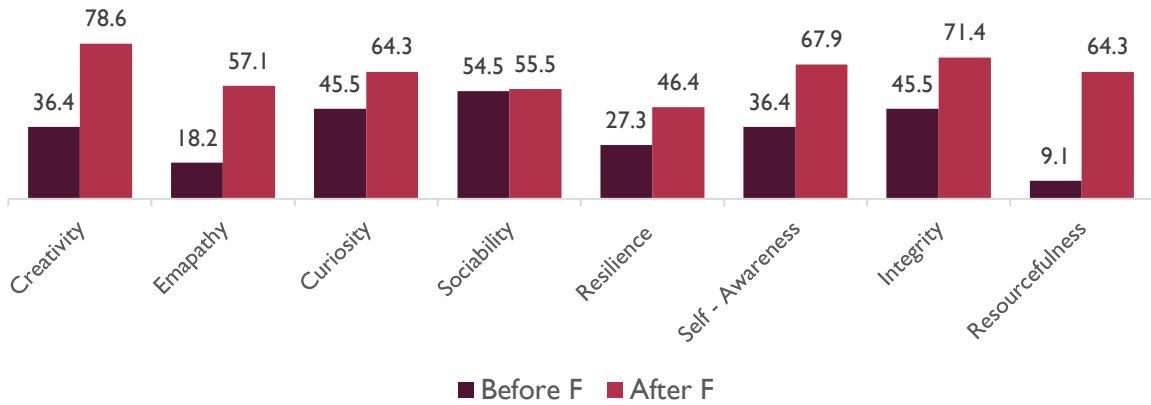
|  |
|--|
| C. Promote inclusion, equity and young people's interests and wellbeing  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•C1 Engage in critical dialogue and work with young people in promoting their rights</li> <li>•C2 Safeguard the health and welfare of young people</li> <li>•C3 Promote inclusion, equity and the valuing of diversity</li> </ul> |

## Appendix 2: A comparison of Male and Females before and after the CashBack funded youth interventions

These charts show a comparison of male and female responses to the eight abilities in the Compass Advantage. The figures relate to the difference between the percentage rating themselves at level 4 or 5 before the CashBack intervention compared to the percentage rating themselves at 4 or 5 after the CashBack intervention.



Before and After Comparison of Females Selecting 4 or 5 points (Before n= 11 and After n=28)



Before and After Comparison of Males Selecting 4 or 5 points (Before n= 19 and After n= 37)

