



**YOUTH
WORK
FUND
EVALUATION
FINAL REPORT
2017 TO 2020**



INTRO

YOUTHWORKFUND

Data & Resources

The icon consists of the letters 'WWW' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered within a white-outlined square. This square is itself centered within a larger, light grey circular background.

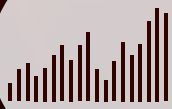
WEBSITE



STORY WALL



CASE STUDIES



INTERACTIVE CHARTS



INTERACTIVE OUTCOMES

CashBack for Communities funding has provided a lifeline to youth organisations since it began in 2009. Many believed that by 2020 the youth work sector would have returned to pre-austerity investment. Alas, organisations are presently in an enduring fight to survive the brutality of cuts to services.

Through the Youth Work Fund proceeds of crime are invested in organisations working in some of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods across Scotland. Youth workers use skilled interventions to engage young people in positive informal learning experiences that affect change which ranges from feeling good about themselves through to turning their lives around and mitigating against the effects of trauma and adversity.

The evaluation brings together three years of research and case studies from Round 4 (2017 to 2020). Findings reinforce the importance of young people having access to youth work in settings where they feel safe and supported by skilled workers that take a genuine interest in who they are, away from the pressures of school or the dynamics at home. The power of positive and respectful relationships is what matters most.

Therefore the report demonstrates ways that youth work providers are defying the hardships of their financial context to make the most of every penny invested. Youth work's commitment to young people leverages wider investment that achieves significantly more than the average £4K awarded. This makes the youth work fund a solid return on investment, which saves substantially by guarding against the costs of criminal justice, health and care interventions in adulthood.

The enclosed report presents the progress made against outcome targets for all three years of funding. As fund managers, YouthLink Scotland use their allocation of around £700K per annum CashBack for Communities funding to distribute small grants to youth service providers in every local authority across Scotland. Priority is given to areas with higher levels of deprivation. Local representatives come together in each of the 32 local authorities to assess the merits of applications made to the fund. Due to the financial context the Youth Work Fund is heavily oversubscribed with most applicants receiving less than they bid for.

The evaluation is carried out independently by Catch the Light consultancy. Mixed methods were used to bring together a large body of evidence accumulated over three years, including data from over 2,000 young people. Details of years one and two are available on the web page created for the evaluation, year three's evidence is based on the

following:

- Survey responses from 759 young people from over 90 youth organisations.
- Case studies in year three conducted with seven organisations that received a grant from the Youth Work Fund. This brings the total number of case studies for Round 4 to 18 [read previous studies here].
- Another product of the evaluation is the creation of a story wall which features the wide range of activities and some of the individual stories that emerged during this period. The stories are tagged according to the outcomes they best represent and are categorised in alignment with the type of youth work approach evidenced. Have a look at the story wall and try filtering the tags and categories here.
- Lastly, the data and charts are published as a set of interactive online results. Year three information can be found here. Outcome results spanning the whole of Round 4 are published here and presented on the next page.



OUTCOMES

CASHBACKforCOMMUNITIES

The results show that mandatory outcome targets * were surpassed during Round 4 of CashBack for Communities funding. For instance over 36 thousand young people participated in a positive activity. This is around 91% of the 40 thousand participants and 14% above the original target. More than 24 thousand (68%) young people were new to the activity - 23% above the target. The majority (32,043: 80%) of young people improved their wellbeing, which was 173% above the original target. More than 21 thousand (54%) of young people increased their aspirations - 268% above the original target.

Results which are below target are isolated to non-mandatory outcomes. It is possible that these targets were set too high. However with less organisations reporting on these outcomes,

results are subsequently lower. Further findings from the evaluation suggest that these figures are not accurate when compared to the case study sample.

Looking ahead to Round 5, it is now known that all fund recipients will have to report on the number of young people diverted from criminal and antisocial behaviour. Some comfort should come from knowing that, although this outcome was optional in Round 4 and the result was 11% below target, the proportion of young people that achieved this represents 21% of all participants. This is significant given that typically less than 5% of 8 to 17 year olds engage in crime in Scotland (SCCJR 2019).

39,995 **YOUNG PEOPLE**
Participated in Round 4

[View interactive results here](#)

* CashBack for Communities outcomes asks grant recipients to set targets at the start of the three year funding term. YouthLink Scotland are unable to predict this accurately, because through not knowing in advance what local youth organisations will bid for each year or how many young people they will work with. Whereas the targets YouthLink Scotland report on as part of the three year agreement assume a fixed number of participants. Consequently reported figures have to be shown against the original estimates. This skews results with some variances going over 100% because the number of participants was double the estimate. A gauge was created to show the results as a percentage of the total number of participants each year. This puts the achievements in their authentic context. Results are therefore presented on this page to meet requirements. Further caution is required in considering that around a third of organisations were unable to submit their figures for year 3 (2019/20) due to the Covid-19 Lockdown. Actual results are likely to be higher.

25,085 32,043

REPORT INCREASED CONFIDENCE

42% above the target of 17,625.

IMPROVED WELLBEING

173% above the target of 11,750.



8,348

WERE DIVERTED FROM CRIMINAL AND ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

11% below the target of 9,387.

19,747

REPORT INCREASED SKILLS

68% above the target of 11,750.



36,263

PARTICIPATED IN A POSITIVE ACTIVITY

14% above the target of 31,902.



3,678

INCREASED SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

10% above the target of 3,348.



3,839

CONTRIBUTED POSITIVELY TO THEIR COMMUNITY

12% below the target of 4,356.

21,611

INCREASED ASPIRATIONS

268% above the target of 5,874.

5,762

IMPROVED ATTAINMENT

134% above the target of 2,460.

24,658

ARE NEW TO THE ACTIVITY

23% above the target of 19,977.

4,745

WERE INVOLVED IN VOLUNTEERING

27% below the target of 6,489.

21,226

POSITIVE CHANGES IN BEHAVIOUR

201% above the target of 7,050.

RESULTS

39,955

young people took part in funded youth work activities in Round 4 (2017 to 2020) - 13,041 in Yr 1, 17,120 in Yr 2 and 9,794 in Yr 3

99%

above the target of 20,000 young people estimated at the start of the fund - almost double;

545

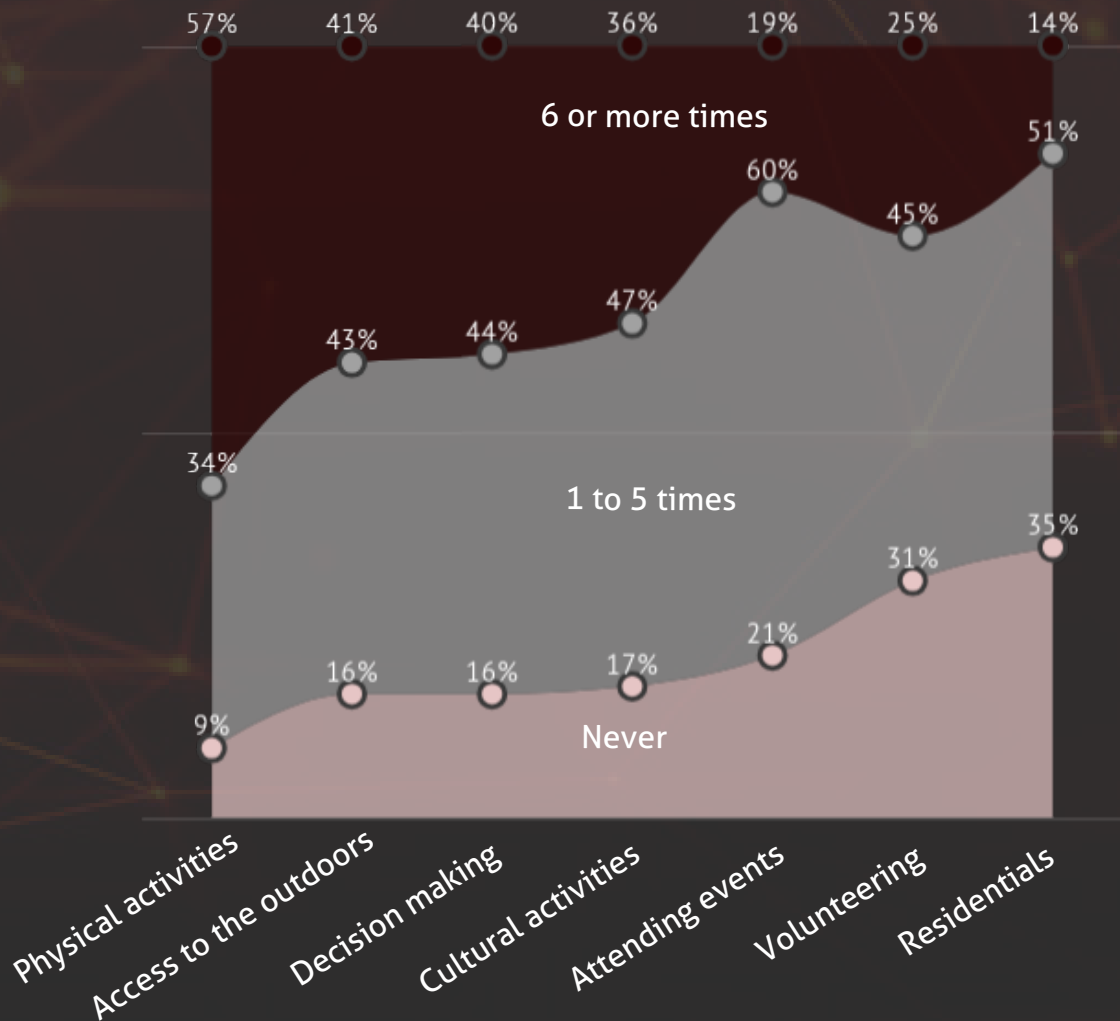
grants were awarded to youth organisations - around £4K on average;

£2.2M

was distributed overall to the youth work sector through the Youth Work Fund.

Chart 1: Activities undertaken

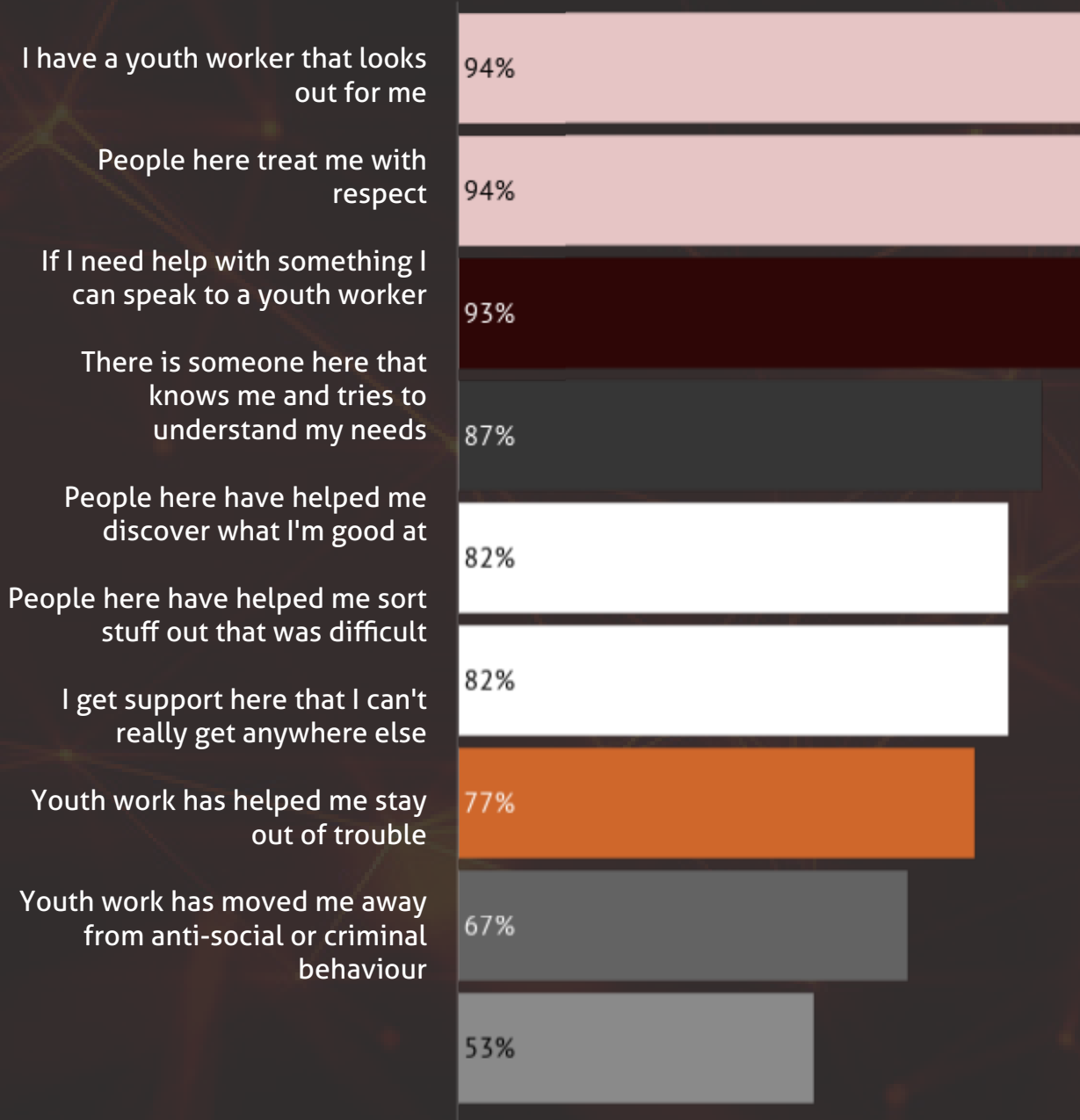
n=758



[View Interactive Charts here](#)

Chart 2: Young people's perceptions of youth workers

n=755



38%

ORGANISATIONS

are situated in the most deprived areas of Scotland (SIMD deciles 1 & 2)

The CashBack for Communities fund targets young people living in areas which are most affected by multiple levels of deprivation. These are categorised in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation or SIMD. View the interactive charts for a breakdown of fund recipients.

ABOUT THE RESULTS

Appreciating the impact of youth work requires understanding its distinguishing factors. Youth work starts where young people are, giving them choice and autonomy over the activities they take part in. This is reflected in Chart 1 which breaks down the youth work activities and their frequency in year 3.

Chart 1 confirms that sports are a frequent and popular feature among participants with a third having done sports 1 to 5 times and more than half doing sports more than 6 times in the previous year. Unlike a sports club however, there is usually scope to move onto something else or try something completely different. For instance access to the outdoors is the second most frequent activity with two-fifths doing this 6 or more times and slightly more getting access to the outdoors 1 to 5 times in the last year. When giving feedback on activities, these examples show the variety of things on offer:

"We went to Ardroy twice this year. I also took part in a 12 week inter-generational group when we visited an old folks home."

"We built a poly tunnel for a community garden where we are growing fresh food."

"I volunteer as an engineer in the recording studio."

Frequent engagement in decision-making sets the youth work approach

apart from other contexts, with 84% having done this at least once. Typical examples include youth forums, planning groups and leadership teams. Cultural activities and events are commonplace. Volunteering is also a feature with young people referring to numerous examples of fundraising either for the youth organisation or as part of a charity campaign, such as the Big Sleep Out for homelessness. Residential that take groups away from their day to day contexts also occur, though less frequently than other activities listed.

Young people's perspectives on youth workers (Chart 2) affirmed that almost all participants (94%) agreed that they have a youth worker that looks out for them and that people in the youth organisation treat them with respect. The strength of agreement reinforces findings from years one and two that young people feel very safe, included and respected in a youth work setting. Furthermore this remains true for young people that do not feel that way at home or at school. Results confirm that adults support young people to discover what they are good at (82%) as well as give support to get out of trouble (67%). More than half agreed that their youth worker has diverted them from antisocial or criminal behaviour, although the lower levels of agreement compared to other statements reflects the reality that most young people are not engaging in those behaviours. Nevertheless, those that do still feel supported rather than judged by their youth workers.

Speaking of their youth workers, these respondents reveal critical life moments where they got help:

"I have been having relationship troubles this week so I came in to speak to a youth worker. They helped with my anger, how to control it and deal with it better."

"I was picking up a lot of charges, but at my last panel they said they've never seen such a positive change in someone."

"My mum is dead and I didn't want to speak to my dad about periods. The staff here helped me to understand what was going on."

"Well...a lot of things happened to me when I was wee and this place has helped me get my confidence back."

"I've stopped hanging about the streets and come here instead."

Consequently feedback from young people acknowledges a connection between positive experiences and positive relationships with workers; which leads to positive personal achievements and awards for young people.

YouthLink Scotland has a database where organisations self-report on CashBack outcomes. In 2019-20 it was reported that 5,762 young people had improved attainment. However evaluation findings gathered directly from a sample of 758 young people shows that this is likely to be an underestimate, with 60% of all respondents having achieved one or more of the recognised awards (Chart 3).

The most common award achieved by more than a third of those respondents is the Saltire Awards given in recognition of volunteering activity. Two-fifths achieved a Dynamic Youth Award or Youth Achievement Award. Almost a fifth have gained a Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the same proportion completed the John Muir Award. The fact that less than a tenth had a sports leadership award underlines that sports participation within the youth work setting is more of an engagement process than a performance tool.

Chart 3: Youth Work Awards

Which of the following awards have you achieved (n=455):



38%

Saltire Award



31%

Dynamic Youth Award



17%

Duke of Edinburgh's Award



17%

John Muir Award



13%

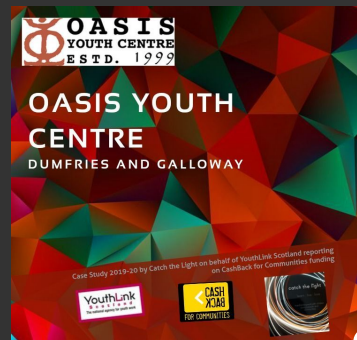
Youth Achievement Award



9%

Sports Leadership Award

CASE STUDIES



[View Collection](#)

PEEK GLASGOW
 PEAKS FOR EDUCATION LEADERS





This is a case study of work carried out during 2018-19. The evaluation is conducted by independent consultants Catch the Light on behalf of YouthLink Scotland.

ABOUT YOUTH
 SOUGHTON EDINBURGH





This is a case study of work carried out during 2018-19. The evaluation is conducted by independent consultants Catch the Light on behalf of YouthLink Scotland.

ROYSTON YOUTH ACTION

RVA receive funding from YouthLink Scotland's Youth Work Fund, made possible by the Cashback for Communities Fund.





This is a case study of work carried out during 2018-19. The evaluation is conducted by independent consultants Catch the Light.

STREET SPORT
DENIS LAW LEGACY TRUST
 STREET SPORT





This is a case study of work carried out during 2017-18. The evaluation is conducted by independent consultants Catch the Light on behalf of YouthLink Scotland.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE
 YOUTH ALLIANCE





This is a case study of work carried out during 2018-19. The evaluation is conducted by independent consultants Catch the Light on behalf of YouthLink Scotland.

yipworld YIP WORLD
 CUMNOCK, EAST AYRSHIRE





This is a case study of work carried out during 2017-18. The evaluation is conducted by independent consultants Catch the Light on behalf of YouthLink Scotland.

TYKES
 THE YOUNG CARERS, EAST SUTHERLAND





This is a case study of work carried out during 2017-18. The evaluation is conducted by independent consultants Catch the Light on behalf of YouthLink Scotland.

The Breathe Project
BREATHE
 ABERDEEN, ABERDEENSHIRE, PERTH & KINROSS





This is a case study of work carried out during 2018-19. The evaluation is conducted by independent consultants Catch the Light on behalf of YouthLink Scotland.

The Pitstop Youth Cafe
PITSTOP
 FORFAR





This is a case study of work carried out during 2017-18. The evaluation is conducted by independent consultants Catch the Light on behalf of YouthLink Scotland.

MYDG
 MUIRHOUSE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT GROUP





This is a case study of work carried out during 2017-18. The evaluation is conducted by independent consultants Catch the Light on behalf of YouthLink Scotland.

DUNDEE & ANGUS
ADHD
 SUPPORT GROUP





This is a case study of work carried out during 2018-19. The evaluation is conducted by independent consultants Catch the Light on behalf of YouthLink Scotland.

ABOUT THE CASE STUDIES

The previous pages show all case studies from Round 4. Below is a summary of the seven case studies undertaken in 2019-2020 linked to the CashBack outcomes as follows:

1. Build Capacity and Confidence:

The OCYI (Ochil Youth Community Improvement) project demonstrates that through youth led research and governance, youth work instils the capacity and confidence that is needed for young people to feel safe and secure in the youth setting.

2. Develop Personal and Social Skills:

The Yard in Edinburgh targets young people with disabilities through engagement in play, so that their personal, social and physical skills improve.

3. Increase Aspirations

The YCSA project for Black and Ethnic Minority young people in the South of Glasgow is supporting new and established immigrants and asylum seekers to overcome the negative impacts of discrimination, prejudice and hate crime.

4. Improved Wellbeing:

Barnardo's in East Ayrshire works specifically with young people involved or at risk of involvement in substance misuse through engagement in positive activities.

5. Attendance and Attainment:

LinkLiving's Steps to Resilience course targets young people through school referrals in the Stirling Council area to

take part in a nine week course. The training seeks to develop young people's knowledge of themselves so that they can overcome trauma and adversity and regain control of crucial aspects of their daily lives. In turn this helps to improve levels of attendance and attainment in school.

6. Improvement in learning, training and employment:

The Oasis Centre in Dumfries and Galloway has created 'YouthBeatz' Scotland's largest youth festival as a means to provide volunteering and training opportunities for local young people.

7. Engagement in Positive Activities

All case studies provided strong evidence of reaching out to young people in their communities to engage in positive informal learning and leisure activities.

8. Diverted from anti-social-behaviour and criminal activity and 9. Contribute positively to their community.

The Vennie provides an example of a local community in Livingston where young people have gone from being perceived as antisocial, to bringing about positive changes that the whole community benefits from. This includes the development of a local skate park and creation of a bike lending library.

Together the case studies demonstrate the impact on outcomes and completes the collection of 18 examples of youth work practice.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The following SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis summarises key lessons learned from the Round 4 evaluation.

Strengths:

- It reaches young people in areas of deprivation from the target groups.
- Provides a diverse range of activities that listens to and responds to needs and aspirations of young people.
- Workers have strong interpersonal skills and nurture positive adult/youth relationships.
- A youth led and value-based approach.
- Young people have a positive regard for the youth work approach, which is sustained when they are at risk/unsafe.

Weaknesses:

- No two youth providers are the same, therefore expectations of funders need to adapt to individual organisations and their context.
- Unpredictable numbers and a variety of approaches leads to different outcomes (as above) which requires percentage targets rather than fixed numbers.
- Many organisations are in survival mode, having to fill gaps in core funding to remain operational.

Opportunities:

- To promote use of CashBack for additional investment in target areas and groups.
- Sector can become strategic anchor for local partnership working that would maximise CashBack impact as well as lever other resources and assets towards the initiatives and outcomes.
- More strategic investment or longer term funding (e.g. three year plus models) would support the creation of sustainable measures to address adversity and youth crime.

Threats:

- Covid-19 Lockdown creates a break in provision, with unknown longer-term risks or impact.
- Sustained austerity or further cuts to youth services will have a detrimental impact on young people's well-being and behaviour.
- The potential loss of established youth services are difficult to replace due to a loss of long-established relationships, knowledge and experience of local communities.

Consequently, the Youth Work Fund consistently reinforces its effectiveness through investing in local youth services. It is recommended that YouthLink Scotland share key findings from the evaluation with the youth work sector and stakeholders, to continue a critical dialogue on the reductions to local youth services. Where core services can be protected, there is scope to work in partnership by combining investments in shared outcomes. This may include working jointly with other CashBack funded projects where appropriate. Partnerships may also lead to more strategic and sustainable measures to tackle the ongoing causes and consequences of adversity, hardship and crime that young people in Scotland currently face.

