

catch the light



EVALUATION

2017-2018


BY CATCH THE LIGHT

YouthLink
Scotland
The national agency for youth work

CASHBACK for
COMMUNITIES
YOUTH WORK FUND







**INTRODUCTION
OUTCOMES
SHANARRI RESULTS
ANALYSIS
CASE STUDIES
EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE
CONCLUSION**

CONTENTS



INTRODUCTION



2018 -The Year of Young People... will show everyone across Scotland just how talented our young people are but also how challenging their daily lives can be - contrary to what some of us might think.

John Swinney,
Education Minister
Scottish Government

The Scottish Government launched 2018 as the 'Year of Young People' to acknowledge that public attitudes towards young people need to change.

Government research found that a quarter of adults in Scotland viewed young people as lazy, more than a third saw them as irresponsible and almost four in ten thought they were lacking in communication skills.

Perhaps rightly, perspectives from young people were that many adults view them negatively simply because of their age.

CashBack for Communities is

how the Government reinvests proceeds of crime so that Scotland's young people can flourish. The Youth Work Fund is administered by YouthLink Scotland to invest in local youth activities, targeting young people in deprivation, not in education, training or employment, or at risk of offending or anti-social behaviour.

Differentiating between the causes and effects of young people's successes and failures depends largely on viewpoints. The mismatch of perceptions and reality are unresolved in literature and policy alike.

In Scotland there is a strong policy drive to close the attainment gap largely by investing an additional 1.2

million pounds into schools. While there is evidence that families might actually have more influence [see NHS report].

Meanwhile Alfie Kohn describes a common misunderstanding that raising self-esteem leads to improved academic performance. Whereas research proves that academic success is the cause of high self-esteem and not the converse, as many believe.

In light of the context, the evaluation sought to find out what role and influence youth work has on raising resilience to risks and achieving the personal and wider successes that CashBack for Communities funding expects.

OUTCOMES

BELOW IS AN OVERVIEW OF CAHSBACK FOR COMMUNITIES OUTCOMES, WITH QUANTIFIED RESULTS FROM YOUTH WORK FUND RECIPIENTS.

Each year, since 2008 youth organisations have applied to YouthLink Scotland - the national agency for youth work, to seek investment from the CashBack for Communities 'Youth Work Fund'. With demand far outstripping supply, local panels decide which projects will be funded from their designated share of the funding pot. In 2017-18 180 organisations received a total of £701,207. Around half of the applicants receive a partial award (less than the estimated costs) as panels try to spread the funds fairly. The average award is around £3.8K (range: £336 to £15,435) with an additional £100K distributed in 2017-18 than in previous years. Recognition and extra investment is welcomed by a sector which relies on a cocktail of investment from charity trusts, lotteries, fundraising and government grants or contracts. The data gathered by YouthLink Scotland demonstrates the collective contribution the sector makes to progressing CashBack for Communities outcomes.

1 Young people build their capacity and confidence

There were 7,175 (55%) young people reported to have increased their confidence [annual target: 5875 +1300].

Reports show that 5,896 (46%) were reported by stakeholders (including youth workers) as having perceived increases of confidence and ability to do new things among young people [target: 4406 +1490].

3 Young people's behaviours and aspirations change positively

Reports submitted to YouthLink Scotland confirm that 6,989 (53.6%) increased their aspirations [target: 1958 +5031]. While 7651 (58.7%) made positive changes to their behaviour [target: 2350 +5301].

In addition stakeholders reported positive changes in aspirations and behaviour for 6,489 (49.8%) young people [target: 2350 +4,139].

2 Young people develop their physical and personal skills

According to submitted reports, there were 6,029 (46.2%) young people that increased their skills [target: 3917 +2112].

Of those, 2921 (22.4%) gained accredited learning [target: 1175 +1746] as follows:

ASDAN - 71 (0.5%)

Duke of Edinburgh - 270 (2.1%)

First Aid - 429 (3.3%)

Food Hygiene Certificate - 152 (1.2%)

SVQ's - 97 (0.7%)

Youth Achievement Award - 699 (5.4%)

Other - 1126 (8.6%)

4 Young people's wellbeing improves

Reports submitted to YouthLink Scotland show that 8,773 (67.3%) made positive comments about wellbeing against one or more of the relevant SHANARRI indicators [target: 3,917 +4856]. Stakeholders confirmed this for 7,819 (60%) of young people [target: 3,916 +3903]

See the next page for more data and analysis of SHANARRI indicators for 2017-18.

5 School attendance and attainment increases

Reports highlight that 1,087 (8.3%) improved their attendance at school [target: 1116 -29].

There are also 1,676 (12.9%) engaging in attainment opportunities [target: 820 +856].

6 Young people participate in activity which improves their learning, employability and employment options (positive destinations)

Evidence from reports submitted is that 3,811 (29.2%) have accessed learning [target: 2,700 +1,111]

There are 1,916 (14.7%) young people that have remained at or returned to school [target: 1767 +149]

Results also found that 1,620 (12.4%) young people are involved in volunteering as a direct part of their project work [target: 2,163 -543].

Some 592 (3.7%) have taken a course of further or higher education [target: 592 -103].

There are 463 (3.6%) that are part of an 'Activity Agreement' [target: 648 -185].

7 Young people participate in positive activity

By virtue of engaging in youth activities all young people are participating in a positive activity. However, reports show 11,679 (89.6%) [target: 10,634 +1,045]

It emerged that 7,889 (60.5%) were new to the activity [target: 6,659 +1,230].

8 Young people are diverted from criminal behaviour or involvement with the criminal justice system

There were 3,132 (24%) young people that achieved a reduction in anti-social behaviour [target: 3,129 +3].

9 Young people contribute positively to their communities

There were 1,273 (9.8%) young people that have taken on a leadership role in their community or organisations [target: 1,452 -179].

The numbers of participants across the 180 funded projects are as follows:

+5,208 (+66.5%)
more than the target
total of 7,833 for 2017-18

11,678 (89.5%)
are within the defined target group

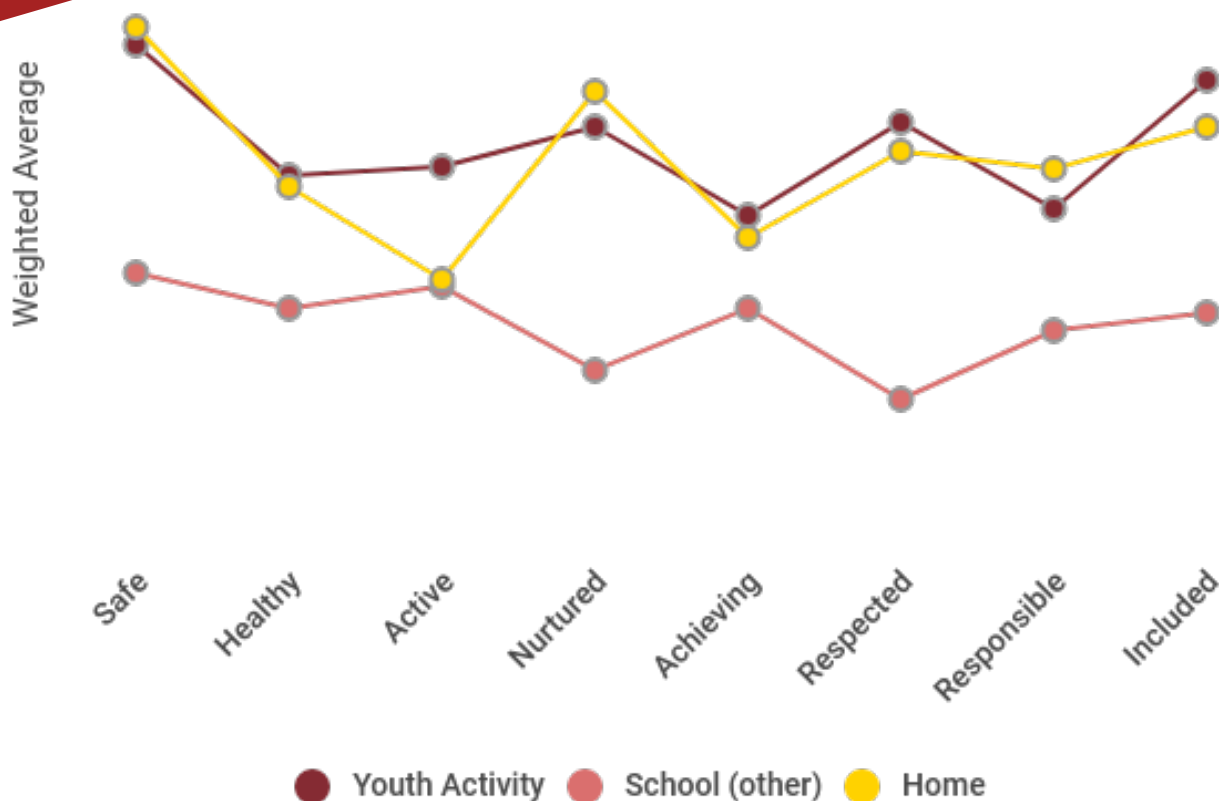
Girls: 5,929 (45.5%)

Boys: 7,112 (54.5%)

Total: 13,041

SHANARRI

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS



SHANARRI RESULTS

Data from youth work fund recipients that responded in 2017-18 (n=901, April 2018)

SHANARRI (Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Respected, Responsible and Included)

There were 1,058 SHANARRI forms completed by young people from across CashBack funded organisations. Of these 901 were completed at the start of the year or project and used as a baseline.

On a scale from 0 (not at all) to 5 (very), the results determine how safe, healthy, active, nurtured etc. young people feel in the youth activity, in school

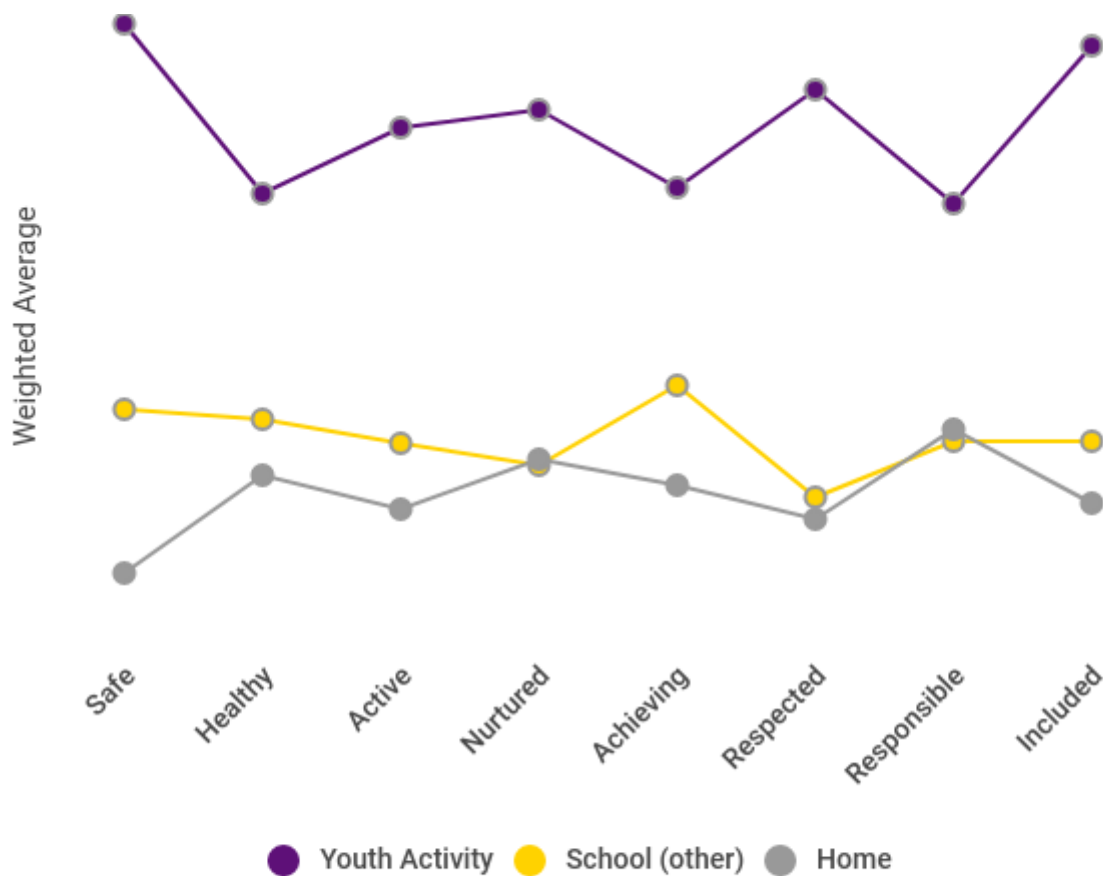
and at home. There were prompt sheets with explanations for each indicator and setting.

Most young people gave a positive rating to how they feel in all settings, with averages achieving more than 3 points. Clear distinctions arose where the youth activity is weighted highly across all indicators (range: 3.94 to 4.42). Home is closely aligned with the youth work setting, apart from active, scoring lower (3.76) at home than in the youth activity (4.08). School was rated lowest across all indicators (range: 3.43 - 3.78).

RESULTS FILTERED FOR FEELING LESS SAFE AT HOME

When results were filtered for those feeling less safe at home, it was found that a significant proportion (128, 12% of 1,058 total responses) scored only 0 to 3. The results for this filtered group were less positive overall. In particular, school and home results are all weighted

negatively, with averages below the mid point of 3. The range for school was 2.52 for 'respected' to 2.9 for 'achieving'. Of greater concern is the low ratings for home with an average of 2.26 for feeling 'safe' up to 2.75 for 'responsible'. In stark contrast the average scores for the youth activity remained positive for all indicators (range: 3.52 for responsible up to 4.13 for safe), albeit at a lower rate than the results for all participants.



SHANARRI RESULTS (FILTERED)

Filtered by those feeling less safe at home (n=128, 12% of total 1,058 responses)

CLICK ON CHARTS TO VIEW INTERACTIVE

POTENTIAL REASONS FOR LOWER SCHOOL RATINGS

The Scottish rapper and social commentator Darren 'Loki' McGarvey has recently publicised this analysis of why school doesn't work for some young people:

"School is never easy, but for those children who lack core resilience, due to emotional dysfunction at home, the ordinary daily challenges of school are far greater. Such children often view their environments – and the people in them – as threatening and unsupportive.

The problem is compounded by the fact these children often haven't been taught how to express or assert their needs or even how to identify them. This is not to say they are feral. Far from it.

These children, who experience extreme or prolonged adversity, are very socially sophisticated. The problem is: their emotional intelligence is marshalled by the necessity of navigating adversity."

For young people feeling less safe at home, results indicated that they were more likely to perceive school as a source of frustration, as these participants stated:

"Guidance think they know everything and they just don't. But I'm trying."

"I don't go coz I hate the teachers. They don't do anything for me."

School also seemed to be a place where young people felt less safe as a result of bullying, getting into trouble with teachers, or not feeling accepted by mainstream norms.

As McGarvey highlights this isn't necessarily a slant on schools, it's more the way that young people experiencing adversity, navigate their world.

School, nevertheless fared better than home. Reasons for home being rated so low tended to relate to family dysfunctions, such as:

"Mum isn't well and I am her main carer. I sometimes go to my Dad's to stay. I am smoking and drinking a lot at weekends."

"Sometimes I wish I stayed somewhere else. My Mum & her partner are always fighting."

Meanwhile the high ratings achieved for youth work overall and among those feeling less safe at home, suggest it has qualities absent from school and difficult home settings.



POTENTIAL REASONS FOR HIGHER YOUTH WORK RATINGS

The way CashBack funding is used offers clues that relationships with workers is a key success factor. Over £350K was awarded to pay for salaries of youth workers. Yet case study organisations spoke openly of having to regularly issue redundancy notices to staff because they can't guarantee work beyond a term of funding. For the youth work fund, this is annually. However, the gift of CashBack funding does not necessarily secure a post for a year, as a large proportion of organisations received a 'partial award' which requires them to seek additional funds from other sources to meet their costs, or trim the project to fit.

The image shown of the 'funder board' on display in one of the case study organisations, illustrates just how many funders, agreements and contracts organisations are juggling to survive (21 in this case).

Regardless of how shaky foundations may be, professional youth workers are trained to understand why dialogical relationships are paramount to success, particularly where home settings are weak links in young people's lives. Evidence of this in action is in the feedback received:

"I am going through a hard time and finding it hard to cope when I'm at college. When I am at the youth activity they are very supportive and there for me."

"I love the youth club because it's a place I can be myself without being judged."

"Workers are great. They listen to me and help with loads of advice."

"Through coming to this group I feel I've figured out more about myself."

"The club is excellent. I love the banter with the staff. I feel I achieve so much every week."

"The youth workers respect and listen to my input. I love learning to make and try new things."

According to findings, a strength afforded to youth work settings is that young people feel 'safe' and 'included', despite opposing feelings at home, as this young person commented:

"I feel content and safe. It's my happy place and somewhere I can always get support from staff. I don't find these things at home because of my mental health & I live alone."

Therefore youth workers appear to fit the mould of being the trusted adults that help to reduce the risks of mental illness that young people with experience of adversity are susceptible to [see report from Public Health Wales and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde].

There was also evidence that the richness of experiences was appreciated, as these young people explained:

"The band night has given me a place to go on a Saturday night as opposed to out on the streets."

"We are always making healthy food. And the project has a good relationship with my mum."

"I scored camp good because it was more fun than school or being at home with my mum."

"They are very good at making sure activities are well organised and that everyone is up for it and enjoys themselves."

Young people reported new insight for improving their lives, as in these examples:

"Being involved in community work has increased my confidence."

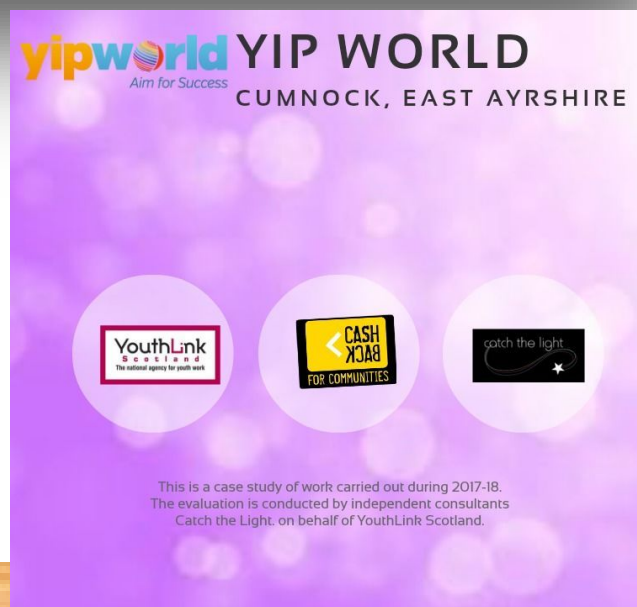
"I have achieved so much, such as DofE, Snowsports instructor and outward bound also the 2 star water sports award."

Consequently, youth work generates positive feelings by promoting resilience factors of feeling safe and having good relationships with adults, as part of meaningful and purposeful activities [see publication].



CASE STUDIES

CLICK EACH DOCUMENT TO VIEW



EXAMPLES OF YOUTH WORK PRACTICE

Youth Work Fund recipients were invited to attend one of four seminars in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Inverness to be introduced to the evaluation tools and discuss ways to evidence the CashBack outcomes. Those unable to attend were required to take part in one of two online webinars.

The seminars allowed funded organisations to raise questions as well as share tactics for implementing the tools. More importantly there was scope to shape how the evaluation would evolve in a way that worked best for the funded organisations.

The benefit of the approach is that the final design for the SHANARRI forms and the prompts sheet were a direct response to ideas and suggestions made.

It was also made clear that YouthLink Scotland wanted fund recipients to use the seminars

and the evaluation experience as a means to share and improve practice together.

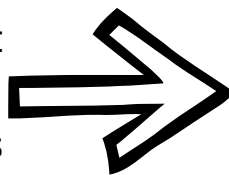
The sector has responded positively to this approach. In addition to the case study organisations, there is a bank of stories collated which highlights ways that funded organisations are working to achieve the CashBack for Communities outcomes.

Everything that funded organisations need for the evaluation is available on a dedicated website www.youthwork.info and regular communication has taken place via electronic news giving updates but also sharing examples of ways organisations have tackled the evaluation.

In this respect organisations have inquired each other along the way.



Link here to read more about individuals that are being assisted by youth workers to achieve the CashBack for Communities outcomes as follows:



grow in confidence,
develop physical or personal skills,
improve wellbeing,
increase aspirations,
improve attitudes and behaviour,
raise attainment, access training or
employment



CONCLUSION

LESSONS LEARNED IN YEAR ONE

As the Scottish Year of Young People, 2018 signals an important milestone where the Government asks us to listen to young people and appreciate their talents, whilst understanding their challenges. There is evidence from 2017-18 that the youth work fund invests in organisations that have a long term commitment to this struggle.

OUTCOMES

The data provided to YouthLink Scotland demonstrates good progress on all outcomes, with significantly more young people than estimated in the targets. Although targets set against each outcome would benefit from allowing a baseline measure to be taken and a measure of progress, to give the results more meaning and relevance, as with the SHANARRI results.

SHANARRI

The baseline SHANARRI measure demonstrates that youth work, home and school settings are viewed positively by most young people. Youth Work and home settings are closely aligned and achieve the highest ratings overall. School settings attain a lower average rating among respondents that take part in youth activities.

Those filtered for feeling less safe at home remain positive about youth work settings across all indicators. Although school is rated higher than home among this group; readers will be concerned to learn that so many young people have negative views of school and home.

Further insight indicates that dysfunctions at home make the formal school environment difficult to navigate, with frequent accounts of bullying, fighting and conflict with peers and teachers.

In contrast, youth work settings appear better equipped to accept young people where they are at in their lives, rather than require them to conform to the norms of the educational system.

According to many of the young people interviewed as part of the case studies, youth work settings are safe havens that can have transformative effects.

Frequently references are made to success factors of good adult relationships and meaningful experiences. These are important factors in building resilience to adversity and making lives more coherent. The examples submitted by fund recipients along with the case studies and SHANARRI data make a strong case that despite the great variety of interventions used, there are strong underpinning professional values employed.

Many participants praised the CashBack for Communities fund for its continued support for the youth work sector. It has become one of the most committed to investing in youth work. Nevertheless case study participants referred to their over-reliance on competitive, short-term grants which place them in a paradoxical situation of working to make young people's lives more stable when their own survival is under constant threat.

Therefore the bigger question for 2018, the Year of Young People is whether the sector can be given a strategic role and more stable investment to play its part in closing the attainment gap and making Scotland the best place for children and young people to grow up.

In the two years which follow, the evaluation will dig deeper into assessing adversity and resilience within case study organisations. A measure will also be taken of SHANARRI indicators and CashBack for Communities outcomes, to determine the extent of progress made.



Have a look at a selection of images and films collected from the Youth Work Fund projects.





Catch the Light wishes to thank all the funded participants, case study organisations, the young people, workers and stakeholders that participated. Also to YouthLink Scotland and Inspiring Scotland for their support.