



Learning through lockdown: The impact of youth work during summer 2020

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The youth work sector has continued to engage and support children and young people throughout the coronavirus pandemic. This has included providing crisis support for the most vulnerable families and mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people's mental health, learning and development.

From 13 July, the sector was able to begin a gradual, phased renewal of face-to-face youth work outdoors. This paper provides examples of how youth workers met the needs of children and young people during the summer holiday period, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Summer programmes

A blend of online, face-to-face and outreach approaches were used to engage young people, provide resources, activities and support.

Snapshot of delivery:

- Youth workers delivered thousands of activity packs to homes across Scotland. In a sample of seven local authority areas over 8,500 children and young people received packs. In general, these were designed to engage young people in learning, improve wellbeing, develop skills and encourage families to spend time together.
- Youth Wellbeing Coaching CIC delivered 400 wellbeing packs to children and young people in the Scottish Borders. One young person said *"This pack has given my wee sister a reason to come out of her room...I have been sharing my pack with her...can't thank you enough!"*
- North Ayrshire Council Connected Communities delivered a digital youth work programme, using online platforms to engage young people, encouraging families to get active, work together and learn. During the seven-week period 105 separate activities and challenges were launched for young people and families to take part in – partnering with the adult education team to give the programme a family-friendly feel. The programme focussed on mental health, health and fitness, gaming, outdoors and the community. Over 71,000 individuals engaged in the programme across lockdown and the summer. They also worked with Countryside Rangers to distribute over 300 plants to young people to grow their own vegetable gardens, alongside isolation packs for young people.
- Over 900 young people participated in Stirling Council's 'Summer Youthie in the Hoosie'. Youth workers used digital platforms to provide opportunities to help young people stay mentally and physically active throughout the summer. Activity packs were also delivered to around 300 children and young people.
- Vibrant Communities in East Ayrshire delivered a number of digital community youth work provisions to supplement the youth work offer in the education hubs. These were generally targeted at young people who previously attended face-to-face provision, providing an opportunity for young people to reconnect with each other digitally, and learn through issue-based sessions.

- North Lanarkshire’s CLD Youth Work Summer Programme used a blend of remote and digital delivery. Facebook Live activities were delivered every day, such as physical challenges, cooking challenges and concluded with a big Gaelic event. Activity bags were dropped off to targeted families to help with taking part (e.g. cooking). There were over online 500 engagements each day.
- West Lothian Council CLD Youth Services used a blend of digital and remote approaches to deliver a ‘Summerfest’ programme. Themed activity packs were distributed in nine SIMD areas weekly in July. They included arts and crafts, STEM activities, cooking and physical challenges as well as resources and competitions. Opportunities also included High 5 and Dynamic Youth online and ongoing engagement via social media platforms. Adapting to a new way of working was challenging but enabled the team to be creative and utilise their skills and knowledge of working with young people and offering learning opportunities in a different way but with similar results. Young people were able to come out and meet the team and continue to engage digitally, helping them become less isolated and stay connected to the service. A total of 1,868 activity packs were delivered in West Lothian. In a survey of participants 76% said that participation improved their mental/emotional wellbeing, with 84% also identifying they had learnt something new. They listed things like art, climate change and surviving camping trip.
- Scripture Union Scotland (SUS) delivered ‘Scotland’s Biggest Holiday Club’ online, supporting families with meaningful activities for fun and exploration of Christian faith. These included ‘Wonderzone’ where they worked with The Faraday Institute to explore science/STEM-related themes. This central provision was complemented by local church-led Zoom sessions, focusing on continuing contact with children and families in a variety of communities across Scotland. In addition, they used digital technology to continue working with young leaders, support transition and deliver small group work in place of their normal summer holiday camps. They even ran Magnitude (their summer festival) online, attracting

1,040 delegates over three days. In total, around 1,852 children and young people took part in SUS activities during the summer.

“I was just in need of social interaction and encouragement in my faith and this week was so brilliant in doing exactly that, so thank you so much!” (Senior pupil attending online leadership training programme).

- LGBT Youth Scotland continued to deliver all of their youth work services online over the summer holiday period. This included youth groups with 479 young people attending and 285 engaging in one-to-one sessions. Within their services they cover a range of needs, particularly mental health and wellbeing. Young people raised concerns around managing the transition out of lockdown and LGBT Youth Scotland worked to support young people on this issue. The media attacks and discussion around transgender identities is proving particularly challenging for young people engaging with LGBT Youth Scotland and they provided support and opportunity for discussion over the summer. These opportunities to continue connections and support were important for young people, as expressed in their own words:

“Because of where I live, seeing friends is very difficult during lockdown so having a time and a space every week where I am able to socialise online has been really nice. It has also meant that there is a structure to that day which is especially good when so many other things are uncertain at the moment.”

“I have achieved an increase in confidence and I have gained knowledge from the activities my group has been doing.”

“I have led a youth group session and been a person welcoming others to the group. Before I came to the group I didn’t have any confidence to speak to others.”

YouthLink Scotland has been working with LGBT Youth Scotland to capture the impact of digital youth work during the summer. Findings will be published in the autumn.

Detached youth work

Many youth work organisations also used detached youth work to engage with young people during the summer. This allowed youth workers to engage with young people on the streets, ensuring they were safe, promoting health and wellbeing and providing opportunities for outdoor learning. Across a sample of four organisations, over 4,000 detached youth work contacts were made.

- In Highland, Highlife Highland undertook detached work in the villages surrounding Tain, in partnership with community-based youth work organisation Tain Youth Cafe. Youth workers used social media to let young people know when the sessions were taking place. Engagement levels were higher than expected, with young people responding positively to engagement with a trusted adult from out with their family.
- In Dumfries and Galloway, detached youth work supported 759 young people with health and wellbeing and provided opportunity to develop social skills through engaging with youth workers. This approach also encouraged young people to increase engagement in their local communities, including participating in other outdoor youth work provision. Many also began to engage in the digital youth work programme, taking part in groups, activities, and challenges.



Outdoor learning

Youth work organisations used outdoor learning to engage young people, build confidence, relationships and skills and provide opportunities to have fun discovering local outdoor spaces. The following example illustrates how youth workers adapted delivery approaches to make use of local green spaces, working in collaboration to expand and enhance opportunities.

Art Club - Dalkeith

Art Club in Dalkeith moved their activities online during lockdown, offering opportunities to maintain positive mental health by helping young people connect with each other and feel part of the wider community. Running online courses and activities provided opportunities for learning and skills development. These were supported by delivery of art packs and materials participants would need to take part. Groups included a food art course, pottery and a creative minds group using art and creativity to improve resilience and good mental health. From 13 July they ran several face-to-face projects, working in collaboration with partners to adapt delivery for outdoors and create new opportunities.

An animation course was adapted for delivery in the woodlands of Newbattle Abbey College – becoming ‘naturmation’. Using natural materials and an outdoor setting participants learnt how to plan and shoot a stop motion animation. The group plan to meet again to edit the video once they are ready for indoor delivery.

Another course, Junior Rangers was led by Midlothian Forest School. They ran a wide range of activities to build specific skills as well as offer opportunities for outdoor work experience. Activities included woodland management, woodcraft, foraging and campfire cooking, beekeeping and den building. For many children who participated, this was one of the first chances they had to socialise with their peers in person.

Art Club used their YouTube channel to share children’s achievements <https://youtu.be/IWMnRjrztR0>.

Parental perspective:

"I'm a parent of two young boys - one of whom has complex needs - and along with my partner was working a very demanding job from home during lockdown. The Art Club activities were absolutely fundamental to the wellbeing of our family as a whole. We all did the drawing activities together and my children got an enormous sense of pride seeing their art exhibited online. The sugar art course gave my older son an opportunity to learn new skills and create and succeed at a time when he was struggling enormously to engage with online materials from school. The diversity of the approach by Art Club really resonated with my children as there was something for everyone and an opportunity to connect with other young people that was sorely lacking from other sources. I am in no doubt that the programme of activities provided by Art Club made a very significant contribution to community resilience and the mental wellbeing of our children."

"From cake decorating to movie making, Art Club saved my 10 year old's summer. It was such a welcome distraction from very trying times. She beamed when she returned from Animation club, Junior Forest Rangers and her drawing activity at Newbattle. Getting out, being creative and spending time with other kids made a real difference to her wellbeing. We cannot thank Donna, Art Club and all the people involved enough for your work in running the activities."

Other examples of outdoor delivery:

- The 'Outdoor Learning at the Allotment' project was delivered by South Ayrshire CLD Family Learning during the summer. This provided family learning opportunities for four targeted families. A youth worker had been keeping in touch with these families remotely during lockdown and the project provided opportunities for them to learn together and re-connect in the outdoors.

"One of the families that we worked with this summer was a lone parent who had been shielding since the beginning of lockdown with her three boys, and was only beginning to start going out again when we offered a chance to join our outdoor learning programme. It offered the boys a chance to venture out somewhere further, and for mum to help ease the boys back into learning and meeting other people again, as an ice-breaker for returning to school."

Mum had worried about taking her sons out, due in part to coming out of shielding and partly because of behavioural challenges in public; but starting the day at the garden centre and then heading to the allotment, gave the family the chance to ease back in to socialising, whilst allowing them to be themselves and not be stressed and regain confidence." (Youth worker).

One parent who was involved in the project said: *"Lovely to be out with nature and see home grown vegetables and talk to others in their plots. Great to boost mental health."*

- Scouts Scotland normally deliver camps for Cubs and Scouts over two weeks in the summer. This summer they ran an online 'Scotj@m' camp for three days in mid-July. Three hundred children and young people participated. Participants had three activities each day and could choose the difficulty level of their programme. They also had challenges to complete and camped out in their own gardens. One parent said: *"Thank you so much to everyone who has made this possible. All 3 of my children have been sleeping in the tent every night and have taken part in the activities and loved it."* From feedback, participating at home/digitally has increased the confidence of some children who may not otherwise have engaged.
- In Fife, Scouts Scotland worked with Fife Foster Care Service to deliver small group outdoor learning programmes focussed on health and wellbeing and keeping young people engaged in learning. Around 200 young people participated. One young person commented on the opportunity to engage and work with others: *"I liked how we were playing and all working together."* Instructors also saw improvements in confidence among participants: *"The confidence the children have gained over the past few weeks has been massive from challenging themselves to go higher on the climbing wall to integrating with new friends. Hopefully we can have a similar programme to help more children gain from this experience."* (Instructor). One carer commented: *"It's given her a chance to be just her and helped her get out her comfort zone."*

Supporting transition back to school

Youth workers delivered a range of online and face-to-face activities that supported children and young people to return to school, including targeting those at key transition points. These opportunities helped children and young people re-connect with peers, re-build confidence and overcome concerns and anxieties regarding a return to school. After receiving support from Dumfries and Galloway youth workers one young person said: *"I was not looking forward about going back to school after being off this long, but now I know I will be ok and that I can get help if I need it."*



Snapshot of delivery:

- South Ayrshire CLD youth work and family learning workers supported P7-S1 transition through a blend of online and face-to-face delivery, including 'transition walk and talk' sessions and a bike maintenance programme. These sessions allowed young people from cluster primary schools to establish positive relationships with their new peers and local youth work staff before making the transition. One young person who took part said: *"I was a little nervous, but I am not anymore."*
- The Jack Kane Centre and Edinburgh City Council Lifelong Learning provided enhanced transition support to 48 children moving from primary into high school. This was delivered using a blend of small group work outdoors, outreach activity packs and various online sessions such as such as 'tie a tie' and a virtual walk-around of the school. Learning loss was tackled through fun tasks/challenges and the programme ended with an outdoor 'Graduation in the Garden' celebrating children's achievements at primary school. The Centre also works closely with St Francis RC Primary School and other partners to deliver the Holiday Matters learning programme during the summer. Holiday Matters offers learning and activities to address holiday learning loss, boost confidence, increase achievement and provide support for the wider challenges facing those affected by poverty. One class teacher said: *"Individual children from my class who attended the Holiday Matters programme came back to school really positive, motivated and ready to learn, they wanted to share their Holiday Matters experience."*
- North Ayrshire Connected Communities worked with Education to create digital back to school content for pupils ahead of their return.

Targeted 'hub' approaches

Children and young people of key workers and those who were identified as vulnerable continued to receive multi-agency support through community/school hubs. Youth work in these settings ensured children and young people had access to a range of learning opportunities and support including transition and health and wellbeing. In many cases this was provided by the local authority CLD youth work teams. However, in Argyll & Bute, Scouts Scotland provided a range of outdoor and adventure activities to enhance the quality of learning experiences within the childcare hubs and engage young people; focusing on health and wellbeing, teamwork and developing skills.

Youth workers also provided opportunities for recognition of personal learning and achievement in hubs. In West Lothian, CLD Youth Services delivered learning programmes and accreditation within key worker/vulnerable children hubs. This increased engagement, addressed learning loss, supported health and wellbeing and raised attainment. A total of 173 accredited learning certificates and awards were achieved by children in P1-S3.

Children and young people participating in South Lanarkshire Council's Summer Emergency Childcare through Youth, Family and Community Learning Services achieved 388 accredited awards, with 23,782 hours registered (mostly Hi5 and Dynamic Youth).

Example from hub delivery:

NORTH LANARKSHIRE – SUMMER HUBS

Across North Lanarkshire, the summer hubs were coordinated by CLD, in collaboration with Leisure and Culture. Each day 540 children and young people were supported, throughout the summer, including those of key workers and those identified as vulnerable through requests for assistance. All activities were focused on improving health and wellbeing, including CLD providing nurture and resilience activities around transition and mental health. Youth awards were offered and a number of young people including young volunteers, were supported to undertake elements of their DofE.

Impact

All 50 youth volunteers in the hubs received Saltire Awards. 48 DofE Awards were completed during this time and 250 Hi5 and Blue Peter badges were achieved.

Young people's evaluations demonstrate the impact on skills development, achievement, health and wellbeing and return to school:

"I did my North Lanarkshire Challenge Award."

"I got the chance to do my gymnastics award with some of the coaches."

"I learned to work as part of a big team."

"I worked on my Blue Peter Badge."

"The Hub helped me mix with others and I feel better about going back to school."

"The quiet area helped me cope with my anxiety. I was nervous about coming to the Hub at the beginning but I quickly made new friends and got to know the staff."

Parent/carers feedback

"My child really enjoyed the hub, it had been difficult to get him to leave the house before he came to the hub as he wanted to play computer games all the time. He participated in so many new activities and met new friends. He loved his time at the hub and has settled well back in to school. Thank You."

"Although my son was one of the oldest young people at the hub, he enjoyed helping the younger children and working with the volunteers. He gained confidence while attending the hub and was looking forward to returning to school. He has settled back well in school. Thank You."

In some local authorities, specific youth work hubs were developed. This included 'The Wee Hub' in Edinburgh. Barnardo's Scotland's Oxfgangs office was repurposed as 'The Wee Hub' and became the site for recreational and emotional support to twenty children and young people who required different support from that offered within the school-based hubs. Barnardo's Scotland worked closely with the local authority to jointly identify those children and young people most likely to benefit from this support.

Children enjoyed a range of activities that supported their learning and emotional and physical wellbeing. *"The young people have been able to give daily feedback and this has always been positive. They have mentioned how much they are enjoying the activities, how calm it is and that there are adults to speak to who they know and trust. Young people who are by nature very reserved now feel able to chat to others and offer their own opinion."* (Wee Hub staff member).

YOUTH WORK HUBS - DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

Youth Work Hubs was a joint collaborative project with youth work, social work and education as it had been recognised that there was a need for provision for vulnerable young people to have respite from their home situations but that the education hubs weren't the most appropriate place.

The Youth Work Hubs were targeted at vulnerable young people (aged 11-18). They provided young people with the opportunity to participate in small group work sessions. During these sessions, young people took part in a variety of different learning experiences including STEM challenges, music-based programmes, and a wide range of issue-based activities. Additionally, young people had the chance to complete various formal qualifications such as John Muir, Hi5 and Dynamic Youth Awards. Youth work staff worked with young people to develop a programme of activities that was directed by them to meet their needs. Young people in Upper Nithsdale for example, wanted to learn more about social media and so worked through the 'Think U Know' toolkit to enable them to keep themselves safe online. In another part of the region, young people asked to learn more about their mental health and so took part in eight weeks of training, where they developed their own peer-education film at the end to support others to learn what they had.

The young people participating in the project had many identified needs and faced multiple barriers to engaging. Firstly, all young people who we worked with were identified as being vulnerable because of COVID-19. For some this meant unstable home environments, being at risk of offending, poor mental health, having additional support needs or having suffered a bereavement, whereas for others it meant that they were becoming increasingly isolated and cut off from their peers/support networks. Many of the young people were hesitant about attending as they had not previously engaged with youth work.

Impact

258 young people were supported in the youth work hubs.

All young people:

- Overcame barriers to learning;
- Improved health & wellbeing through attending;
- Worked on transitions, developing coping mechanisms for difficult situations and their mental health and wellbeing through attending weekly sessions; and
- Developed their skills, predominantly developing socially and emotionally.

129 young people involved increased engagement in learning.

92 individual young people increased attainment, working towards awards including Hi5, Dynamic Youth, John Muir, Participative Democracy Certificate, Bronze Youth Achievement and Heritage Hero Awards.

"I came to the Youth Work Hub at the start of the summer because I have worked with them in the past. I came along because there is a lot going on at home and the Hub felt like a bit of an escape. I have made new friends, and this was a big achievement for me. This has improved my confidence speaking to people. I have achieved a lot during my time at the hub which has surprised me." (Youth hub participant).

YOUTH WORK HUBS - DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

Additional outcomes

There were several unintended outcomes for young people, including:

- Some young people are now engaging more in their local communities;
- A number have got involved more in volunteering and getting their voices heard through consultations and engagement with the local youth council;
- Many are now embracing digital youth work and are engaging regularly through the Digital Youth Work Programme, taking part in groups, activities, and challenges;
- Several young people have gone on to participate in other face-to-face youth work opportunities, something that prior to their involvement in the hubs, they would not have done; and
- Young people have also gained a wide range of practical skills in areas such as STEM, the arts and digital media.

How was impact measured?

We used a variety of methods to measure young people's progress towards the outcomes. Before young people attended the Youth Work Hubs we asked them to complete a short evaluation of where they felt they were at with their health and wellbeing and learning. Young people were asked to complete the same survey at the end of the sessions and the two were compared.

Young people were directly involved in setting outcomes and were responsible for measuring their progress. Young people told youth workers what they were aiming to achieve through participating and this formed the outcomes worked towards with each individual.

Learner case study

The youth work hub had a particular impact on one young person 'S', who was referred to the hub through school. S was a very shy and quiet person who had never accessed the youth work service before. S had not been out of the house in 16 weeks. This was comfortable for them as before COVID they felt very anxious socialising and would not attend activities or groups. When first attending, S was very emotional and did not want to come in. However, after a tour and chatting to staff, S then attended the first session and decided to come back the next day. S then attended 3 sessions a week throughout the summer holidays and took part in a range of activities, discussions and projects. Through this they also started to develop relationships with the staff and their peers which in turn has really boosted S's confidence. S made new friends that they spent time with out with sessions. Through working with staff, S has developed coping strategies to help with their anxious feelings and has improved on their communications skills. S is now looking forward to returning to school and engaging in further youth work activities.

S said:

"I really enjoy it here! It is fun and I love laughing with my new friends. I am also looking forward to attending school for the first time since starting secondary as I now have friends at the same school."

SENIOR HUB PILOT ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL CLD

As has been the case in many parts of the country, the Vulnerable Childcare Hubs in Aberdeen were staffed by a multi-disciplinary team, including youth workers, and were attended almost exclusively by children aged 12 and under. In the city, the youth work team also worked with schools and other partners to pilot a distinct Senior Hub where vulnerable teenagers, aged 12-16, could access community-based support and a range of activities to build skills and confidence. Six young people were referred from three secondary schools in the city, and five attended the hub regularly, and took part in games, visual arts activities and cooking, two hours a week for five weeks. Young people particularly enjoyed the opportunity to buy, prepare and eat food together.

Impact

All 5 participating young people saw improvements in relationships, independent living skills and grew in confidence to lead activities.

Feedback from School – Depute Head:

"Learners quickly established positive relationships which had a huge impact on their confidence to be involved, lead and learn new skills in a very short period of time...it provided an opportunity to ensure that young people were safe and to respond quickly to any concerns. As an educator, I also learned a lot from other professionals and built partnerships that will have a huge impact on my practice in the classroom."



Youth voice

Just prior to lockdown West Dunbartonshire Youth Council (WDYC) hosted a West Dunbartonshire wide consultation which gathered over 600 responses from local young people and helped them identify their first local campaign of Mental Health (57% of the vote). WDYC decided on the campaign name of Small Talk as they believe it only takes a 'small talk' to open up about mental health and reduce stigma. A 10-week Small Talk campaign was delivered as lockdown was introduced. Themes included anxiety, stereotyping, coping strategies and domestic abuse. Delivery was created through a series of graphic resources, links and helplines via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages.

Through partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council's Health Improvement Team and West Dunbartonshire's Young Leaders, the Youth Council organised an online mental health training session via Zoom during mental health week. This gave 14 young people, aged 14+ and from across the authority, the opportunity to take part in online learning and helped them during the pandemic. Following this, regular Small Talk posts were shared on social media every Monday, to raise awareness of the issues, share info about techniques to support mental health and provide practical resources.



Vertigo Theatre for Youth, a group based at East Kilbride Universal Connections and supported by South Lanarkshire's Youth, Family and Community Service, have been undertaking a few initiatives over the lockdown period. Every Thursday evening, an average of 22 young people from the senior group have been coming together online to talk about how they are feeling, take part in interactive drama sessions and discuss and plan projects that they can undertake to keep themselves creatively engaged and entertain families and other young people within South Lanarkshire.

These projects include story-telling videos for children and families, including stories told in BSL and Makaton, which are published weekly. The young people have also been producing videos of themselves performing music from their homes. In the last week, the videos by the young people reached over 1,200 members of the public and have had 395 engagements.

The Vertigo Committee of young people have been meeting regularly and are making contact with the younger members of the group who do not use social media. Members of Vertigo are also currently working on writing poetry and monologues that represent their experience of lockdown, often concentrating on the positive aspects of this. These initiatives all aim to encourage young people to help support each other's mental health, and to create a support network for young people during the current crisis.

Facebook link <https://www.facebook.com/Vertigo360TY/> or search Vertigo 360 on Facebook to see the story and music videos.

North Ayrshire Council Connected Communities created a consultation with young people to gather their views on access to digital resources during lockdown. They also collated young people's views on their mental health and wellbeing during lockdown to plan activities to help. This was shared this with partners in Education, other departments and the third sector.

Food insecurity

In partnership with Scottish Government, YouthLink Scotland supported delivery of a pilot food insecurity project during the summer. This was delivered by local authority and third sector youth workers across six local authority areas. Measures to address food insecurity were embedded in youth work programmes that provided learning opportunities, supported health and wellbeing and transition. Programmes were delivered through a blend of approaches, to meet local need, including encouraging engagement from the wider family. A full evaluation report of the pilot will be published in autumn.

One of the pilots took place in South Lanarkshire. Pathfinders Summer Programme supported young people on the edges of care and at risk of disengaging from school. The programme provided opportunities to build relationships and develop resilience, delivered alongside activities to address learning loss.

Thirty two families participated in the programme which included horticulture, fitness and wellbeing, cooking and issue-based work such as health issues in the community. Activities offered were aligned to the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence. Each week, young people received a delivery of food and activities to undertake at home with online activity and digital group work sessions supporting the resources. Each completed activity was uploaded to Glow. For some young people, this has represented a major breakthrough in terms of engagement with their education. Additionally, young people are engaged and working on the Dynamic Youth Award supported by a Youth, Family and Community Learning Service worker.

FALKIRK'S SUMMER TAKEAWAY

The closure of Falkirk Council schools during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic raised concerns that the poverty related attainment gap would increase. It has been recognised within Falkirk High School that some pupils who face significant challenges also face 'learning loss' during the school holidays period, together with food insecurity as result of not being able to access free school meals entitlement. This was further exacerbated by COVID-19.

As part of the YouthLink Scotland pilot, youth work staff based within school invited pupils and families to be involved in the Summer Takeaway and together they created a six week programme of activities. The pupils, families and staff agreed that the purpose of the activities was to encourage cooperation and learning within the family. The provision of food and digital devices supported engagement and learning, ensuring a non-stigmatised approach was taken to addressing food insecurity and learning loss.

Families shared with youth workers that family life can be very busy and it was agreed with pupils and families that the activities required would offer opportunities for family empowerment, flexibility with no set times or days to participate and importantly with support 'on tap, not on top'.

Youth workers provided all the resources that the pupils and their family would need to do each activity. These were packaged up and delivered on a weekly basis, together with a shopping voucher to support the family to buy additional food for recipes that they had learned or wanted to experiment with. Working with the pupils and families/carers, youth workers demonstrated the recipes or tasks via social media videos which were uploaded to the group and then the families could if they wanted show how it went in their homes. The pupils were able to support their parents with some aspects of digital technology.

FALKIRK'S SUMMER TAKEAWAY

The outcomes for pupils and families who participated in the Summer Takeaway were:

Improved participation, achievement and attainment

72 individuals were involved (91% participation rate). The pupils who wished to accredit their participation achieved Dynamic Youth Awards.

Improved family/carer cohesion, reduced isolation and family learning

As a direct result of the participating within the Summer Takeaway, families reported that they felt less isolated. Pupils reported that they mixed better with family/carers:

"Me and my brother are lot closer now because we have done this."

"As a result of the Summer Takeaway, my family will do more together, we will sit down at the table and eat together and talk more." (Falkirk High School pupils).

"I feel more confident as a parent. It was great to spend time with the family and having the time to do it." (Parent/carer of Falkirk High School pupil).

Pupils and families reported that they enjoyed learning together. In particular, parents/carers reported that they found a confidence to share skills and activities with their children.

"It's something that has helped with my family. I have four kids who all do their own thing. Doing the Summer Takeaway activities has enabled us to realise that we all needed each other, more than we realised." (Parent/carer of Falkirk High School pupil).

Almost all the pupils and their families reported their positive use of social media as a communication tool had improved their relationships and that this had enabled families to support each other with activity tasks. This had also led to new friendship being formed and peer support being offered.

Addressed food insecurity

"It was a lifeline getting the extra food – what we made together, did us for 3 days"

"The food was really helpful – the activities were boredom busters!" (Parent/carer of Falkirk High School pupils).

Next steps:

- 8 families have committed to continue to take part with family learning as a direct result of their experiences of Falkirk High School Summer Takeaway.
- Falkirk High School have committed to the Connecting Falkirk Project which will ensure that pupils who face significant challenges are connected digitally so that they can access to online learning and support.
- The positive experience of the Summer Takeaway has resulted in Falkirk High School committing to invest in a full time CLD Worker to focus on the delivery of youth work and family learning.

"Relationships with and within families are critical for our school. We see youth work and family learning as key to developing these relationships and our holistic approach to learning and development." (Jennifer Macpherson, Depute Head Teacher, Falkirk High School).

Employability

Youth work partners continued to support senior phase pupils and those 16+ during the summer, including adapting approaches to deliver employability programmes and 'next steps' support.

HYPE@HOME – WEST LoTHIAN

Lockdown presented specific challenges for the HYPE (Helping Young People Engage) client group. Whilst HYPE is primarily a skills-based pre-employability programme, the reality for most of the young people we work with is that it's the first step to them engaging in a structured programme to begin to address the barriers which are getting in the way of them moving onto further training, education or employment. The barriers HYPE young people face tend to centre around social isolation, difficult home/living situations, ASD, issues around mental health & well-being and poverty.

Prior to lockdown a number of young people spoke to staff and tutors about their fear of losing the routine of attending courses which they feel are instrumental in their personal development and losing a reason to get up and leave the house. The loss of physical social contact with others and often with newfound friends is a really big deal for some of our young people who've struggled with friendships and 'fitting-in' through their time at school and the loss of the really positive, supportive relationships they've built with staff and tutors from the HYPE team.

In response the HYPE team of staff and tutors delivered a range of opportunities during lockdown and throughout the summer period to continue to support and develop our young people including:

- 150 Themed Learning Activity Packs delivered to doorsteps;
- 44 Targeted Outdoor/Construction themed learning packs delivered;
- 15 Targeted Individualised Craft packs delivered;
- Twice weekly group video calls;
- 42 x 1:1 Walk & Talk/ sessions delivered including focussed sessions on Personal Fitness, Art, Photography; and
- WhatsApp groups set up for individual & peer support.

The generic themed activity packs were delivered to all young people participating in a West Lothian HYPE Learning Agreement and included tasks and information relating to Mental Health & Wellbeing, Personal Care, Cooking, Creativity, Physical Fitness and preparation for a return to leaving the house 'The New Normal'. The outdoor and construction tasks involved a range of activities including planting a COVID blossom memorial tree, building and planting a wooden wheelbarrow planter, and building a birdhouse and bug hotel. Other popular construction tasks included the 'Lockdown Lambo' Airfix Lamborghini kit, moving on to more technical Meccano builds.

What impact did this have on young people?

"HYPE helped me a lot during Lockdown. Especially the Zoom calls and the walk and talks as they both gave me a place to vent and it was just a laugh which took my mind off lockdown." (Young person S).

"I think my favourite pack was the designing a t-shirt. It was fun to do and motivated me to decorate some of my own clothes." (Young person J).

"I think HYPE has helped by giving me something to look forward to each week such as the Zoom calls and the learning packs. It made all the craziness from the lockdown feel a little bit more normal." (Young person A).

"Getting a personalised pack was great. It felt like people were thinking about me and like it was my birthday. It reminded me that nobody had forgotten about me." (Young person J).

PRINCES TRUST

Princes Trust continued to provide one-to-one support for 481 young people across Scotland, building individualised plans based on young people's needs. This was delivered through a blend of digital and remote approaches. Young people receive one-to-one support from a key worker throughout their participation. Induction sessions allow time to develop a relationship, identify barriers and needs, create a work plan and set goals. We enable young people to create their own targets for areas of development by identifying short and long-term goals, helping them articulate what matters to them, and raising their ambitions for their future. It is important that young people have a sense of moving towards something. We encourage young people to reflect on achievements during their time with us and frequently set out new revised goals throughout their journey and acknowledge progress. Key workers have regular check in sessions with their assigned young people to enable welfare and wellbeing discussions to take place.

Depending on the needs and barriers identified, young people are able to choose from a number of online group sessions, whilst maintaining connection with their key worker throughout their journey. 209 young people participated in group sessions which were supported by volunteers from our corporate partners who provide practical advice and tips. Group work sessions are themed around:

Employability - We develop employability skills and knowledge to help young people address specific barriers to their progression into employment. This content includes understanding the world of work, job hunting skills, interview techniques, self-awareness/personal presentation, CV writing and cover letter.

PSD/ Wellbeing – We provide specific learning on Personal and Social Development and Wellbeing. This content includes: Setting and Achieving Goals, Managing Feelings, Managing Money, and group sessions to support with communication. We felt that, more than ever, within the current climate, it was so important for young people to have online access to support in these challenging times. These sessions also give our young people the opportunity to meet with other young people and socialise with others.

Enterprise – we provide specific learning on Enterprise, for those young people who have an interest in launching their own business. These sessions include; understanding HMRC and finance, marketing and networking with other businesses. We feel this has been an extremely popular choice during the Pandemic due to young people taking charge of their own futures and having the time and space to be as creative as possible.

This combination of social and personal development, coupled with specific employability skills and knowledge, and enterprise understanding, provides the best opportunity for a sustainable impact on the young person and their future.

Impact

"The combination of groupwork and one-to-one work has not only improved my confidence but has made me really think about who I am and how to discuss this with my family. Before I worked with The Trust, I wouldn't have felt comfortable taking part in activities and talking to others in a group setting, but I've done all this and more. The support I've had from The Prince's Trust has made me look at the positive aspects of my life rather than the negatives and I have a better sense of my own self-identity which has made me feel much more positive about myself overall." (Princes Trust participant).

Care experienced

Highland Champs – a project delivered by High Life Highland in partnership with Highland Council, Life Changes Trust and Who Cares? Scotland - provided a range of opportunities for care experienced young people to continue connecting and receiving support. This included digital weekly group and one-to-one sessions. Once a month youth workers ordered takeaway to be delivered to young people who were signed up to attend the session. The sharing of a meal together, while they chatted online, allowed youth workers to recreate an integral part of their group sessions. In addition to digital engagement, they developed a 'Covid Capsule'. Parcels were sent out to young people, who completed tasks and returned them to the youth workers. The feedback from those who have taken part has been that the experience of receiving something physical in the post was of great importance and made them feel connected to CHAMPS in a way that was different to the digital engagement. *"It has been a very tangible and creative way to maintain links with our young people."*



SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN'S HOUSES – NORTH LANARKSHIRE

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| Who was involved | 13 young people between the ages of 8 and 16. |
| Impact | All young people improved literacy and numeracy, health and wellbeing, attainment and developed skills. 11 out of 13 were better prepared to return to school, with the remaining 2 demonstrating improved employability skills to move on to college. |
| Additional outcomes | Young people who were lacking in confidence had the opportunity to try new things and some of them really shone – they gained confidence to enter inter-house competitions. The experience of working together made some of them more confident to participate in other things. |
| How was impact measured? | Young people co-designed a learning plan and progress was assessed using award frameworks. |

Health and wellbeing

Youth workers helped children and young people improve health and wellbeing during the summer period. Outdoor learning and physical activity were key elements of many programmes, with others providing important opportunity to reduce social isolation through creative activities and connecting with peers.

In South Ayrshire, CLD Youth Work Services identified that many young people had gradually reduced their social activity over time and said that they lacked personal motivation to continue with routines and any form of exercise. Some also highlighted how lonely and isolated they felt and were very keen to see a friendly face. In response, youth workers delivered a variety of opportunities to connect and engage online and face-to-face.

"It was so much fun learning makeup as I was never very good at it. I love using all the different colours and I'm practising on my own and I did Leah's makeup too. I was inspired the way we learned on Facetime with Lauren. Getting to talk to my friends and youth workers has stopped me going crazy through Lockdown or I would have been really lonely." (Lochside Youth Group Female, aged 15).

Importantly, young people and parents/carers identified the importance of relationships with youth workers that supported health and wellbeing:

"It's been a good amount of time spent online with the Jack Kane staff as there was no-one to talk to otherwise during the worst of lockdown. I knew that the staff were still there when I needed them the most and this meant a lot to me as I had no one else to talk to." (Young person from Edinburgh).



"I really struggled with my emotions during lockdown which was strange for me as I never have felt that low before. Having one to one meetings with the youth worker at the Jack Kane really got me through this. I'm not one for opening up and talking about my feelings, but because I already knew the youth worker it was so much easier. They encouraged me to write down my feelings and keep a lockdown diary, I did this and even got to feel comfortable to share these with the youth worker, then we would talk about this. This helped me a lot. It gave me a safe space to share how I was feeling, not keep it all in and helped me get the confidence to talk with my family about how I was feeling and get even more support." (Young person from Edinburgh).

"The other thing I like about the support is if you are upset, stressed or really worried they will ask you what is wrong and they will try and help you." (Young person from East Renfrewshire).

"Our youth worker is really supportive and helps us with everything that we might be experiencing. It's helped me become a lot more confident in who I am especially my gender identity. I've recently applied for a HNC and got an unconditional at the local college and I doubt I would have done that if I didn't (come to) LGBTYS." (Young person).

"Going to the Hub over the summer has made me feel like I have someone who will listen to me." (Young person from Dumfries & Galloway).

"I just wanted to add I really appreciate that you were all put in an unknown and difficult position and you done great with such short notice. I was trying to figure out what made you all so different that I took an instant like to all the workers I met and then realised it was because you all spoke to the parents and the kids the same and I think that's why my boy has engaged and adapted so well to you all. Thank you so much." (Parent/carer in South Lanarkshire).

"He has made more progress with you guys than he has since around Christmas time. Language, eye contact, negotiating skills, balance, less meltdowns, calmer at home. Has learned to walk away from difficult situations more rather than hit out as much." (Parent/carer in South Lanarkshire).

GIRLS GROUP – PERTH AND KINROSS

The Girls Group provided online and face-to-face opportunities to improve health and wellbeing and connect with peers. This included pamper sessions, walking sessions, quizzes, wellbeing support, picnics and arts and crafts. Six young people aged 14-17 took part.

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| Impact | All young people improved health and wellbeing, engagement in learning and developed skills. 3 young people raised attainment through achievement of youth awards. |
| Additional outcomes | 3 of the 6 participant's families were supported with weekly food hampers. Young people increased engagement in youth voice opportunities. 2 young people were given new phones and data to reduce barriers to participation and promote connectedness and inclusion. |
| How was impact measured? | Self- assessment using wellbeing web. Number of awards undertaken. Workers observations and feedback from young people. |

What young people said:

"Doing Skype calls and activities with Pam during lockdown really helped make social distancing better. I could see familiar faces whilst still being at home. We got to do fun things like homemade face masks and have chit chat with people we didn't live with. I was so happy to finally hear we could meet up at the park. It was so much fun and we completed a questionnaire (place standard) about what it's like where we live. It was good to see people and share our ideas it felt good to be listened too, it was one of the first things I did when restrictions were lifted. We did work around our mental wellbeing and were given goodie bags from mindspace. Overall I think Pam made my lockdown a little better." (Young person NR).

"During COVID-19 lockdown I did a Bronze Youth Achievement Award. Overall I had a very enjoyable experience and it was really fun doing all of the different challenges. I liked how I could choose the things that interested me to learn about including arts and crafts and cooking which I really enjoyed. It was nice when my mum and Pam said I had done a good job which was encouraging. I feel over lockdown I have achieved more than just my school work and I'm proud with my folder." (Young person FO).

Parental perspective:

"As a parent, I supported my daughter to complete a Bronze Youth Achievement Award during COVID-19 lockdown. This was a positive experience as it gave us the opportunity to spend time and work together on something new. Planning and taking part in lots of different activities, and reflecting on them, meant we shared new experiences and had fun trying out and learning new things together that we might not normally have had the opportunity or time to do. Doing the award was a great focus and it was good to feel that we were spending our time working towards something positive that my daughter would gain accreditation for, particularly when things at school were uncertain and we were waiting for exam results. We had support from Pam, via email and meetings, as we progressed through the award, with Pam offering positive feedback and encouragement, which helped give my daughter a boost during lockdown. I am really pleased that she has done the award as it has given her a great sense of achievement and she is very proud of her finished award folder, which is fantastic."

Youth awards

Opportunities for personal learning and achievement continued across the country through youth work – face-to-face, using digital technology and through resources to support learning at home. This raised attainment but also supported young people to take the next step in their education, employment and training:

“With support from my youth worker I was able to complete my Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award through the lockdown even though I had moved to Glasgow. I had applied for a college course and had to have an interview by phone. I was very nervous of this and when it came around and struggled in the interview. It wasn’t going so well as I could not think of anything to say until I mentioned my award. I was then able to talk about all the activities I had done for the different sections and have now been offered a place on the course I wanted.” (M.W. 17-year-old male supported by South Ayrshire Council CLD).



THE LOCHALSH GIRLS GROUP

The Lochalsh Girls Group worked together during lockdown and the summer period to improve their mental health, strengthen social networks and develop skills. Wellbeing and toiletry packs were delivered to houses and weekly online meetings were held to provide support and work towards the SQA Wellbeing award (SCQF level 4).

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| Impact | All 13 young girls improved health and wellbeing, engagement in learning, preparation for return to school, developed skills and raised attainment through recognition of achievement. |
| Additional outcomes | Young people developed their self-management skills in working on their award between sessions. The process brought the young people together, communicating with each other out with the sessions. |
| How was impact measured? | Award assessment framework/process, ongoing reflection and feedback. |

Award providers adapted resources and approaches to engagement and achievement to allow young people to enrol, participate and achieve during lockdown.

The DofE developed a Certificate of Achievement, to recognise the accomplishments of young people who were unable to complete the Expedition element, but had completed all other sections while in “lockdown”. In East Renfrewshire CLD youth workers supported over 100 young people to continue working towards a DofE Award, with 87 achieving an award during this period. This included regular digital sessions to support completion of sections of the award and an online ‘Lockdown Camp Out.’ DofE in Scotland saw 2,113 enrolments during June-August, with 608 awards achieved.

Youth Scotland adapted their Hi5 and Dynamic Youth Awards for delivery at home. Over 420 children and young people achieved an award during the summer period. Children and young people developed skills, improved wellbeing and engaged in social action: *“My challenge was to work as a team with my sister on random acts of kindness. COVID-19 meant that our mum had to shield and we knew and understood how sad that made us feel and thought how lonely and down everyone else in the community was feeling. We wanted to try and bring our community together so they didn’t feel alone and bring smiles. So, project smile was launched.”* (Young person).

Girlguiding Scotland continued to provide opportunities for girls to learn and achieve during the summer. They delivered a virtual International themed weekend event for girls aged 13-18 years, a Tri Sport resource encouraging physical and mental wellbeing and developed fun challenge resources for all sections. This included Guiding at Home – a fun four week challenge based on the programme themes. Activities included binary bling, robot design, algorithms, meditation, creating mini gardens, upcycling, baking and loads more. This challenge was also open to member’s siblings and friends. Over 4,000 girls achieved a badge for completion of the challenges. The impact and feedback has been extremely positive:

Ella, aged 11, said: *“I moved up to Guides from Brownies in August last year. I love Guides, and look forward to my Tuesday night meetings. Since lock down, I am really missing my Guide Friends and leaders. I have been working on some badges at home. I have loved these special challenges set by Girlguiding Scotland, as they*

are fun activities to do, and remind me of the kind of things we would normally do at Guides.”

Katie, aged 9, said: *“I am in Brownies just now, and it is another year before I move to guides. The stay at home badges are good fun. I am excited to show my friends in Brownies the unusual badges I have worked hard to earn while we were off.”*

Leaders across Scotland have been keeping members connected by moving their weekly meetings online, allowing girls to continue to have fun, learn new skills and keep in touch with their friends. Girlguiding Scotland have supported this new way of guiding by delivering zoom training sessions to over 440 leaders and an additional 300 leaders attended online training to help them deliver the Guiding programme themes remotely. An online Guiding at Home hub providing advice and guidance has also been set up.

Girlguiding Scotland Speak Out Champion, Erin Waldie, aged 18, said: *“Having the support of my fellow guiding members has helped me massively by just having someone to chat to. Staying connected and having that support brings a sense of community in these hard times.”*

Scouts Scotland has enabled thousands of young people to be involved in virtual sessions and camps over the summer, working to achieve badge outcomes whilst experiencing activities together. Scout groups have continued to be involved in care for the community projects, supporting local people with acts of kindness at a time needed most. With support from The Wellbeing Fund, a group of young people created a mental health & wellbeing resource ‘The Wellbeing Pizza’ focussed on the five ways to wellbeing; connect, be active, take notice, give and learn; the pizza is now being shared widely! Feedback from participants involved in virtual sessions demonstrates positive impact with one young person communicating that his Scout sessions were the only time he’d talked to anyone out-with his family in several months.

The Boys' Brigade created an online programme of youth work activities, #BBatHOME, which has been running since 20 March. This included around 300 brand new activities to promote mental health and wellbeing whilst also reducing social isolation and loneliness for over 6,000 children and young people in Scotland. The programme was available for every young person, parent and carer to access, regardless of whether they have had any involvement with the Boys' Brigade previously. 94% of respondents to their parents/carers survey rated the #BBatHOME programme as "Brilliant" or "Good", with 66% agreeing that virtual sessions had a positive impact on their child, improving their mental health and wellbeing. These opportunities had a positive impact on whole families:

"We have loved having #BBatHOME; it has allowed some normality and an opportunity to learn new skills and have fun."

"As a family, we've really appreciated the efforts made by the leaders and volunteers during these uncertain times. Their commitment to weekly Zoom meetings and staying in touch with the young people has been a really positive experience for our son. I think the BB activities will feature strongly and positively in his memories of this time."

"I would like to say that this has been a massive uplift for our foster child. The communication and support has been outstanding."

"BBatHOME has done so much for this family's mental health during Lockdown. They've kept us laughing together, even on tough days. I can't thank you enough."

In addition, The Boys' Brigade volunteer leaders and young people have carried out some incredibly selfless acts of kindness and generosity during this difficult summer. Those actions are, in many ways, the perfect example of how youth work changes lives and makes our communities better.

William (1st Cumbernauld) made a fantastic contribution to his local community.

William took it upon himself to organise a collection for Kilsyth Community Food Bank as part of his Queen's Badge (highest award within The Boys' Brigade). He wrote to all of his neighbours and had a terrific

response. He collected 58 bags of food in the first week alone and went on to make a massive difference to his community.

44th Dundee decided to put their minibus to good use and have been helping a local charity to deliver food parcels to families in need of extra support during these difficult times.

"It is sad to see the number of families who are in need of this help but heart-warming to see the smiles on their faces when you deliver the food. I was walking away from one house on Friday when I heard a wee voice shouting 'Hey mister!' and when I turned round a little girl at the door shouted 'Thank you, you're a nice man!' and blew me a kiss. I am not ashamed to admit that at that moment I had a tear in my eye." (Bob, BB Leader).



Community-based youth work

Community-based youth work continued to make a vital contribution to Scotland's response to the coronavirus pandemic during the summer period. The Youth Scotland Action Fund, launched within days of Scotland's lockdown being implemented, provided grants (<£500) to smaller youth groups (turnover <£200,000) to enable them to meet young people's immediate needs arising from the crisis. The fund awarded 167 grants to 131 individual youth groups totalling £80,483. These youth groups ensured that 12,019 young people were supported throughout this crisis. With the funding, youth groups were able to adapt delivery – moving online fast; remove barriers – ensuring young people could access their youth groups activities; and care for wellbeing. This included addressing both mental and physical health needs. The fund helped youth groups to:

- Distribute food and 'care' packages.
- Deliver digital youth work services including online support, group chats, games and activities.

- Provide resources to keep young people engaged and active socially, mentally and physically.
- Purchase essential equipment to enable online delivery such as laptops, smartphones and tablets.
- Remove barriers for young people through providing top-ups for phones and data access.
- Support informal learning and educational achievement through enabling young people to complete youth awards at home.

Rising to the Challenge: Community-based youth work and Coronavirus, a report of findings from the first phase of the fund (March to May 2020), highlights the essential role community-based youth work plays both in meeting and addressing immediate needs but also in taking action now to prevent further negative outcomes arising for young people. In many cases funding provided community-based youth groups with the capacity and infrastructure to continue supporting young people during the summer period and beyond. The report also contains examples showing the impact of community-based youth work.





Summary

This report is only a small example of the opportunities the youth work sector has provided during the summer period of 2020. The impact on children and young people has undoubtedly been significant and it is not possible to capture it all in one place. The examples given demonstrate how youth work has continued to close the poverty-related attainment gap, raise attainment for all and provide opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.



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