



The Impact of Community-based Universal Youth Work in Edinburgh

1 May 2020



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH





Significant Change Story

Young person's story, aged 25 (Story 60)

It's always been something to keep me out of trouble, and given me somebody to talk to. Becoming a dad-to-be at 14 played a big part to where I am now, with the help of everyone at the [youth club], they were always there to listen and guide me. I always felt welcome and supported and enjoyed coming here every week with a bunch of my friends. And definitely I'm a more confident person because of coming here. And I feel like I have made better life choices. I've chosen a different path from all my old friends, a lot of which are in jail or worse. Even now, whenever I'm going through a rough time I can always pop in for a cuppa and a chat and I always leave feeling ten times better.

Youth worker's commentary

He was 11 when he first came along to the drop-in. When he first attended the drop-in his peer group were making poor choices relating to their behaviour. Within the local community they were involved in a lot of anti-social behaviour which resulted in police involvement. While he was not the main culprit he was getting into trouble as a result of being there and did not always fully understand the impact or consequences of his actions. Staff would challenge him to think about the impact his actions were having on others and the possible consequences he may face.

Other members of his peer group have been charged with assault, arson, theft and more recently murder. As a result of the support he had received he distanced himself from this peer group and started to hang about with young people who also attended the drop in.

He also took part in a programme ran by [us] that aimed to address antisocial behaviour in the local community and because of the existing relationship he had with staff engaged fully. He felt confident to express to his peer group how he felt and why he did not want to engage in criminal activities.

At 14 he became a dad but his relationship with his daughters Mum was very chaotic and this went on for a couple of years until they split up. During this time he would often pop in for advice, support and someone to talk to.

He continued to see his daughter and due to her Mum's substance use and volatile relationships he applied to have for custody of his daughter. Staff supported him throughout the custody procedure both practically and emotionally and he was granted full custody. He now solely cares for his daughter and has a full time job, he is also applying to join the Fire Service.



Contents

Statement of Endorsement

Executive Summary

1. Introduction – youth work and Edinburgh

2. Purpose of the research

3. Methodology

4. Findings

- Analysis of stories
- The impact of universal youth work on young people
- How was the impact on young people achieved

5. Conclusion

Appendix

References

Statement of Endorsement

The Youth work sector in Edinburgh has a well-established foothold across the city. Historically, there has been consistent acknowledgement of the impact youth workers can make in local neighbourhoods and through engagement with communities of interest. Youth work services are identifiable as being either targeted at specific individuals or groups, or universally open and available to all young people. Despite anecdotal evidence of the value of universal youth work services, the tangible impact on the lives and lifestyles of participating young people has proved more difficult to demonstrate. This is an international phenomenon, with limited research data available to support the case for the impact of youth work practice intervention. The evidence presented in this report directly addresses this situation.

I fully endorse the publication of this report which showcases findings from a study of the impact of universal youth work in Edinburgh. This important work builds on similar research projects undertaken in Scotland, England and other European countries and utilises the discrete method of Transformative Evaluation (Cooper 2018)¹. In keeping with this approach, a group of local youth workers were trained as practitioner researchers. They collected data from 96 young people participating in youth work services; their reflective experiences are captured in the stories presented and discussed in the following report. I have worked closely with other members of the project team to help design the research approach and ensure that ethical issues have been considered. From discussion with practitioners involved, it is clear that the data collection and analysis has been undertaken rigorously with attention given to ensuring a duty of care towards the young people engaged in the study.

The data presented gives insight to issues faced by young people living in the city. The wide-ranging impact of universal youth work is clearly demonstrated in their respective stories and provides valuable evidence to inform the ongoing development of community services in Edinburgh. At the time of writing, we all face an uncertain future in the wake of the Covid 19 pandemic. The transitional prospects for young people as they move through education towards the world of work and independent adulthood, have been significantly disrupted. The findings from this research confirm the unique role that youth work can play in supporting young people to develop knowledge and essential skills to help them achieve their potential.

Dr Ian Fyfe

University of Edinburgh

17th June 2020

Executive Summary

This report details the findings of a qualitative research study in Edinburgh. The study explored the impact of community-based universal youth work on young people who participated in these services delivered by 9 voluntary organisations across the city, all members of LAYC (Lothian Association of Youth Clubs).

The study used Dr Sue Cooper's Transformative Evaluation methodologyⁱⁱ. Youth workers from partner organisations were trained to become research practitioners and gather impact stories from 96 young people. Young people shared their reflections of significant changes they had experienced as a result of participating in universal youth work. The stories were then contextualised by the youth workers to generate rich, co-authored significant change stories.

Qualitative analysis of the stories revealed the importance of universal youth work to young people and its value in supporting young people to develop and grow in the following areas:

- Skills
- Confidence
- Relationships
- Feeling safe, valued and supported
- Positive choices
- Achievement
- Wellbeing

As well as examining impact, the study also identified the key elements of youth work practice that enabled and supported young people to achieve these changes in their lives. The following aspects of youth work practice were identified as important:

- Provision of opportunities
- Building relationships
- Tailored support
- Safe and welcoming spaces

1. Introduction: Youth Work and Edinburgh

Edinburgh

The City of Edinburgh is an urban local authority located on the Firth of Forth in south-east Scotland. It covers 264 square kilometres with a population of approximately 524,930 peopleⁱⁱⁱ. Edinburgh is Scotland's capital city, the second largest financial centre in the UK and a significant tourist destination. Edinburgh is an affluent city, but with pockets of poverty and low income. City population, and demand for services has grown rapidly in the past decade. This population and demand growth is projected to continue throughout the next ten to fifteen years, facilitated by planned housing developments.

Data from National Records of Scotland (2018) shows the population of young people in Edinburgh aged 0-15 years as 78,501 and those between 16-24 years as 65,075. Local Child Poverty Action Reporting states 1 in 4 children are living in poverty in Edinburgh with this expected to rise to 1 in 3 as we see the impact and effects of Covid-19 across communities.

Youth Work

The Statement on the Nature and Purpose of Youth Work defines youth work as “an educational practice contributing to young people’s learning and development.

Youth work engages with young people within their communities digitally and physically; it acknowledges the wider networks of peers, community and culture; it supports the young person to realise their potential and to address life’s challenges critically and creatively; it takes account of all strands of diversity.

Youth work takes place in a variety of settings including community venues, uniformed groups, schools, youth cafés and on the street, whilst using numerous approaches such as outdoor pursuits, drama workshops, health initiatives, peer education and single issue and single gender work to engage with young people.”^{iv}

All youth work is underpinned by three key principles:

1. Young people choose to participate
2. The work must build from where young people are
3. Youth work recognises the young person and the youth worker as partners in a learning process

Youth work can be targeted or universal, provided by local authorities or voluntary organisations. Targeted youth work involves focussed and tailored interventions aimed at specific groups of young people to bring about often pre-agreed outcomes. Universal youth work can be defined as open access with an open purpose and curriculum however, in reality universal youth work can also often have a specific focus responding to young people and community needs.

Youth work in Scotland has faced some significant challenges in recent years driven by increasing demand and decreasing budgets. In order to secure funding for youth work services, local authorities and voluntary organisations are required to demonstrate the impact of their practice.

It is challenging to evaluate the impact of open-access universal youth work. This study and the Transformative Evaluation methodology provides a structured and participative way of understanding the impact that youth work makes on young people in Edinburgh. The study looks at the open access youthwork provided by nine voluntary organisations across the city and identifies the specific impact participation has on young people.

Youth Work in Edinburgh

The majority of youth work in Edinburgh is undertaken by the voluntary sector.

Funding of voluntary sector youth work is a mix of local authority grants, trust and grant funding. Some organisations have social enterprise strands to their work and some are engaged in procurement and contracts, for example, Pupil Equity Funding.

City of Edinburgh Council funding streams have been oversubscribed and many organisations are not in receipt of local authority funding for youth work provision.

During spring 2020, Covid-19 meant that youth workers in Edinburgh had to quickly adapt to restrictions on movement and take all of their youth work online. The flexibility and agility of the youth work sector has enabled them to continue to deliver to children and young people. Many voluntary youth work organisations have also been reactive in providing services to communities in need in universal and non-stigmatising ways.

The majority of the work in this study including collecting stories was carried out before coronavirus disrupted everyday life.

2. Purpose of the Research

LAYC and its member youth work organisations were keen to use the Transformative Evaluation methodology to better understand and evidence the impact of universal youth work on young people across Edinburgh to support planning, improvement and fundraising.

In universal youth work, the curriculum is not predetermined but is developed through the partnership between a young person and the youth worker and this relationship is crucial. Due to the open and flexible nature of universal youth work, there are unique evaluation challenges that do not exist with targeted provision and for this reason LAYC chose to focus on universal youth work.

LAYC was keen to ensure that the process of evaluation also gave youth workers the opportunity to build their research skill set, reflect on their practice, understand what works and understand the difference their practice makes on young people.

This research set out to answer two main questions:

1. What is the impact of universal youth work on young people in Edinburgh?
2. How was that impact achieved?

The research partnership consisted of:

- Canongate Youth
- Girlguiding Edinburgh
- Kids in the Street
- LAYC
- Muirhouse Youth Development Group
- Northern Star, independent research and evaluation agency
- Sighthill Community Centre
- Sikh Sanjog
- The BIG Project
- Tinderbox Collective
- University of Edinburgh
- Wester Hailes Youth Agency
- YouthLink Scotland, the national agency for youth work

3. Methodology

The Transformative Evaluation methodology used in this research was used in two previous studies *The Impact of Community-based Universal Youth Work in Scotland*^v and *The Impact of Community-based Universal Youth Work in Dumfries and Galloway*^{vi}. The methodology developed by Dr Sue Cooper (Cooper 2012)^{vii} is based on a reflective conversation between a young person and the youth worker. The methodology enables wider stakeholder engagement through the analysis of stories and seeks to provide both evidence of impact and development of practice through the process of evaluation.

This methodology is consistent with the values and approach of youth work, as it provides an opportunity to listen to the stories of young people about what they think they have gained from taking part in youth work. It is a method which encourages practice development:

- youth workers receive authentic feedback from young people about how their practice has impacted on their lives;
- both youth workers and stakeholders have an opportunity to reflect on ‘what is working’ and therefore improve and develop practice accordingly;
- it facilitates wider development of organisational learning and knowledge creation in the longer term; and,
- it creates a culture of evaluation built on collaboration and trust between all stakeholders which supports organisational learning and sustainable practice.¹

Study sites and data collection

Organisations wishing to be included in the study needed to meet the following criteria:

- A voluntary sector youth work organisation
- Operating within City of Edinburgh Council area
- Committed to and delivering universal youth work

¹ Description of Transformative Evaluation Methodology kindly reproduced from UofE/Plymouth Marjon University/YouthLink Scotland (2018)

LAYC asked for expressions of interest from youth work organisations who would like to be involved in the study. All organisations who applied were included as study sites. The organisations all had a commitment to universal youth work and were assessed to ensure they had the competence and capacity to undertake the research.

This study focussed on 9 youth work organisations in Edinburgh, all members of LAYC. LAYC works across Edinburgh and the Lothian providing advice, support, training and information to Member Groups and the wider youth and children’s work sector. LAYC has 122 member groups working with 28,829 children and young people engaged in services in the LAYC network with 2328 staff and volunteers.

| Organisation | Location | Types of work | Number of young people they work with per year | Number of staff and volunteers |
|-----------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Canongate Youth | Mainly in the South-east locality but with some city wide remit | Universal youth work through 1-1 support, group work and youth and children’s clubs | 650 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 staff (14 core team and 6 sessional staff) • 15 volunteers |
| Girlguiding Edinburgh | City-wide | A range of youth work activities – residential, outdoor activities, creative activities and the opportunity to try new things and volunteer in their communities | 4,647 girls and young women | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 staff • 1,255 volunteers |
| Kids in the Street | North-east Edinburgh - based at Castlebrae high school with ability to set up in streets parks and the beach within the local community | Free sporting opportunities to young people mainly based in greater Craigmillar. Youthwork provided in and out of school | 107 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 part time staff • 4 volunteers |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|-----|---|
| Muirhouse Youth Development Group | Muirhouse and surrounding areas of North Edinburgh | Drop-in youth clubs, 1-1 work, volunteering, group work in schools, residentials, exchange trips, outdoor educational activities, social enterprise 'My Adventure' | 265 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 full time • 3 part time • 5 sessional workers • 8 volunteers |
| Sighthill Community Centre/Gate 55 | South-west Edinburgh | Universal Youth work, Targeted Youth Work | 297 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27 employees • 13 volunteers |
| Sikh Sanjog | Leith, North-east Edinburgh | Youth work with BME young people | 42 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 staff • 1 volunteer |
| The BIG Project | South-west Edinburgh | Children's activity clubs, large youth clubs, holiday activity programmes, special interest groups, music - choirs, instrument tuition, songwriting and performance - youth theatre, residentials and trips, 1:1 support, targeted small group work, class based transition support and seasons for growth | 170 | |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|------|--|
| Tinderbox Collective | North Edinburgh | Music-based youth clubs, gigs, events, and music workshops in schools, hospitals and community settings | 1000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 employees • 56 freelancers • 30 volunteers |
| Wester Hailes Youth Agency | South-west Edinburgh - Wester Hailes and the surrounding communities of Broomhouse, Sighthill, Parkhead and Longstone | Drop-in provision, schools work, detached, environmental, groupwork and individual support | 390 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 staff • 10 volunteers |

In October 2019, YouthLink Scotland provided training for youth workers from each organisation to become practitioner researchers and collect stories from young people who access their universal youth work provision.

Following initial training, practitioner researchers identified young people to participate in the research. Young people were selected to participate based on the practitioner researcher's perception that the young person had experienced a change in their life as a result of their involvement in youth work. Between October 2019 and February 2020, a total of 15 practitioner researchers gathered 96 stories from young people accessing universal youthwork services across the 9 organisations.



Practitioner researchers asked the same question to each young person during the data collection:



Looking back, what do you think has been the most significant change that occurred for you as a result of coming here?

Once the stories had been gathered, the practitioner researchers contextualised each story with their own commentary. The significant change stories consist of the young person's input and the practitioner researcher's commentary which the young person approved. Young people were also asked for their consent to share their stories in the final report. The stories were anonymised before analysis and young people were asked to choose a pseudonym to use in their story.

Coding and Analysis

Analysis of the significant change stories initially involved reading each story and identifying key themes and trends known as codes. This process is called coding.

Coding generated two types of codes:

- Impact codes that described the difference universal youth work had on young people. There were 29 impact codes.
- Process codes that described what it is about the youth work process that generates the impact. There were 19 process codes.

Youth workers were a key part of the coding process. Youth worker's involvement helped them to develop research skills, have the time and space to reflect on youth work practice and shape the language used for coding.

There were four main phases of analysis. Phases 1, 2 and 3 took place in January and February 2020, whilst phase 4 took place between March and May 2020.

Phase 1 - members of the research team² came together to read and review 9 stories and identify the key codes emerging. The 9 stories were randomly selected at this workshop and the research team identified an initial set of codes for impact and process.

Phase 2 - practitioner researchers coded the remaining 87 stories using the codes identified in phase 1 plus noting any other codes that arose in these stories.

² Practitioner researchers from Gate 55, Kids in the Street, Muirhouse Youth Development Group, Wester Hailes Youth Agency and the Senior Research and Policy Officer from YouthLink Scotland

Phase 3 – a second workshop with members of the research team to:

- a. Consolidate the initial codes into final, overall domains. This process involved organising the codes into groups called domains and agreeing an overall name for that domain. For example, young people identified a wide range of skills that they had developed through youth work, from skills for life, to leadership, to creative and sports skills. All of these skills codes were combined together under the domain of Young people develop skills. A domain will have a number of codes attached to it. Domains help to summarise and describe the findings of the study.
- b. Select stories that exemplify these final impact and process domains – 11 stories selected

Phase 4 - all of the data and codes were independently checked and verified by the independent researcher from Northern Star. This process ensured that the codes were applied consistently across stories, that there is enough evidence for application of codes and that the initial codes contribute to the relevant final domain.

Stakeholder Workshop

The 11 stories selected by the research team as exemplifying the final impact and process domains were reviewed by a stakeholder group in March 2020. The stakeholder group was made up of young people, youth work professionals, City of Edinburgh Council staff and elected members who all had an interest in youth work within the city. Please see Appendix 1 for more detail on the stakeholder group.

In previous studies, young people had attended the stakeholder group to read the stories selected from the coding days. In this study, the adults on the stakeholder group were keen that the young people played a fuller role in the discussions and deliberations.

The stakeholder group reviewed all 11 stories and chose 4 stories that they considered to demonstrate the most significant change that universal youth work has delivered in Edinburgh and these are featured in full in this report.

Summary of Transformative Evaluation Methodology in Edinburgh



Ethical Considerations

Practitioner researchers had long standing relationships with young people and had a duty of care for the young people participating in the research. All stories were anonymised and young people were asked to select a pseudonym to use. Practitioner researchers worked with young people to explain the purpose of the research, how their stories would be used and to gain informed consent from young people. The consent form used in the study can be found in Appendix 2. Once youth workers had added their commentary to the young person's story, the young person was asked to approve the significant change story before being submitted for analysis. In the report, pseudonyms and organisation names have been removed to protect the anonymity of the young people.

Limitations of the study

This study gathered stories from 9 youth work organisations in Edinburgh. They cover the broad geographical areas of Edinburgh. The youth work sector in Edinburgh is very diverse and includes a variety of providers both voluntary and statutory, delivering targeted and universal youth work. The research only focussed on young people who had engaged in universal youth work and the findings should not be generalised to youth work services across the city. In addition, the findings in this report contribute to the body of evidence on the impact of youth work but cannot be generalised to other local authority areas.

The young people selected to participate in the research were those known to the practitioner researchers through their involvement in youth work and deemed to have experienced some kind of change as a result of their involvement. The demography of the young people reflected those accessing the services of the selected projects and were not representative of all young people engaged in youth work services across the city. The research did not set out to measure the number of young people that had experienced change as a result of youth work but rather to better understand the extent to which universal youth work impacts young people engaging with the service.





Significant Change Story

Young person's story, aged 17 (story 45)

Coming [here] has impacted me immensely. It has given me the opportunity to make friends as I didn't really have any at school and I don't know where I'd be now if I hadn't met them. I first started going to music café in late 2017 and it was very much a safe and welcoming place for me to go as I didn't enjoy school and things were hard at home. Nowadays, things are better for me but I'm so glad I had [this organisation] to help me through it all.

I met my best friend [here] and made so many amazing friends too. They have been so important to me as they make me happy when nothing else can. When I started here, I was at CAMHS every day for my anxiety and depression. I didn't really have any friends or anything that I enjoyed doing. I was very suicidal but [coming here] has made me decide to keep going when I'm at my lowest.

I have become a more confident person during my involvement [here] and actually feel like I'm important and wanted. The staff have always been so supportive and easy to get along with which has also made a world of difference to me.

I've grown so much since starting [here]. They gave me the opportunity to live as myself where I've never been able to do so before and I know I wouldn't have the strength I do today if I had never started coming along.

Originally, I came [here] so I could play drums which I had just discovered I loved doing. One of my friends [here] taught me how to play ukulele and I can now play two instruments. This has given me a sense of identity and realising my ability has brought me a long way from my days of feeling nothing but worthless.

So, I think the most significant change that has occurred for me as a result of coming [here] is that I have a reason to live. I have something to look forward to and friends that make me feel loved and cared about now. I'm no longer left sitting in my room alone and losing myself in my own mind. I have [this] now. And I don't want to lose that.

Youth worker's commentary

When [he] started attending, he was very shy and was having difficulties with his mental health. Life at home can be quite chaotic with a big family in the house. Since coming along... he has been able to increase his confidence, feels more comfortable being himself and is a great drummer and ukulele player. It's been amazing to see him progress over the years and to get involved in opportunities that he would never have done before.



4. Findings

4.1 Analysis of Stories

Practitioner researchers gathered 96 stories from young people.

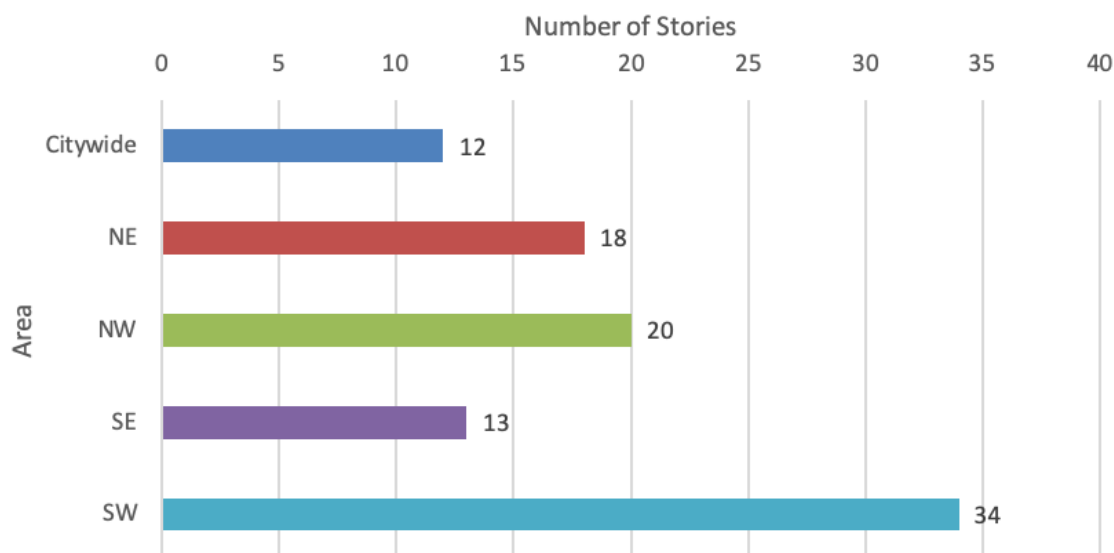
Table 1: Number of stories generated by each organisation

| Organisation | Number of Stories Generated |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Canongate Youth | 13 |
| Girlguiding Edinburgh | 12 |
| Kids in The Street | 11 |
| Muirhouse Youth Development Group | 8 |
| Sighthill Community Centre | 11 |
| Sikh Sanjog | 7 |
| The BIG Project | 11 |
| Tinderbox Collective | 12 |
| Wester Hailes Youth Agency | 12 |



Apart from Girlguiding Edinburgh that operates citywide, the other partner organisations in the research work in specific areas of the city. The chart below details the number of stories by geographical area.

Chart 1: Number of stories generated by geographical area

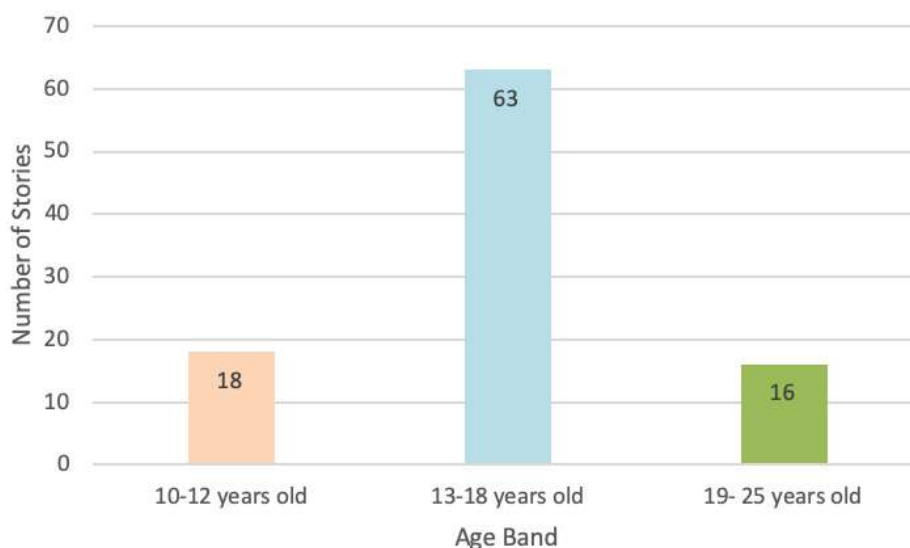


The variety in the number of stories per area is driven by the number of organisations representing each area. Sikh Sanjog and Kids in the Street work in the north east of the city, Muirhouse Youth Development Group and Tinderbox Collective in the north west, Canongate Youth in the south east and The BIG Project, Wester Hailes Youth Agency and Sighthill Community Centre work in the south west.

Age of participating young people

The significant change stories were generated by young people aged 10 to 25.

Chart 2: Number of stories generated by age band

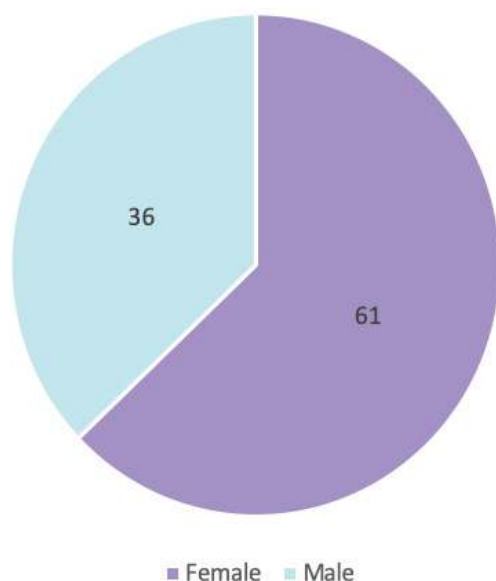


Two-thirds of stories were collected from young people between the ages of 13 and 18 years old (n=63 stories) with the remaining third of stories coming from young people who were aged between 10 and 12 years old (n=18 stories) and those aged between 19-25 years old (n=16 stories).

Gender of participating young people

During the collection of the significant change stories, young people were asked to self-identify their gender in whichever way they felt comfortable doing so. All the young people who participated in the research identified as female or male.

Chart 3: Number of stories generated by gender



More stories were generated by females (n=61) than males (n=36).

Stories and codes

There were a total of 48 initial codes identified – 29 impact codes and 19 process codes. Each individual code can only be applied once to a story. The average number of codes per story is 18.

4.2 The impact of universal youth work on young people

During the analysis process there were 29 impact codes generated which were grouped together into 7 impact domains. Table 2 below shows both the impact codes and the impact domains. Please note that like the codes, each domain can only be applied to a story once. For example, if a story has both the Skills for life and Leadership codes applied, this will only count as one application of the Young people develop skills and behaviours domain. For this reason, the percentage of stories in which the impact domain is present (final column of the table) is lower than the sum of the impact code percentages (second column in the table).

Table 2: Impact codes and domains

| Impact Codes | % of stories the impact code is applied to | Impact Domain | % of stories the impact code is applied to |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Skills for life | 74% | Young people develop skills | 92% |
| Leadership | 23% | | |
| Creative or sports skills | 20% | | |
| Becoming a positive role model | 14% | | |
| Coping strategies | 10% | | |
| Independence | 8% | | |
| Confidence | 80% | Young people have increased confidence | 80% |
| Friendship | 51% | Young people develop and maintain positive relationships | 71% |
| Meaningful relationships with adults | 34% | | |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|---|-----|
| Vocalising thoughts and emotions | 29% | Young people feel safe, valued and supported | 71% |
| Fun/enjoyment | 22% | | |
| Young people feel supported | 21% | | |
| Place to escape to | 18% | | |
| Valuing youth work | 17% | | |
| Sense of belonging | 17% | | |
| Happiness | 9% | | |
| | | | |
| Broadening horizons | 22% | Young people make positive choices about themselves and the world around them | 54% |
| Self-awareness | 19% | | |
| Giving something back | 17% | | |
| Positive choices | 15% | | |
| | | | |
| Achievement | 28% | Young people achieve | 46% |
| Positive destinations | 17% | | |
| Qualifications | 11% | | |
| Setting goals | 10% | | |
| | | | |
| Physically active | 15% | Young people improve their physical and mental wellbeing | 39% |
| Improved mental health | 11% | | |
| Resilience | 10% | | |
| Courage | 7% | | |
| | | | |

Young people in 92% of the stories developed or improved on their skills. Young people were more confident and had an improved ability to develop and maintain positive relationships with their peers and adults in their lives as can be seen in 71% of significant change stories. Young people felt safe, valued and supported within their youth work provision helping them to make positive choices, achieve their goals and improve their wellbeing.

This section provides more detail on each of the impact domains and illustrative quotes from young people and practitioner researchers. The quotes from young people and workers are not from the same story unless this is explicitly indicated. Any names of people or organisations have been removed to protect the anonymity of the young people participating in the research.

When reading this section, it is important to remember that rarely do the codes or domains occur in isolation. The impact of universal youth work on young people is multi-faceted and multi-layered with many connections between codes and domains.

Young people develop their skills and behaviours

Almost all young people participating in the research developed new skills or improved on existing ones. We use a broad definition of skills in this study and include skills, behaviours and qualities. The skills young people developed through young work equipped them to live, learn and work and enabled them to survive, thrive and fulfil their potential.

Skills for life is a broad category and includes practical skills such as first aid and cooking as well as communication skills and team work. Most frequently young people developed communication skills. Young people were better able to socialise with others. They were able to have conversations with people they didn't know, interact in a group setting, actively listen to the views of others and were more tolerant of those who were different from themselves. A number of young people were more confident to speak in front of a group and present their thoughts and ideas in public.



When I first came [here] a few years ago, I barely spoke and didn't really have any friends...

Throughout my time here, I've talked to new people and learned how to deal with situations better even though I initially found them difficult... It's helped me to be around people not just within the club, but out in the real world too.

Q1 young person, aged 17 (story 48)

Almost a quarter of young people had developed leadership skills as a result of their engagement in youth work. This was mainly through volunteering at their local youth group as a youth leader. They took responsibility for planning programmes including holiday clubs as well as delivering individual activities. They also helped with set up and pack up of sessions. Some young people were involved in managing finances and resources for their group. Young leaders were also involved in actively engaging, listening to and supporting other young people within the group and developing positive relationships with them.

In their commentaries on the young people's stories, youth workers highlighted that young people went on to become role models for other young people. This was not through formal routes but through demonstrating positive behaviour, good communication and a commitment to youth work.

“ Since joining... Levi has matured and grown into an effective leader within the unit... ”

Over the last couple of years, we have seen her take on more responsibility and initiative in leading the group. She is conscious of the needs of the group and communicates clearly the intended goals and outcomes of activities.

Q2 , youth worker (story 16)



Some of the organisations involved in the research had a focus on music or sports in the youth work they provided. Twenty percent of young people said they had developed creative or sports skills. Football for girls was highlighted with some girls going on to play for local teams. Those involved in music projects learnt new instruments, learnt to play in groups and perform in front of others. They were able to overcome nerves and fears about performing in public.

“ I think coming here has been a confidence booster coz I joined here when it first started, it was a small thing, but then when I got to the big thing, I performed at Celtic Connections and the Olympic Games Opening Ceremony, so it taught me how to function well in front of big crowds of people, and work as a team, and it helped maintain friendships even though we went to different schools.

Q3 , young person, aged 16 (story 66)

In 10% of stories young people identified that they had developed coping strategies to deal with challenging home environments or behaviour problems, especially anger management. Central to this was the positive relationship between young people and youth workers founded on trust and reliability. Young people were able to describe how youth workers supported them to better understand the challenges they faced and how they might deal with them. Young people were better able to manage their anger and less prone to physical or verbal outbursts. They had improved self-awareness. Those young people who had experienced bereavement felt they had someone to talk to who understood their situation.

“ Being able to control my anger. There was one time that I punched a hole in the wall, I got that angry. And I’ve got a good relationship with the staff. And I’ve been coming for the past 10 years which has developed that strong relationship.

Q4 young person, aged 17 (story 8)

Young people have increased confidence

Four-fifths of young people in the research said that youth work increased their confidence. Increased confidence is linked to the other impacts that young people report especially developing new skills and behaviours and making friends. The relationships with youth workers were central to young people becoming more confident. That young people had a trusted adult who provided tailored support enabled young people to feel safe, valued and helped young people to recognise their strengths.

Giving young people the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities and experiences in a safe and welcoming space, encouraged young people to step out their comfort zones and increased their confidence.

A large proportion of young people talked about their improved confidence in terms of their ability to meet new people and interact with people they didn't know well.

“ It helped me build my confidence in speaking to people and it gave me a understanding on why this division happened in many communities. It also let me see how by bringing people together in a youth space it can allow young people to come together and share their opinions and views in a safe space.

Q5 young person, aged 16 (story 89)

“ ...it's also taught me to more confident... I did a lot more stuff with groups, and it gave me the confidence a lot more to talk to other people. And it also gave me a chance to meet new friends and learn more about other people. Since the place is very diverse it taught me a lot about other cultures as well.

Q6 young person, aged 17 (story 67)

Young people develop and maintain positive relationships

Youth work helped young people develop and maintain positive relationships in 71% of stories. Youth work gave them the space and opportunity to meet and mix with young people outwith school broadening their social circle. Young people were better able to make new friends.

“ I’ve definitely made more friends. Like, I know everyone and everyone knows me and it’s nice to like hang out about with everyone and when someone new comes we always work together and like make them feel welcome, you know.

Q7 young person, aged 14 (story 28)

Young people also developed meaningful relationships with their youth workers based on trust and respect. Youth workers set and reinforced clear boundaries in relationships and what constitutes acceptable behaviour in a group setting. This modelling of healthy respectful relationships helped young people to understand what they looked like in practice. These relationships were developed over time and took patience and perseverance. Young people felt that youth workers listened to them and were always there – a constant they could rely on.





When I was 11 my dad passed away and [they] helped me hugely by getting me involved in camps etc.

That year I was starting high school and they helped me through that. I have always been able to talk to the staff about things because they have been a massive support for me. If [it] wasn't here I'm not sure who would've helped me as there is nowhere else like here.

Q8 young person, aged 16 (story 46)

Young people feel safe, valued and supported

The majority of young people participating in the research (71%) felt safe, valued and supported giving them a solid foundation from which to progress. In a youth work setting, young people were able to vocalise their thoughts and emotions. For some this was the first time they had been able to do this, whilst for others youth work was their only outlet.



With all the activities that we do at the start, when we are like speaking to each other and I feel like now I can

express myself without being scared

Q9 young person, aged 14 (story 11)

Young people's positive relationships with youth workers were particularly important in enabling young people to have these open and honest conversations about how they felt and the challenges they faced. Young people's improved ability to vocalise and share thoughts and emotions in turn helped youth workers to better support young people. Consequently, young people were able to access the services and benefits they needed and were entitled to.

Young people felt supported practically by being given help to attend appointments, fill in forms and practice interview techniques. They also felt supported emotionally. They were able to share their problems with youth workers because of the trust built up over time. Young people felt that there was always 'a cuppa' and a friendly face available to chat.

“ The group helped me from feeling lonely and have helped my anxiety and depression. It has also helped me from all my suicidal thoughts. [My youth workers] have helped me over come family problems and problems at home.

Q10 young person, aged 15 (story 41)

For some of the young people involved in the research, universal youth work was a haven, a place to escape from the pressures and stresses of home and life. It was a place to spend time with friends, a place to take part in activities they enjoyed and a space to relax. Young people felt a sense of belonging and valued youth work and the difference it made to them and their lives.

“ Coming to [here] has made a significant impact on my life because I can de-stress in a place that I feel comfortable and get away from schoolwork and other levels of stress that I face in everyday life.

Q11 young person, aged 15 (story 20)



Young people make positive choices about themselves and the world around them

Just over half of the significant change stories (54%) feature this domain. Participation in youth work gave young people the opportunity to try new experiences and activities, exposing them to new places, cultures and opportunities. There were visits and exchanges to other places and countries and the immersive nature of exchanges had a big impact on young people. Often new experiences were closer to home, within Scotland or local communities, which helped young people to see and access the opportunities around them. These opportunities included residential, new sports, arts and crafts, cooking or visiting places in the local area that were new to young people. These new experiences often took young people out of their usual context and comfort zone but in a safe and controlled way. Through new shared experiences, young people were able to build strong bond with their peers. That young people were willing and able try new experiences is linked to them feeling safe, valued and supported and the trusting relationships they developed with youth workers.

“ Before I went on a residential, I wasn’t good or even able to speak in front of people. When I was asked a question by a teacher in school I didn’t answer in the class. Now having had the chance to speak in front of people who listen to you and respect you I am more comfortable in speaking in school and group settings... Youth Workers help you or if you are scared they give you confidence. They allow you to see places you have never seen or been to before...By going to see different places in Scotland it makes me think what else is possible for me

Q12 young person, aged 16 (story 90)

All of the young people in the research were able to reflect on their journey through youth work by telling their stories. In 19% of stories, young people talked about changes and improvements in their self-awareness. They were more aware of and recognised negative behaviours in themselves and importantly their impact on others. They had a greater understanding and tolerance of difference. They were able to identify and control their anger and they could recognise mental ill-health and seek support.

“ It has helped and shown me how to not lose my temper and not to get really angry. It also helped me to include way more people. And like if I miss a club it does not feel right, it’s like one of those things you can’t get out your system.

Q13 young person, aged 13 (story 85)

For most of the young people who ‘gave something back’ this was in the form of volunteering in their own youth group. They progressed from attending and participating to taking on more responsibility within the group. Young people took on a variety of roles that involved supporting other young people, helping to set up and pack up sessions, organising activities for young people and delivering holiday clubs.

Young people made a choice to engage in youth work and disengage in negative or harmful behaviours. Young people were clear that a choice to actively engage in youth work helped them to avoid risky or difficult situations such as anti-social behaviour, alcohol abuse or aggressive behaviour. Youth workers proactively addressed young people’s negative behaviours whilst also providing them with positive alternatives. This support was tailored to the individual needs of young people.





Right so, like probably being safe coz obviously we dinnae live in like a great area so if I never came [here] I'd

probably be out and that and getting into trouble and stuff, so, that would be the most significant one about coming to [here].

Q14 young person, aged 16 (story 18) linked to quote 15 below



Thomas is a very confident and outgoing individual who thrives when challenged. She had a blip about two

years ago where she left [us] and was, as she says, mucking about the streets. She quickly recognised for herself that it wasn't beneficial to her and returned to [us] . She now enjoys challenging herself by working towards her Gold award and is great in supporting new [young people].

Q15 youth worker (story 18) linked to quote 14 above

Young people achieve

In almost half of the stories young people talked about achieving in a variety of different ways whether setting and meeting personal goals, working towards qualifications or moving on to positive destinations like employment, training, education or other youth work opportunities. This domain focussed on those achievements or goals that young people identified in their stories however big or small. Young people's sense of achievement was linked to the development of new skills which in turn is linked to the opportunities and activities they are able to participate in. Achieving was also linked to increased confidence.

What is clear is that young people feel safe, valued and supported within youth work and this gives them the space and security to try new things and experience both success and failure in a safe and nurturing environment.

Achievements included performing in front of others, writing music, learning new sports, playing for a team, getting on well at school, learning a new skill like cooking, first aid, arts and crafts or moving on and gaining employment or housing.



Well I'm a carer, I drive, me and my sister have got a mortgage and we're getting our keys at the end of the month. It's exciting stuff.

Q16 young person, aged 20 (story 70)



I've also been on stage with Shooglenifty and on stage at the 40th anniversary with my own song, 'This is the anniversary'.

Q17 young person, aged 14 (story 44)

Through their participation in youth work, young people have been able to access employment, education or training. The significant change stories described young people gaining places at college or university, improving their own living arrangements and securing employment including careers in youth work. Youth workers supported young people to achieve these things by working with them on specific aspects of employability such as interview skills, developing new skills like communication and team work and improving on negative behaviours.





Over time, [he] has built positive relationships with staff and often asks for practical support or advice.

Most recently he asked for some support as he had an interview coming up. Staff talked him through the interview process, looked at interview skills and practised possible interview questions. After the interview [he] thanked staff as he said he felt more prepared and knew what to expect and as a result he got the job.

Q18 youth worker, (story 6)



Starting the youth club opened up many pathways for me as a grew older, I was then able to take part in youth

forums and also become a volunteer here myself. This helped me gain confidence in taking groups, as well as confidence in myself and my abilities. Having gained these experienced through [coming here] I was able to use them in my university application and also when applying for jobs.

Q19 young person, aged 20 (story 87)

Just over 10% of young people were able to work towards and gained qualifications including first aid, John Muir, Baden Powell Award, Duke of Edinburgh, Guiding Gold awards as well as youth work and mentoring qualifications and apprenticeships.

Through their participation in youth work, young people were more able to set and work towards goals and they had a renewed sense of purpose. The youth work environment gave young people the space to figure out and plan their own personal goals whether they be education or employment focussed or behaviour and skill focussed. The relationships young people developed with their youth workers meant that goal setting was a collaborative process between young people and youth workers.



Erm it kind of gave me, erm I know it sounds crazy but it gave me like a... I dunno what the word is...

like a purpose to work towards something, like as in like a career and to think about my future and stuff.

Q20 young person, aged 22 (story 22)

Young people improve their physical and mental wellbeing

Young people in 39% of stories talked about an improvement in their physical and mental wellbeing. Through their participation in universal youth work, young people were supported to look after themselves. They were introduced to new physical activities, encouraged to take part in sports and learn more about healthy eating though the snacks provided and cooking for themselves.



Well I realise that I've been more active and I've grown more confident and I go up to people and make new pals and and I learnt how to play a new sport.

Q 21 young person, aged 14 (story 71)



Young people were encouraged to talk about and work through any mental health difficulties they were experiencing. Some young people had very serious mental ill-health whilst others needed someone to talk to and emotional support that prevented more serious problems. Some of the young people had faced some very challenging times in their lives including bullying, bereavement, caring for others, difficult home environments and experience of the care system. Youth work was a constant in their lives, somewhere they could always go to for help and support. In their stories young people talked about how they were more resilient, able to deal with and recover from challenges. They were supported to access information and services, to talk about their problems and strategies to deal with them.

“ By coming [here] I have come to terms with my mum’s mental health issues like bipolar.

One to one helped me through my young carer duties that is linked to my mum’s mental health condition. [It] also provided a safe place for me to come and talk about my issues. I changed my views on mental health and became a more compassionate person. As a person I became more confident and embraced my carer duties. I also feel like I can now cope in difficult situations and, like, I have somewhere I can come and talk about my personal issues and a place I can seek advice. As well, like a place I can come to escape my duties. I became more confident as a person and more happier in my day to day life. If it weren’t for [youth work], I probably would have been on the streets drinking and not really going to school, but now I’m an A student and I have great relationships with my teachers and my family and I’ve just really embraced who I am.

Q22 young person, aged 14 (story 1)

Young people, particularly those participating in youth work with a musical focus, overcome fear to achieve their goals including performing in front of others, taking the lead and going away on residential.

“ I was so scared to even go on the stage, but then something changed when I saw like everybody go on and play, and I just wanted to do it...It was nerve-wracking but also it felt like something I needed to do because this is my family and I just couldn't be here without them

Q23 young person, aged 15 (story 23)





Significant Change Story

Young person's story , age 15 (story 43)

I think it's changed my behaviour in school and it's helped me realise that not all things are about lashing out and then, basically like getting angry over the slightest things and it's helped me with like, suicidal thoughts ...Well it's like a space for me that I can just take time to control my temper, and it's like... people helped me to realise that it's only me that can control my temper, and I've learned that and my temper's gotten a lot better....Like [the workers have] not been strict but they've like... like if I've wanted to lash out they've been like 'take ten minutes if you need to', and it's helped....Erm, well, like stuff's happened at school between some other people, like me and some other people, that's made me feel so low that I've thought about committing suicide. And then this club's helped me bring it back by realising that I've got friends here that can help me, instead of the people at school that aren't... that say they're my friends but aren't really and they'll just turn on me like that...Yea, I've got quite a good relationship with everyone here....I've learned how to make pancakes. [...] I've learnt first aid and it's sort of helped me with another career path...Basically in school I've got all my subjects and I'll be taking new ones. But the person from the first aid has come in and taught me like some new skills and it's helped me go towards like paramedic stuff.

Youth Worker's Commentary

He attends the Monday Group for the Young people that are in S1-S6. When [he] first started coming to the club, he was a little disrespectful to the staff and some of the other young people attending the club. He also had anger issues which he has addressed. At one point he was getting told off multiple times a night by the youth workers. As weeks went on, I think he began to understand we were not having it and we think that's when he started to realise his behaviour was unacceptable and that we would not tolerate it. We have been supporting him since he arrived at the club and we continue to help him week on week with these issues. They are very rare now, but they are still with him. [He] is a very brave young man, he has dealt with so many emotional issues that have affected him and we helped and supported him in all the ways we could through issue based conversations, one to ones and getting other agencies to come in and do group work. We worked with him very closely to ensure he was getting all the right support that we felt that he needed.

He is a very bright young man even though he may not see it. From what we have seen through the club and the activities we have done. When we done first aid he was very knowledgeable and was teaching the other young people how to do CPR and how to put someone into the recovery position. He has a bright career path ahead of him and we only hope we can help and guide him in a good direction in the future.

”



4.3 How was the impact on young people achieved?

This section of the report looks at the elements of the youth work process that were identified as supporting delivery of impact with young people. As described above, any themes that emerged during the analysis process that were concerned with the nature, purpose and practice of youth work were recorded as process codes. Process codes describe what it is about the youth work process that generates impact. There were 19 process codes identified which were then grouped together into 4 process domains.

Table 3: Youth work process codes and domains

| Process Codes | % of stories in which process code is present | Process Domain | % of stories in which process domain is present |
|--|---|--|---|
| Activities | 49% | Youth workers provide opportunities for young people | 97% |
| Skills development | 43% | | |
| New experiences | 40% | | |
| Socialising | 36% | | |
| Progression routes | 31% | | |
| Volunteering | 28% | | |
| Young people taking the lead | 15% | | |
| <hr/> | | | |
| Being a trusted adult | 43% | Youth workers build and maintain relationships with young people | 59% |
| Being responsive | 23% | | |
| Listening to young people | 20% | | |
| Developing relationships with families | 10% | | |
| <hr/> | | | |

| | | | |
|--|-----|---|-----|
| Encouraging young people | 26% | Youth workers provide tailored support for the unique needs of young people | 52% |
| Providing support for young people | 23% | | |
| 1-2-1 work | 15% | | |
| Group work | 9% | | |
| Mental health support | 9% | | |
| Support to access appropriate provision | 9% | | |
| Helping young people develop coping strategies | 8% | | |
| | | | |
| Safe and welcoming space | | Youth workers create a safe and welcoming space | 39% |
| | | | |

This section provides more detail on each of the process domains as well as illustrative quotes from young people and practitioner researchers. The quotes from young people and workers are not from the same story unless this is explicitly indicated.

The impact that universal youth work has on a young person is often achieved over a long period of time using a variety of tools, methods and approaches. There is no one-size-fit-all in youth work and support is tailored to a young person's needs and this is highlighted in the significant change stories.

Youth workers provide opportunities for young people

This domain occurred in 97% of stories. Providing activities and opportunities is at the core of what youth workers do and is the mechanism through which young people develop skills and confidence. The youth work organisations involved in the research provided a wide range of activities and opportunities including sport, outdoor activities, cooking, first aid, music and creative activities, arts and crafts, discussion sessions and games.

In 40% of the stories, young people had the opportunity to take part in new experiences broadening their horizons. Young people were able to take part in activities that enabled them to develop new skills like team work, communication skills, creative and sports skills, leadership skills and practical skills.



My outward-bound courses because that's when I realised all young people are different.

You need to ignore people sometimes as they could be going through harder times than you think. You shouldn't always think they are annoying because that is the way they are all the time.

Q24 young person, aged 16 (story 91)

Youth work provides an important space for young people to socialise and have fun with their peers and over a third of stories identified this. The spaces for young people to socialise freely and safely are few and young people identified how important this was and the difference it made to their interpersonal skills. They were better at meeting and interacting with people and making new friends.



I'm taking part in more things and I'm building my confidence. I am making more friends and able to chat with

them.

Q25 young person, aged 11 (story 50)

Young people chose to participate in youth work and importantly, the activities and opportunities that youth work provided were developed in partnership with young people and tailored to their needs and interests. Young people were encouraged to take ownership over their youth group and actively participate in shaping activities and programmes. Participation in youth work was also a gateway to volunteering specifically as a leader within youth work. These volunteering opportunities provided progression routes for young people and further skills development. For some of the young people it enabled them to decide on a career path or apply for employment or college.



I've gone all the way through to being a leader and just totally being able to show independence and give it onto other girls and give them confidence and independence and skills that I've learnt.

Q26 young person, aged 25 (story 12)

Youth workers build and maintain relationships with young people

In 59% of stories, the relationship between a young person and their youth worker was central to the positive changes in young people. Youth workers were trusted adults and for some young people their only trusted adult. Youth workers were a constant in young people's lives, they were always there and always cared.

Youth workers got to know the young people they worked with and spent time developing healthy respectful relationships. Youth workers actively listened to young people, didn't judge and responded sensitively. Young people felt able to share problems and concerns with their youth workers and develop a way forward in partnership.



I feel like since I lost my mum it's made me more confident and reconnected with my friends and family.

Kind of helped me a lot. It's also helped me be confident and open about how I feel, and when I want to talk to someone, they're there for me and support me through my forms or anything else I need help with.

Q27 young person, aged 16 (story 9)

They were responsive to the needs and interests of young people developing programmes and activities that young people enjoyed but that also challenged them to step out of their comfort zone and try new things building their skills and confidence. Youth workers were grounded in their communities, understanding local issues and concerns. They developed relationships with siblings and wider families.

“[It] has helped me a lot because I have been coming here for 10+ years and when I was out of school for a long time I was working in the café and I got some qualifications. They helped me catch up on school work as well when I was out of school and if I didn't have that support, I would have struggled to go back to school. When I come [here], I feel comfortable to talk about stuff with people because I know everyone from when I used to go to club and that.

Q28 young person, aged 15 (story 47) linked to quote 29 below

“When he was out of school for a very long period, we were able to provide an important link and a degree of insight - only gained through having those relationships - between the school and family. [He] and his family continue to access [us] for support on a range of issues.

Q29 youth worker (story 47) linked to quote 28 above

Youth workers provide tailored support to meet the needs of young people

Youth workers spent time getting to know the young people who participated in their youth work which meant they were able to offer tailored support to meet the needs of young people. The domain occurred in 52% of stories.

Youth workers encouraged young people to set new goals and work towards them. They encouraged young people to pursue their interests, engage with other young people and be themselves.



***“[They gave]me the opportunity as a trainee worker taking young people camping as a lead worker which helped [me] grow in confidence...I received support from the other workers, the way I was introduced to the young people and the way the workers let me take a lead.*”**

Q30 young person, aged 16 (story 88)

Youth workers supported young people both practically and emotionally. Practical support included helping young people fill in forms or access support for housing, benefits or mental health. Youth workers also provided emotional support by listening, being a shoulder to cry on and a source of help and advice. They knew the challenges individual young people faced and tailored their response accordingly, helping young people develop coping strategies. Young people really valued having someone to turn to particularly in times of crisis. This was especially important for young people experiencing mental ill-health.



***The most significant change I’ve had since coming here would be my housing situation. I’m now successfully on the council housing list and have also been helped with getting a priority from [this organisation] and it has made a significant difference in my life.*”**

Q31 young person, aged 18 (story 93)

“I’ve never been able to handle my stress like in healthy ways, so it’s being able to go and speak to somebody and get positive advice and support and encouragement, and that helps me throughout that week, and then again just getting that support and being able to make friends that are going through what I’m going through – it’s not as isolating. And it meets that kinda human need for closeness...Erm, so, like, obviously you’re amazing, every time I’ve needed help I’ve come to you.

Q32 young person, aged 24 (story 39)

In almost 10% of stories, young people were supported by youth workers to manage and recover from mental ill-health. Support also entailed signposting young people to information and services that they access themselves or providing more hands-on support. This involved working through information with young people and enabling them to access appropriate services and provision to help them such as CAMHS, young carers groups, and young parent support groups.

Youth workers used both 1-2-1 and group work sessions to work with young people. Through 1-2-1 sessions, youth workers were able to provide confidential support and advice to young people experiencing specific challenges such as mental ill-health, bullying or bereavement. Group work was particularly useful for young people to meet and interact with others in a safe space with clear boundaries.



Youth workers create a safe and welcoming space

Young people felt that youth work was a safe space where they were welcome and valued. This space was both physically and emotionally safe. It gave them somewhere to be and avoid more challenging or risky spaces. It was a space where they could come and have fun and socialise with other young people but also learn new skills and progress. Youth work provided respite from the stresses and challenges of life and a place they could be themselves. In the youth work space, young people were able to survive, thrive and fulfil their potential.



Looking back [coming here] has been a great experience because we always have a choice they never tell us we need to do something unlike school. [They] always help us and show us new things that we probably never thought we would enjoy but we end up liking it. They are always there for us, when we are sad they are there. There has never been one time that they have not been there to help. The trips they take us on are decided but they always give us a choice if we wanna do it. They never give up on us. [It] is like our blood. Whenever we or others miss the clubs it's like we miss out on something fun. [It] is a part of us and will always be

Q33 young person, aged 13 (story 86)

5. Conclusion

This research study set out to try to answer two key questions:

1. What is the impact of universal youth work on young people in Edinburgh?
2. How was that impact achieved?

For the young people involved in the research the impact of engagement in universal youth work on their lives was substantial. They learnt new skills and behaviours, became more confident, made new friends, developed positive and supportive relationships with their youth workers and improved their wellbeing. They felt safe, valued and supported, made positive choices and were better able to deal with the stresses and challenges of life.

Despite the diversity of voluntary sector youth work provision, there were some core elements that generated impact on young people. Building and maintaining positive, respectful relationships with young people was crucial to providing tailored support at the right time. Universal youth work provision in Edinburgh provided a safe and welcoming space where young people were encouraged to have fun and challenge themselves.

This study took place before the outbreak of Covid-19 and the subsequent restrictions on movement which has had a profound impact on how universal youth work is provided in Edinburgh, shifting to online, digital youth work. In May 2020, it is too early to understand what impact this will have on young people but the commitment of youth workers to provide tailored support, their positive relationships with young people, their skills in engaging with young people and knowledge of local communities evidenced in this study should help to maintain support for young people in difficult times and ease the transition to online engagement.





Significant Change Story

Young person's story, aged 16 (story 64)

So basically if I didn't go to any clubs I'd be in the hoose...I see the world in a different place, because when I went to Ireland I didn't really see this stuff happened in different parts of the world. That people young and older than me are getting shot for being a different religion basically' 'It basically shows me that basically Pilton and Muirhouse is divided by which part you are born in and which part you raised in. I was born in Granton but I was raised in Pilton.

Basically it's changed my lifestyle, staying in the hoose isna healthy. Use all take us oot ti rock climbing, swimming and all different activities. Yeah it's changed for the better because I have connected with a lot more people than I thought I would. Because we all join in, share and have a good time with each other at the clubs.

I have improved from when I used to be young from now, I respect the workers and they respect me back.

Youth work games was a big change for me. From being a young one to a volunteer was quite a big change. You get to see there is a lot more hard work involved than you assume it is...As in like we had to get up early to set everything up to be perfect before people showed up. It changed me because I got to see the work the workers put in to make it was safe and friendly environment and I want to be like a youth work like use now and organise an event like that myself. And everything brings all the communities together. It brings Glasgow, Edinburgh n stuff together and each year youth work games gets bigger and bigger, my wee cousin might be coming to the youth work games this year. It's basically positive because we get to learn what its like in Glasgow and they get to learn what it's like in Edinburgh, they are both different but the same, ya ken what a mean.

Youth worker's commentary

She has been coming along since she was in p6 – she is now in S5. She is from a local neighbourhood of North Edinburgh. She has got involved in many larger projects and exchange trips which she has mentioned throughout the research interview through building a positive working relationship with staff and volunteering and growing in confidence at many of our universal youth clubs.



Appendix 1

The Research Team

Amy Calder, Senior Policy and Research Officer, YouthLink Scotland

Laurene Edgar, Director, LAYC

Dr Ian Fyfe, University of Edinburgh

Kelly McInnes, Director, Northern Star

Practitioner Researchers

Taylor Fairgrieve – Gate 55/Sighthill Community Centre

Kevin Finlay – Kids in the Street

Clare Jamieson – Canongate Youth

Susan Law – Kids in the Street

Sascha MacLeod – The BIG Project

Brian McDermott – Muirhouse Youth Development Group

Claire McGeary – Gate 55/Sighthill Community Centre

Jed Milroy – Tinderbox Collective

Suzanne Quinan – Canongate Youth

Yaz Rew – Wester Hailes Youth Agency

Dean Shanks – Muirhouse Youth Development Group

Satnam Singh – Sikh Sanjog

Sabrina Tickle – Sikh Sanjog

Kara Wipperfeld – Girl Guiding

Stakeholder Group

Cllr Steve Burgess – Scottish Green Party

Cllr Alison Dickie – Scottish National Party

Alistair Gaw – Director of Communities and Families City of Edinburgh Council

Sascha MacLeod – The BIG Project + 3 young people

Katie Nicol – Muirhouse Youth Development Group

Bernadette Oxley – Head of Children’s Services City of Edinburgh Council

Yaz Rew – Wester Hailes Youth Agency

Dean Shanks – Muirhouse Youth Development Group + 4 young people

Appendix 2

YouthLink Scotland
Rosebery House
9 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5EZ

Consent Form – Impact of Universal Youth Work in Edinburgh

We are delighted that you/your young person has volunteered to participate in the impact of universal youth work in Edinburgh research. The research aims to better understand the impact of open access youth work (like youth clubs) has on the young people who come along.

This research will involve young people sharing a story about significant change they have experienced as a result of attending their youth group. These stories will be digitally recorded by their youth worker and then transcribed. The transcriptions will be anonymised to ensure the young person cannot be identified in any way. The stories collected from the young people will help inform the writing of the final report, and some of the stories will be included in the report. Involvement in this research is entirely voluntary, the young person is free to ask any questions and stop the process of telling their story to a youth worker at any point even after the story has been recorded. After the story has been digitally recorded and transcribed, the youth worker will arrange to meet the young person to check they are happy with it and they can make any changes.

We [YouthLink Scotland or LAYC] may use the young person's story in:

- A presentation at a conference or event
- Our social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- Our website, partner websites, project website and blog
- Our toolkits and resources
- Business reports

We will keep and use this information for 5 years, where the content is part of a written publication or report the content will remain in the public realm beyond this period.

Please see the YouthLink Scotland Privacy Policy link:

<https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/legal/privacy-policy/>

Every young person/parent/guardian has the right to easily edit and delete all content they create. If you have any questions please feel free to talk to a youth worker or you can get in touch with YouthLink Scotland who are coordinating the project:

- Email Amy Calder from YouthLink Scotland at acalder@youthlinkscotland.org
- Phone us on 0131 313 2488 (9am to 5pm on weekdays)
- Write to us at Rosebery House, 9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5EZ

Complete and Return

Please return and complete a copy of this consent form and keep a copy for your records.

Please can everyone complete section 1 and 2. Section 3 only needs to be completed if the young person is under the age of 16.

Section 1

Please tick the boxes you agree with:

- I am happy to take part in sharing my story about the impact of universal youth work.
- I understand that taking part is voluntary and I can change my mind and stop taking part at any point.
- I understand that I just need to let my youth worker know if I no longer want to be part of the research.
- I am happy for the youth worker to record my story and understand that the recording will be destroyed when no longer needed.
- I understand that I won't be identified in the final report. My name will not be used in any report or any other materials written as a result of the interview unless I give permission.

Section 2

- By signing this form** I, the volunteer participant, acknowledge that I have completely read and fully understand the consent request and agree to be bound by it.

I confirm I am aged 16 or over.

Full Name:

Signature:

Date:

Section 3

If this consent is obtained from a participant under the age of 16, then the signature of that participant's parent or legal guardian is also required.

Parent/Guardian Name:

Signature:

Date:

Please complete and return to the young person's youth work organisation

References

ⁱCooper, S. (2018) Participatory Evaluation in Youth and Community Work. Routledge, London.

ⁱⁱCooper, S. (2012) Transformative Evaluation: An interpretive study of Youth workers' experience of using participatory evaluation, Doctoral Thesis. Available at: <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/handle/10036/3759> (Accessed: 21 November 2018)

ⁱⁱⁱCity of Edinburgh Area Profile from <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/city-of-edinburgh-council-profile.html> (accessed May 2020)

^{iv}YouthLink Scotland (2005) Statement on the Nature and Purpose of Youth Work. Available at <https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/media/1255/statementonthenatureandpurposeofyouthwork.pdf> (Accessed November 2019)

^vUofE/Plymouth Marjon University/YouthLink Scotland (2018) The Impact of Community-based Universal Youth Work in Scotland: A study commissioned by the Scottish Youth Work Research Steering Group. Available at <https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/media/3183/impact-of-community-based-universal-youth-work-in-scotland-november-2018.pdf>

^{vi}Dumfries and Galloway Council/YouthLink Scotland/Northern Star (2020) The Impact of Community-based Universal Youth Work in Scotland

^{vii}Cooper, S. (2012) Transformative Evaluation: An interpretive study of Youth workers' experience of using participatory evaluation, Doctoral Thesis. Available at: <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/handle/10036/3759> (Accessed: 21 November 2018)



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