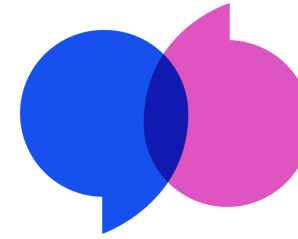




Regional Centre of  
Expertise on Education for  
Sustainable Development



**YouthLink  
Scotland**

# Learning for Sustainability and the proposed Youth Work (Scotland) Bill

**Monday 17 February  
16:00 – 17:00**

# Welcome!



- **Please introduce yourself in the chat box**
- **Mute your audio**
- **Put any questions in the chat box.**

# Aims of this webinar

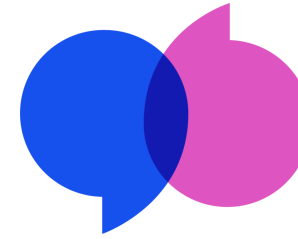
- **Hear a context update:**
  - **Scotland's national vision** for Learning for Sustainability (LfS)
  - **The Youth work (Scotland) Bill consultation** – its aims and purpose
- **Discuss some of the key questions in this consultation.**
- **Encourage participants to submit their own responses to the consultation.**

# Session overview

- 16:00** **Welcome and ‘Setting the scene’**  
*Betsy King, Learning for Sustainability Scotland*
- 16:10** **The Youth Work (Scotland) Bill**  
*Liz Green, YouthLink Scotland*
- 16:30** **Group conversations**  
*All participants*
- 16:55** **Next steps**
- 17:00** **Close**



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# ‘Setting the scene’

**Betsy King**  
**Learning for Sustainability Scotland**

# 'Sustainability' – a national priority

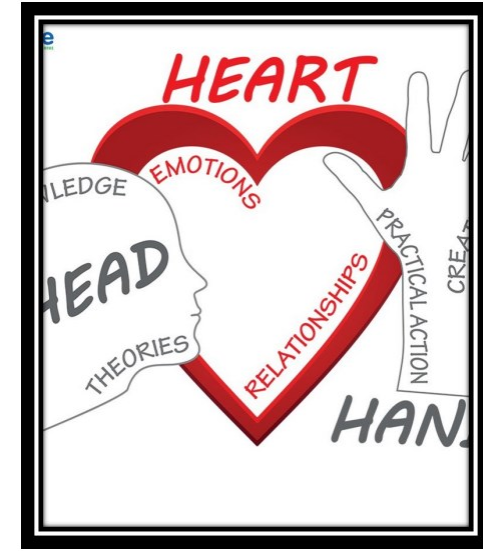


embedded in the curriculum international education ethos  
 equality and fairness values-based understanding interdependence improving attainment and achievement  
**outdoor learning** resilience critical thinking health and wellbeing  
 sustainable energy and water use local to global eradicating poverty and inequity  
 responsible use of our planet's resources play **children's rights** skills for work  
 links between environment, society and economy creativity contact with nature  
 problem solving school linking  
 fair trade **learning for sustainability** respect  
 peace and conflict **learning for a better world** identity and heritage  
**social justice** engaging with democracy human rights addressing discrimination and prejudice  
 sustainable buildings and grounds discussing controversial issues  
**sustainable development education** learners as leaders protecting biodiversity  
 developing political literacy tackling climate change growing food  
 culture community partnerships systems thinking **global citizenship** ethical issues  
 social and cultural diversity cooperative, collaborative and active learning waste reduction and recycling

# What is 'Learning for Sustainability'?

“... a **cross-curricular approach** which enables learners, educators, learning settings and their wider community **to build a socially-just, sustainable and equitable society**; and as an effective **whole-setting approach** which weaves together global citizenship, sustainable development and outdoor learning to create coherent, rewarding and **transformative learning experiences.**”

*Scottish Government 2023*



# Learning for Sustainability – and building a movement for change.

'Target 2030: a movement for people, planet and prosperity':  
Scotland's refreshed national Learning for Sustainability action plan



“To build an inspiring movement for change so every 3-18 place of education becomes a Sustainable Learning Setting by 2030.”

“A Sustainable Learning Setting is about every aspect of the learning context. It is about what and how students learn, how the setting manages its physical environment and resources, how staff and learners relate to each other, how they work with their local community, and how they reach out to the wider world.”

Culture

Curriculum

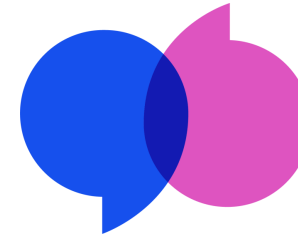
Campus

Community





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# Exploring the Youth Work (Scotland) Bill

Liz Green  
YouthLink Scotland

**Youth Work (Scotland) Bill**

**YouthLink Scotland Stakeholder  
Engagement Session**






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Scotland**

Scottish Labour MSP Martin Whitfield has launched a public consultation on his Member's Bill, A Legal Right to Youth Work. The Youth Work (Scotland) Bill proposes granting all young people a legal right to access high-quality youth work services.

## The Aims of the Bill

The Youth Work (Scotland) Bill proposes establishing a legal framework that would guarantee young people aged 11 to 25 across Scotland have equitable access to high-quality youth work services. It seeks to address the disparities in youth work provision. By making youth work a statutory service, the Bill aims to support an inclusive environment where every young person, regardless of their background, has the support they need to thrive.



The Bill mandates that local authorities develop comprehensive Youth Work Strategies that align with a National Youth Work Strategy and address the specific needs of their communities. These strategies must:

- Reflect the voices of young people, involving them directly in shaping services.
- Respect young people's rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) by ensuring their right to participate, develop, and access support.
- Integrate youth work with broader community services, including education, health, and social care, for a holistic approach.
- Establish sustainable funding models to maintain resilient and adaptable youth work services.

**Establishing a Legal Obligation** - The Bill seeks to address this gap by obligating local authorities to ensure that youth work services are available in their area.

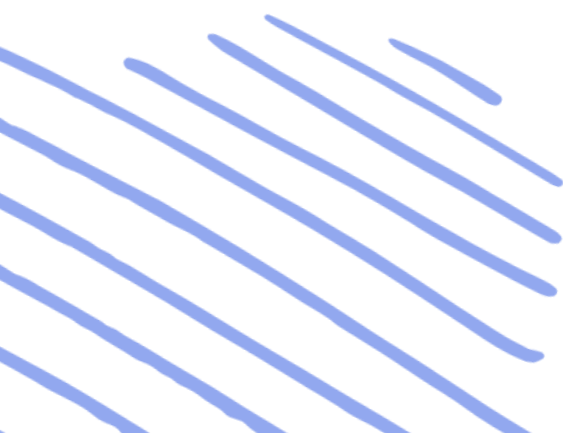


### **Creation of a Dedicated Youth Work Fund**

The Bill proposes the establishment of a Youth Work Fund, which will provide sustainable, long-term funding for youth work services.

### **Collaboration and Holistic Support**

The Bill emphasises the importance of collaboration between local authorities, voluntary sector youth work providers, and other vital services to support young people



## **Accessibility and Equity**

A core objective of the Bill is to remove barriers to access, particularly for under-represented communities, ensuring that all young people can engage with youth work services

## **Strengthening Communities**

Beyond individual benefits, the Bill highlights the role of youth work in strengthening communities by promoting social inclusion, mental wellbeing, and civic engagement.



## How a Bill, or proposed Bill, becomes an Act

- Proposal
- Introduced to the Scottish Parliament
- Stage 1 (general principles)
- Stage 2 (amendments)
- Stage 3 (amendments, debate and final vote)
- Turning the Bill into an Act

Details on [Parliament Website](#)








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Question 1: Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill?

1. Fully supportive
2. Partially supportive
3. Neutral (neither support nor oppose)
4. Partially opposed
5. Fully opposed
6. Do not wish to express a view
7. Please explain the reasons for your response.



## Key Consideration

- Youth work is a cornerstone of Scotland's approach to empowering young people, developing their personal and social development, and enabling them to thrive in life.
  - The Bill ensures youth work receives the recognition and protection it deserves, safeguarding its future in a time when many sectors face uncertainty. By legislating for youth work, Scotland will further align with its commitments under the UNCRC and ensure equity and accessibility for all young people across urban, rural, and remote areas.
  - Youth work is critical in addressing complex societal challenges, including mental health, educational attainment, employability, and social inequality. The proposed Bill would reinforce its vital role, making it a statutory component of Scotland's education and public health landscape.
- 



Question 2: Do you think legislation is required, or are there other ways in which the Bill's aims could be achieved more effectively?

Legislation is required. While the sector has been effective in delivering transformative outcomes, it currently relies on low, inconsistent and short-term funding which varies significantly by local authority area.

Legislation would address these inconsistencies by:

- o Securing long-term, sustainable investment.
- o Ensuring collaboration between statutory and voluntary sectors.
- o Creating a stronger national standard for youth work provision.
- o Providing parity of esteem with formal education by making youth work a statutory service.

The Bill would also strengthen youth work's preventative role, helping to meet Scotland's national outcomes related to health, education, and equality.

While investment and national strategies are crucial, they are insufficient without legislative backing. Experience from other sectors shows that voluntary measures often lack the necessary longevity and enforcement to drive systemic change



Question 3: What financial impact do you think this proposal could have if it became law? Would this save money or cost money?

Youth work offers an exceptional return on investment: for every £1 spent on youth work, £7 is saved in future public spending. These savings arise from:

- o Reduced demand on health services due to improved mental and physical wellbeing.
- o Lower crime rates as youth work provides positive outlets and interventions for at-risk young people.
- o Higher educational attainment and employability, reducing dependency on unemployment benefits and other state support.

Implementing the Bill would ensure resources are directed toward preventative initiatives that address issues before they escalate, saving substantial public funds and reducing costs in areas like justice, health, and social care.



Question 4: Any new law can have an impact on different individuals in society, for example as a result of their age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. What impact could this proposal have on particular people if it became law?

Youth work plays a critical role in addressing the inequalities which affect young people in Scotland.

By providing accessible, inclusive, and often free services, youth work helps by:

- Building young people's confidence and skills, enabling them to access opportunities that improve their life chances.
- Offering a safe, supportive environment where young people can develop their potential, and strategies to overcome barriers.
- Providing practical support, such as signposting to services, and opportunities for free or affordable activities



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Question 5: Any new law can impact on work to protect and enhance the environment, achieve a sustainable economy, and create a strong, healthy, and just society for future generations. Do you think the proposal could impact in any of these areas?

Youth work contributes to a sustainable future by:

- Promoting environmental awareness through outdoor learning, community action projects, and sustainability-focused programmes.
- Supporting economic sustainability by equipping young people with skills, confidence, and pathways into employment or further education.
- Building social sustainability by empowering young people to address social inequalities and build more inclusive communities.



**Question 6: Do you have any other additional comments or suggestions on the proposed Bill(which have not already been covered in any of your responses to earlier questions)?**

**Key Considerations:**

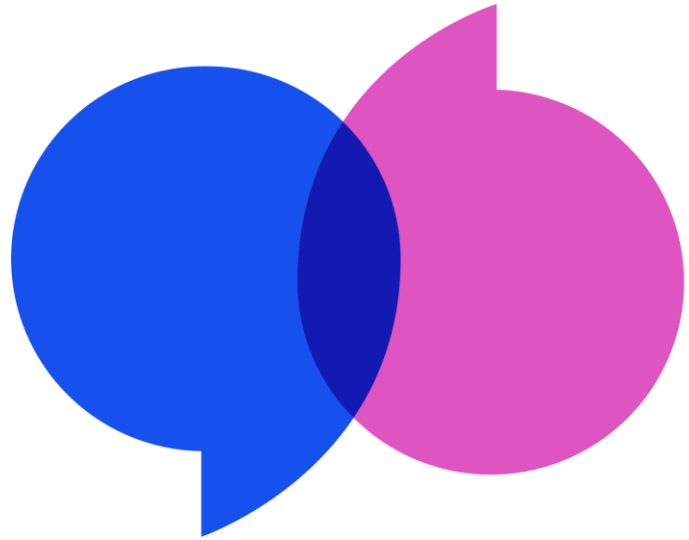
- Ensure robust co-production with young people, youth workers, and organisations throughout the implementation process.
- Recognise the full breadth of the youth work sector, including voluntary organisations, uniformed groups, and specialist services.
- Develop a clear national strategy for youth work delivery, ensuring alignment with Scotland's National Performance Framework and the UNCRC

## Call to Action – Next Steps

- Have your say and respond to the consultation
- Support the young people you work with to ensure they have their voices heard (YouthLink have prepared a session guide for youth workers supporting young people to respond)
- Encourage past participants, parents and local communities to participate (YouthLink have prepared a communications pack)
- Full details available [here](#)





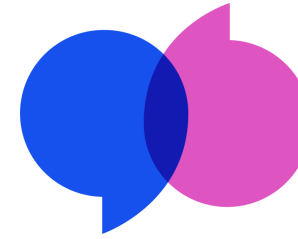


# YouthLink Scotland

The national agency for youth work



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# Group Conversations

All

# Group conversations



1. How do you **feel about the Bill**? (as per the responses offered)
2. Do you think **legislation is required, or are there are other ways** in which the Bill's aims could be achieved more effectively?
3. What **financial impact** do you think this proposal could have if it became law? Would this save money or cost money?
4. Thinking about **equalities...what impact could this proposal have** on particular people if it became law?
5. Any new law can impact on work to **protect and enhance the environment, achieve a sustainable economy, and create a strong, healthy, and just society for future generations**. Do you think the proposal could impact in any of these areas?
6. Do you have any **additional comments or suggestions** on the proposed Bill (which have not already been covered in any of your responses to earlier questions)?

[Add your comments to our Padlet...](#)

# Learning for Sustainability Hub



## Next steps

All

# Find out more:

- [Respond to the Youth Work \(Scotland\) Bill consultation](#)

## Join the conversation!

- [More Learning for Sustainability Scotland events](#)
- [Become a member of Learning for Sustainability Scotland](#)
- [Become a member of YouthLink Scotland](#)

**#LfSforALL**



# Join the Call to Action

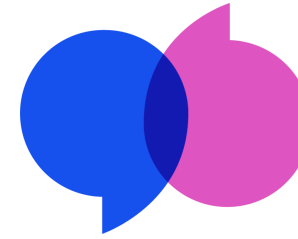
[Learning for Sustainability | Resource Themes | Education Scotland](#)

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Scotland**

**Thank you and good-bye.**

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[Contact | YouthLink Scotland](#)