

MAKING LIFE BETTER



highlife Highland Youth Work

Annual Report 2023

#youthworkchangeslives

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“Young people rightly have high expectations of accessing quality youth work wherever they are in Scotland. Rural isolation and poverty can create significant obstacles for young people, making a strong and vibrant youth work service essential”.

Tim Frew Chief Executive, YouthLink Scotland

Foreword

As a young person shaped by the amazing youth work in Highland, I'm delighted to welcome you to the High Life Highland Annual Youth Work Report. I'm always so inspired by the young people and youth workers in Highland, and it's been so nice to see their dedication, joy and enthusiasm come through in this report.

I have been a member of the Scottish Youth Parliament since 2019 and in March this year, I became the Chair of the organisation. The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) are the democratically elected voice of Scotland's Young People, where we campaign, debate and speak out on the issues that affect young people. As the first Chair from the Highlands, it's been my pleasure to represent the young people of the Highlands at a national level speaking directly to civil servants, government officials, ministers, cabinet secretaries and the First Minister about the importance of Youth Work and ensuring it is properly funded.

This year Youth Work in Highland has provided young people with a safe space, opportunities, meals and shelter, work experience and skills development all in a fun and welcoming environment. Youth work supports positive outcomes for young people therefore its importance can never be understated. All Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament agreed with the phrase 'Youth Work Changes Lives' which is evident throughout this report.

A huge congratulations to Highlife Highland for another year of supporting high quality youth work, truly making a difference for young people.

Mollie McGoran MSYP (She/Her) | Chair of the Scottish Youth Parliament | MSYP for Inverness and Nairn
| [@OfficialSYP](#) | [@molliemsyp](#)

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WHAT WE DO: Changing lives through learning

Young people say that what *they* want from being involved in youth work is to **make life better** for themselves and their peers.

They **choose** to take part because they want to experience new things, speak up for what is right, become more confident and make good decisions.

HLH Youth Work provides both targeted and “open to all” opportunities for young people to: **Get Involved, Get Heard** and **Get On**.

By taking part in these high-quality youth activities and programmes **young people are making life better for themselves with our professional support.**

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WHY YOUTH WORK?

Changing times, changing needs,
evolving youth work

Because it's needed

Life can be experienced as; volatile, uncertain, complex and confusing by many young people.

Current issues such as the cost-of-living crisis have made existing challenges tougher. These can include:

- Mental health problems
- Being a carer
- Being bullied, discriminated against or left out
- Peer / educational / family pressures

Because it works

It's fair, it's fun, and its enriching!

Young people grow in confidence and learn new things about themselves and each other and their surroundings and get ready for the next steps in their lives.

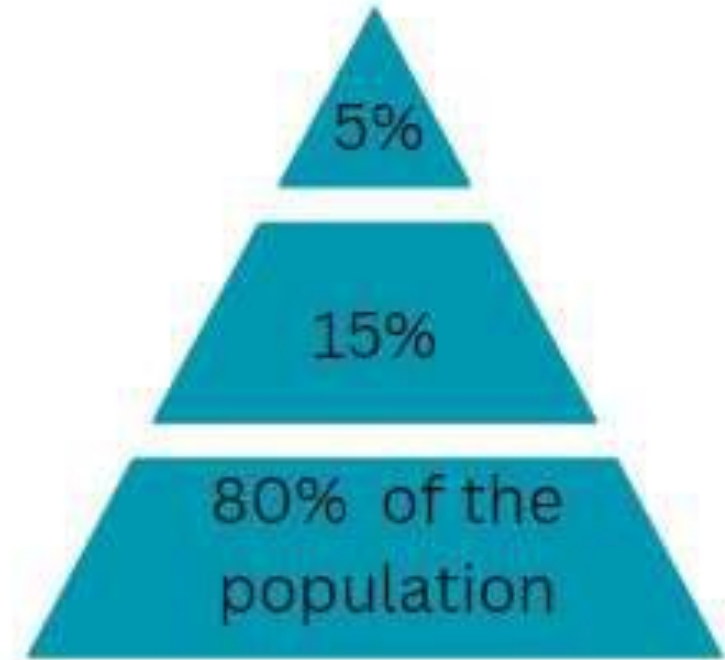
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Community Learning & Development (CLD) aims are supported by

YOUTH WORK

Work is targeted

15% of people in our community are disadvantaged by low skills and qualifications. These individuals may have the power to change their own circumstances if they have access to learning.



CLD is a constant commitment to social justice

Access to learning helps people in our communities with the lowest level of education to access the things that improve our quality of life.

Improved life chances

Everyone in our community has access to learning that will help them to improve their quality of life, especially those with the least education.

Stronger, more resilient, influential & inclusive communities

Everyone in our community has the skills and confidence to make their own choices, influence the things that affect them, and are not excluded from or by the community they live in.

2023: WHAT'S GOING WELL

- ✓ **HLH Youth Work is making life better** for young people across Highland through their involvement in *high quality youth work*, making sure their *voices are amplified* and heard by decision makers and providing *aspirational learning opportunities* aimed at those who stand to benefit the most.
- ✓ A **72% increase in achievement awards gained by young people** and supporting work to close the attainment gap.
- ✓ HLH youth workers continually demonstrate that equality of opportunity is an **essential** part of their planning and delivery.
- ✓ **High quality relationship building** is at the heart of everything that HLH youth workers do with young people.
- ✓ Over **85% of young people** said their experience with HLH youth workers was **excellent or very good**.

“ taking part has made me learn to trust people again”
Young person

The year at a glance

7,558

programmed activities delivered

79,841

meaningful engagements made

157,957

hours of learning provided

1,513

achievement awards gained

MEET YOUR TEAM

Go to the following link to find contact details of your local YDO

<https://www.highlifehighland.com/youth/where-do-we-work/>





MAKING LIFE BETTER by *Getting Involved*

What is Get Involved?

Grass roots youth work provided by HLH across Highland –

Where does it happen?

HLH youth work delivers a Get Involved programme in all 29 high school areas of Highland. Getting Involved includes:

Youth Work in the community – youth clubs / Streetwork

Youth Work in school – lunch time drop ins / after school activities

Youth Work online – issue-based and Pan Highland projects

HLH Youth Work makes life better:

- *“B struggles with his mood which is often low however during his time on the project he was more engaging with staff and his peers in school. He loved to share his experiences of the outdoor activities and would talk about what he had achieved that day” (teacher)*
- *“K loved it! It gave him something to look forward to as school is a big challenge for him” (parent)*



Getting Involved in HLH youth work

Impact / examples / field notes

- ***Over 600 programmed opportunities each month to Get Involved in HLH Youth Work***
- ***Field example - Fort William Street Work – We support young people on a Friday and Saturday night and extra support sessions when required by partner agencies such as Police Scotland and Social Work. Meeting young people in their environment, on their terms, for support enables a more equal, respectful rapport between staff and young people, especially in challenging situations. HLH Fort William Youth Work Team***
- ***“seeing these young people blossom by leaving their comfort zones and thoroughly enjoy themselves was incredible’ – HLH Youth Development Officer***

To learn more about our **Getting Involved** work in your local area, contact us:

youthwork@highlifehighland.com



MAKING LIFE BETTER by *Getting heard and making change*

What is Get Heard?

Getting heard can involve many things such as...

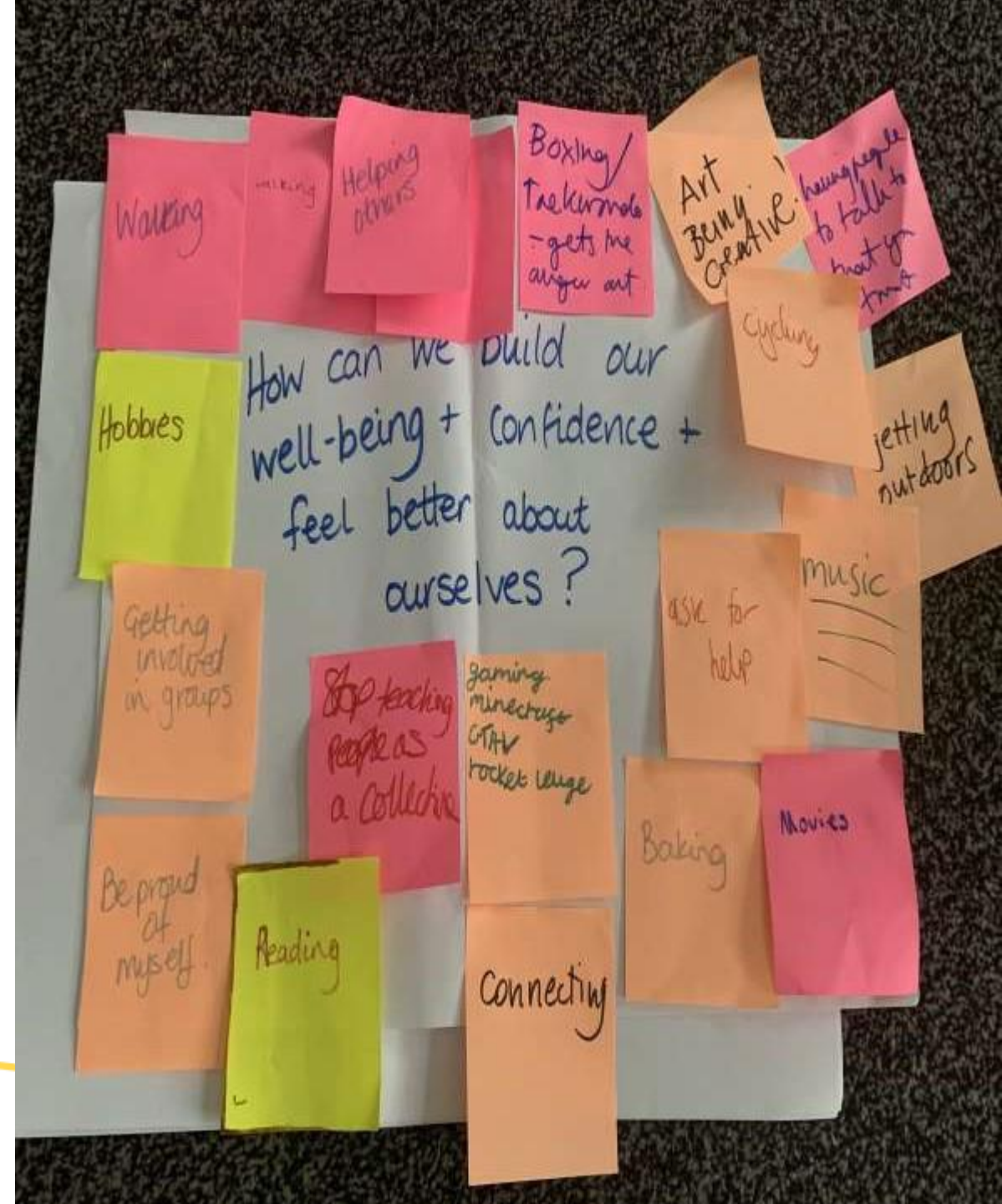
- Being listened to by a caring, professional youth worker
- Having a say in shaping your own local youth work provision
- Being supported to campaign on issues that matter to you
- Becoming a member of a local youth forum, Highland Youth Parliament, Scottish / UK Youth Parliament or the Highland Youth Convenor.

Where does it happen?

HLH youth work delivers a Get Heard option for young people in **ALL 29 High school areas of Highland.**

HLH Youth Work Makes Life better:

- Our vision is *“a Scotland where policy, law and decision-making take account of children’s rights and where all children have a voice and are empowered to be human rights defenders”* by ensuring that *“children enjoy their rights, as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)”* Scottish Government



Getting Heard – with support from HLH Youth Work

Impact / examples / field notes

- **80 young people representing all 9 Community Planning Partnership areas** attended the 2023 annual Highland Youth Parliament Conference in June. This included an Education Q and A with senior Highland Council Officers and key Elected Members.
- **“Our Youth Forum gets involved in their communities. They organise and deliver activities for others, and they fundraise for community projects such as a Defibrillator in one of the villages” – HLH YDO Golspie**
- **To increase and encourage participation amongst young people 2022-2023 Highland Youth Convenor Caitlyn Munro** -visited schools/youth forums/youth groups across Highland to meet groups of young people face-to-face and encourage them to speak up in confidence, to Inspire young people to talk about anything they feel strongly about, reassuring them that people do want to hear from them.

To learn more about our Getting Heard work in your local area, contact us:

youthwork@highlifehighland.com



MAKING LIFE BETTER by *Getting on and being your best you!*

What is Get On?

Getting On is about taking informal learning routes, through youth work, to **achievement** and **attainment**. It's on your own terms, for your own present *and* your own future.

HLH youth work supports the following awards

Youth Achievement Awards / Dynamic Youth Awards / Hi5 Awards

Saltire Awards

HLH Leadership Programme

John Muir Award

SQA awards

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Where does it happen?

HLH youth work delivers a Get ON option for young people in **ALL 29 High school areas** in school *and* community settings.

HLH Youth Work Makes Life better:

"This is a great environment to learn in, lots of other people at school would really do well here".



Getting On – with support from HLH Youth Work

Impact / examples / field notes

- **HLH SQA centre now offers 26 different awards for learners - to choose from themselves**
- **Health & Wellbeing SQA** also new to our offer this year and supports ongoing recovery work with young people after the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **HLH Leadership Programme:** SCQF accredited “Choose To Lead” awards (Level 4 & 5). Includes options for; Play, Leaders, Green Leaders and Gaelic Leaders. 696 awards and “hoodies” completed in the last year!
- **Our first youth work awards delivered in Gaelic were completed this year!**
- *“When asked about my job as a Youth Development Officer by teachers at my children’s School, I didn’t imagine rolling out a **Gaelic Hi 5 Award** pilot with a class of **22 pupils – HLH Youth Development Officer Fort William**”*

To learn more about our Get On work in your local area, contact us:

youthwork@highlifehighland.com



The case for youth work: preventive spend = long term outcomes for all

In education as in health, we are safe when everybody is safe; we flourish when everybody flourishes. (UNESCO)



Investment in youth work is currently **saving** society

£3.2 billion

annually

UK Youth 2022

Read the report:

Ukyouth.org/Untapped

“We know that youth work can transform, and even save, lives. Now, we can also place an economic value on it too”

“for every pound the government invests in the youth sector, this generates between £3.20 and £6.40 in benefits to the taxpayer”.





“Our analysis shows that youth work is likely to deliver high value for money for the UK taxpayer, through the positive effects that it has on young people in terms of mental health, wellbeing, education, employment and other areas”.

"Failing to invest in this frontline preventative service will have consequences on the health and wellbeing of our young people in the years to come and there's plenty of evidence to back this up".

Angela Leitch, who guided Public Health Scotland through Covid-19 and is the current Chair of YouthLink Scotland

SUPPORT OUR WORK

You can support High Life Highland Youth Work to continue to help young people and families to ***make life better*** by:

-  telling others about what we do and why it's important for everyone
-  following us on social media and sharing our content
-  donating to High Life Highland www.highlifelifehighland.com
-  becoming a ***highlife*** member; a part of your subscription will help to fund our work
-  Keep an eye out for youth worker job opportunities, including volunteering

To learn more about what HLH Youth Work are doing in your local area, contact us:
youthwork@highlifelifehighland.com





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Thank you Mòran taining

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