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|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>COMMITTEE:</b>     | Education & Children's Services Committee       |
| <b>MEETING DATE:</b>  | 18 November 2025                                |
| <b>BY:</b>            | Depute Chief Executive Children and Communities |
| <b>REPORT TITLE:</b>  | Youth Vision Youth Work Strategy 2026-2029      |
| <b>REPORT STATUS:</b> | Public                                          |

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## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To approve and adopt the East Lothian Youth Vision, a co-produced three-year strategy for Youth Work from 2026 to 2029 that reflects current and emerging youth work priorities.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the contents of this report including the extensive consultation and engagement carried out with young people.
- 2.2 Approve the Youth Vision as East Lothian's Youth Work Strategy 2026-2029 (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 Note that the governance of the Youth Vision will sit with the East Lothian Partnership through the Community Learning and Development Partnership.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Each local authority is required to consult on and publish Community Learning and Development (CLD) Partnership plans every three years. These plans should contain specific information on the provision of CLD in the local authority area, including youth work provided by both the local authority and third sector partners as outlined in The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013: Guidance for Local Authorities.

### 3.2 National Youth Work Context

There are three essential and definitive features of Youth Work practice, highlighted by YouthLink Scotland's *'The Nature and Purpose of Youth Work'*.

- Young people choose to participate
- Youth work builds from where young people are
- The young person and the youth worker are partners in a learning process

Source: Statement on the Nature and Purpose of Youth Work, 2024 YouthLink Scotland <https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Statement-on-the-Nature-and-Purpose-of-Youth-Work.pdf>

### 3.3 National Youth Work Outcomes

The seven youth work outcomes describe the key overarching impacts of youth work:

Outcome 1: Young people build their health and wellbeing

Outcome 2: Young people develop and manage relationships effectively

Outcome 3: Young people create and apply their learning and describe their skills and achievements

Outcome 4: Young people participate safely and effectively in groups and teams

Outcome 5: Young people consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control

Outcome 6: Young people grow as active citizens, expressing their voice and enabling change

Outcome 7: Young people broaden their perspectives through new experiences and thinking

Source: YouthLink Scotland, National Youth Work Outcomes & Skills Framework

## Evidenced Impact of Youth Work

- 3.4 Youth work delivers wide-reaching benefits - not just for young people, but for communities and the economy. Research commissioned by YouthLink Scotland shows that every £1 invested generates at least £7 in value, highlighting its strong return and lasting impact. Amongst the growing body of research two Scottish studies (2018 & 2020) highlight the powerful role of youth work. Both reports found that youth work provides a safe, supportive environment where young people:

- Build confidence and life skills
- Form trusted relationships with youth workers
- Feel valued, respected, and listened to
- Make positive choices and handle challenges
- Develop new skills and friendships

These findings show a consistent and compelling picture of Youth Work as a vital space for personal growth, learning and emotional support.

Source: YouthLink Scotland, see background papers.

## **East Lothian Context**

- 3.5 Youth Work improves the life chances of children and young people. In East Lothian, services and organisations working with communities are committed to improving the life chances of all children and young people, while reducing existing inequalities. Youth work plays a key role in achieving these priorities. By building trusted relationships between young people and with supportive adults, youth work creates safe spaces where young people feel heard, included, and able to access help. It supports both educational and personal development, helping to improve engagement, and achievement. By encouraging positive peer and community connections, youth work helps young people build resilience, confidence, and a strong sense of belonging—reducing the risk of long-term challenges such as poor mental health, involvement in crime, or unemployment. The Youth Vision Strategy was co-developed by young people, youth organisations, East Lothian Council, and key partners. A Young People’s Advisory Group (YPAG) worked with professionals to consult peers and draft the Youth Vision.

The Youth Vision contributes to the priorities in the East Lothian Plan, East Lothian Partnership Poverty Plan, Children and Young People’s Services Plan, Corporate Parenting Plan, CLD Partnership plan, Raising Attainment Strategy and GIRFEC framework in East Lothian.

This is the overview of the East Lothian Youth Vision 2026-2029 ‘Plan on a Page’.

- 3.6 **Youth Vision:** Young people in East Lothian are safe, heard and included.

### **Strategy Goals:**

1. Children and young people feel safer in their communities
2. Children and young people’s ideas and experiences will be heard, listened to and acted upon
3. Children and young people feel included in their communities

### **Outcomes:**

1. Children and young people report feeling safer and more supported in their communities through youth work experiences and relationships with trusted adults.
2. Children and young people in East Lothian report that their views are heard, listened to and acted upon.

Opportunities for children and young people's ideas to shape decision making will be strengthened.

3. Children and young people feel a stronger sense of inclusion and wellbeing through inclusive youth work opportunities and access to helpful information in their communities.

**Impact** will be measured through a range of evidence for example youth work surveys, case studies, participation data, volunteering opportunities and number of youth awards.

## **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None

## **5 RESOURCE AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Finance: None
- 5.2 Human Resources: None
- 5.3 Other (e.g. Legal/IT): None
- 5.4 Risk: None

## **6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 ***Select the statement that is appropriate to your report by placing an 'X' in the relevant box.***

An Integrated Impact Assessment screening process has been undertaken, and the subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on: equality and human rights; tackling socio-economic disadvantages and poverty; climate change, the environment and sustainability; the Council's role as a corporate parent; or the storage/collection of personal data.

☐

or

The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and impacts have been identified as follows:

x

| Subject                                               | Impacts identified (Yes, No or N/A) |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Equality and human rights                             | YES                                 |
| Socio-economic disadvantage/poverty                   | YES                                 |
| Climate change, the environment and sustainability    | YES                                 |
| Corporate parenting and care-experienced young people | YES                                 |
| Storage/collection of personal data                   | NO                                  |
| Other                                                 |                                     |

*[Enter information on impacts that have been identified]*

The Integrated Impact Assessment relating to this report has been published and can be accessed via the Council's website:

[https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210602/equality\\_and\\_diversity/12014/integrated\\_impact\\_assessments](https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210602/equality_and_diversity/12014/integrated_impact_assessments)

## **7 APPENDICES**

- 7.1 Youth Vision, Youth Work Strategy 2026-2029 (Appendix 1).

## **8 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 Statement on the Nature and Purpose of Youth Work

<https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Statement-on-the-Nature-and-Purpose-of-Youth-Work.pdf>

YouthLink Scotland, National Youth Work Outcomes & Skills Framework

<https://www.youthlink.scot/education-skills/youth-work-outcomes-skills>

YouthLink Scotland, Scottish Parliament Election 2021 The Report Resilient, Resourceful, Reimagined and Recognised A manifesto to support Scotland's youth workers and young people

[https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Manifesto-Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Manifesto-Report_FINAL.pdf)

The Impact of Community-based Universal Youth Work in Scotland, YouthLink Scotland, 2018 <https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Impact-of-Universal-Youth-Work-in-Scotland.pdf>

The Impact of Universal Youth Work, Edinburgh 2020, YouthLink Scotland <https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Impact-of-Universal-Youth-Work-in-Edinburgh.pdf>

## 9 AUTHOR AND APPROVAL DETAILS

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| <b>Date</b>        | 16 September 2025                                                                                                                                                |

### Head of Service Approval

|                                                                                                 |                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Name</b>                                                                                     | Eamon John                           |
| <b>Designation</b>                                                                              | Head of Communities and Partnerships |
| <b>Confirmation that IIA and other relevant checks (e.g. finance/legal) have been completed</b> | Yes                                  |
| <b>Approval Date</b>                                                                            | 28 October 2025                      |

East Lothian Partnership

# YOUTH VISION



**Youth Vision Strategy 2026-29**

**SAFE HEARD INCLUDED**

# Welcome to our Youth Vision 2026-29

*Youth Work is amazing! It brings so many kinds of people together and helps children and young people make friends, try new things and feel more involved in our community. There is lots of brilliant youth work happening across East Lothian. We want to celebrate this and continue to grow our support for young people through youth work*

Young People's Advisory Group

Cover photo © Dylan MacFadden

The East Lothian Youth Vision is a three year strategy for Youth Work - from 2026 to 2029. Our vision is for Youth Work to help ensure young people in East Lothian are **safe, heard and included**.

The strategy was developed by young people, Youth Work organisations, East Lothian Partnership, and East Lothian Council. It explains how we aim to deliver positive impacts for young people using our resources effectively.

Each year, we'll create an **impact report**, to celebrate youth work and to measure progress by sharing stories, achievements and challenges.

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@ Leo Hackett and Dylan MacFadden

# Introduction to Youth Work

## Youth Work improves the life chances of children and young people

In East Lothian, services and organisations working with communities are committed to improving the life chances of all children and young people, while reducing existing inequalities. Youth work plays a key role in achieving these priorities. By building trusted relationships between young people and supportive adults, youth work creates safe spaces where young people feel heard, included, and able to access help. It supports both educational and personal development, helping to improve engagement, and achievement. By encouraging positive peer and community connections, youth work helps young people build resilience, confidence, and a strong sense of belonging—reducing the risk of long-term challenges such as poor mental health, involvement in crime, or unemployment.

## What is Youth Work?

Youth Work is an informal education practice that supports young people's social, emotional and educational development. It can be adapted across a variety of settings, and typically engages with young people within their local community. YouthLink Scotland

There are 3 essential and definitive features of Youth Work practice, highlighted by YouthLink Scotland's *The Nature and Purpose of Youth Work*.

- Young people choose to participate
- Youth work builds from where young people are
- The young person and the youth worker are partners in a learning process.

YouthLink Scotland created the **National Youth Work Outcomes and Skills framework**. Young people are at the core of youth work delivery with the Youth Work Outcomes and Skills Framework detailing the seven overarching outcomes of youth work. These set out how youth work can contribute to improving life chances of children and young people. We use this in East Lothian to guide our youth work practice.<sup>i</sup>

## Evidenced Impact of Youth Work

Youth work delivers wide-reaching benefits — not just for young people, but for communities and the economy. Research commissioned by YouthLink Scotland shows that **every £1 invested generates at least £7 in value**, highlighting its strong return and lasting impact.<sup>ii</sup>

Amongst the growing body of research **two Scottish studies (2018 & 2020) highlight the powerful role of Youth Work**. Both reports found that youth work provides a **safe, supportive environment** where young people:

- Build confidence and life skills
- Form trusted relationships with youth workers
- Feel valued, respected, and listened to
- Make positive choices and handle challenges
- Develop new skills and friendships

These findings show a consistent and compelling picture of Youth Work as a vital space for personal growth, learning and emotional support.<sup>iii</sup>

# What Guides Our Youth Work?

The Youth Vision is underpinned by and supports several key policies and approaches, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), The Promise, a trauma-informed approach and the Lundy Model of Participation.

## United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The incorporation of the UNCRC into Scottish law is helping children and young people see their rights recognised in meaningful ways. In East Lothian, youth work plays a vital role in making these rights a reality. By fostering inclusive environments where young people are heard, respected and actively involved in decisions that affect them, youth work bring the principles of the UNCRC to life.

## Trauma Informed and Responsive Practice

Safety, trust, collaboration, choice and empowerment are the principles that underpin trauma informed and responsive practice.<sup>iv</sup> Youth work providers are committed to embedding this approach, it's about understanding and responding to young people's needs by building relationships, creating safe spaces where people can connect, providing choices and working collaboratively to build on young people's strengths. A trauma informed approach will make sure our youth work services are open and accessible to all.

## The Promise

The Promise is Scotland's commitment to children, young people and their families that every child grows up loved, safe and respected. Youth work plays a vital role in fulfilling this vision by building trusted relationships, offering safe spaces, and empowering young people to develop their voice, confidence, and potential. Together, The Promise and youth work create a foundation for lasting change—where young people are not only heard but are central to shaping the services and communities that affect their lives.

## The Lundy Model of Participation

The **Lundy Model of Participation**, developed by Professor Laura Lundy, helps adults support children and young people to express their views and have those views taken seriously. It focuses on four key elements:

- **Space:** Children and young people must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their right to participation. We use this model in East Lothian to help improve how we listen to and act upon what children and young people tell us.
- **Voice:** Children and young people must be supported to express their views freely and in their own way.
- **Audience:** Adults must actively listen to what children and young people say.
- **Influence:** Children's and young people's views must be acted upon, with clear feedback showing how their input made a difference.<sup>v</sup>

## Tackling Child Poverty

We contribute by offering youth work opportunities that are either free or low-cost. As part of our youth work and holiday programmes we provide healthy food to support wellbeing. Through trusted relationships with children, young people, and their families, youth workers help sign post to other services offering support in the community.

# East Lothian **Youth Vision** 2026-29

**Plan on a Page - Our East Lothian Youth Work Strategy.**

## Our Vision for Youth Work

Young people in East Lothian are **safe, heard and included.**

### Goals

#### **Safe**

Children and young people feel safer in their communities

#### **Heard**

Children and young people's ideas and experiences will be heard, listened to and acted upon

#### **Included**

Children and young people feel included in their communities

### Outputs [The Youth Vision will include these Actions]

- Provide welcoming spaces for children and young people to connect, express themselves, and have fun.
- Youth workers will continue to build relationships, offering guidance and information to help children and young people make safe, informed decisions.

- Create and strengthen inclusive opportunities for young people to express their views.
- Build the capacity of adults and decision-makers to actively listen and respond meaningfully to young people's views

- Celebrate and recognise the achievements and contributions of young people in the community
- Children and Young people and youth workers co-design inclusive activities to reflect needs and interests.

## Measuring Impact – Examples of how evidence is gathered

- Youth work surveys and Case studies
- Feedback from young people, youth workers, and stakeholders
- Data on youth work attendance, participation, and session delivery
- Number of peer leadership and volunteering opportunities
- Number of youth awards and certificates achieved
- Wider community impact – school surveys, police reports etc.

Young people involved in developing the Youth Vision shared how youth work supports them to feel safe, heard, and included. Definitions are in line with GIRFEC wellbeing indicators.<sup>vi</sup>

# Goal 1 - SAFE

*Children and young people feel safer in their communities*

## Children and young people told us:

*Youth Work takes us away from different environments where we might not be safe and offers a space for us to go where there are adults we trust.*

*Adults need to take young people's safety seriously. We need the police, education, parents, politicians to help improve safety for young people.*

*In a youth centre you can find out your own mind, explore who you are. Passions you have, you can follow without feeling judged. Youth workers listen to what you like and help you explore this.*

*Since it is getting dark in the evenings my mum lets me stay out later because I am in youth club.*

Definition of Safe – Youth work creates environments where young people feel secure, nurtured and listened to.

## How we know Youth Work makes a difference:

### Building Trust and Safety Through Outreach Youth Work in Haddington

In response to concerns about young people's safety, Haddington youth workers undertake outreach youth work at the weekends, engaging with young people on the streets and in the park. The regular presence of the outreach youth workers helps build trust with young people in public spaces, especially those who don't attend youth clubs. They offer a wide range of advice including staying safe and looking out for friends.

These interactions can also lead to more in-depth conversations about mental health, self-harm and suicide, with youth workers guiding young people to specialist support. Now reaching up to 150 young people in one evening, the outreach team plays a key role in ensuring young people are seen, heard and supported.

### Feeling Safer and Reconnecting with School – Specialist Youth Work through North Berwick Youth Project

North Berwick Youth Project's wellbeing walks continue to make a big impact. This year, youth workers supported 51 young people during the school day, helping them improve their mental health and wellbeing. One young person shared how weekly walks with their youth worker became a turning point:

***"School wasn't working for me and I felt low and isolated. Meeting my youth worker every Tuesday gave me someone to talk to and helped me feel less alone. She helped me build confidence, make friends, and feel more like myself again. Without her, I'd probably still be stuck at home."***

This support helped her feel safer, more connected, and ready to re-engage with school life. A Guidance Teacher at North Berwick High School, added:

***"Their simple referral system and weekly check-ins with a thoughtful youth worker do so much good. Our young people are so positive about the support. Thanks NBYP!"***

# Our plan to achieve Goal 1

## Goal 1 – SAFE Outcome:

*Children and young people report feeling safer in their communities through youth work experiences and relationships with trusted adults*

**Context: This outcome contributes to the following national and local priorities:**

### National Youth Work Outcomes and Skills Framework:

Outcome 1. Young people build their health and wellbeing

Outcome 2. Young people develop and manage relationships effectively

Outcome 4. Young people participate safely and effectively in groups and teams

Outcome 5. Young people consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control

**Young people will gain skills** in how to look after themselves, learn to make decisions, communicate, solve problems and build positive relationships.

### National Community Learning and Development (CLD) Outcomes:

1: CLD participants have increased skills and knowledge

2: CLD participants have improved mental health and wellbeing

### Local Priorities:

Youth work in East Lothian will continue to provide low- or no-cost opportunities for children and young people in their communities, supporting families impacted by poverty (**East Lothian Poverty Plan**). To help build strong, resilient communities where people feel respected and supported (**East Lothian Plan**), we will offer inclusive, community-based wellbeing activities in safe spaces, led by trusted adults (**Children and Young People's Services Plan**). Working in partnership with families and other services, we are committed to ensuring that care-experienced young people and young carers have equal opportunities to take part, be active, and thrive through youth work (**Corporate Parenting Plan**).

### Outputs

- 1.1 Sustain a youth work offer to ensure children and young people have access to trusted, caring adults.
- 1.2 Provide welcoming spaces for children and young people to connect, express themselves, and have fun.
- 1.3 Youth workers will continue to build relationships, offering guidance, support, and information to help children and young people make safe, informed decisions.
- 1.4 Create and promote opportunities for children and young people to influence decisions that affect their safety.
- 1.5 Young people and partners work together to celebrate achievements of children and young people and challenge negative stereotypes.
- 1.6 Workforce development on Trauma Responsive Practice.

### Measuring Impact

- The number of safe, inclusive spaces for Youth Work created or maintained.
- SEE Survey results show increase in how safe young people feel in their communities.
- Reductions in anti-social behaviour.
- Youth work surveys capturing young people's feelings of safety.
- Feedback from young people, youth workers and stakeholders around National Youth Work Outcomes identified for this goal.
- Case studies show how youth work helps young people take part in decisions about their safety.
- Feedback and case studies on youth celebrations.
- Workforce development data

## Goal 2 - HEARD

*Children and young people's ideas and experiences will be heard, listened to and acted upon*

### What children and young people told us:

*I think being heard is a key aspect of youth work. I feel heard when I can give my opinion, and someone really listens.*

*I'd be up for trying to speak to politicians. Speaking directly to them would be a way to make a change.*

*Groups of young people could come together and talk about how we could make things better.*

*Young people's views need to be listened to. We have ideas for the things that need to be improved or changed.*

Definition of Heard – Young people are encouraged to share their views, and those views are respected and taken seriously.

### How we know Youth Work makes a difference:

#### Young Carers heard and valued

Since April 2023, the **Young Carers Advisory Group** in East Lothian has empowered 11–16-year-olds to shape the support they receive. Meeting each school term, members have: Designed the service logo, co-created holiday programmes, produced website videos, consulted peers on key issues, advocated for a **Carer ID card**, engaged with professionals and decision-makers, represented the service at events like the **Scottish Young Carers Festival**. One member now chairs the group, and several have become **Young Carer Ambassadors**, leading assemblies and running school lunch clubs.

*"Being part of this group has boosted my confidence. I've taken on leadership roles and helped make things better for other young carers, their families, and schools."* — Group Member

#### Recharge Youth Reps

We're the **Recharge Youth Reps**—12 to 14-year-olds who meet weekly at **Recharge Youth Centre** in Tranent. We help shape what happens at Recharge and come up with ideas to improve our community.

We've volunteered at Fa'side Community Kitchen, run fundraising events, and made an animation about children's rights and life in East Lothian. We've even spoken to councillors about things that matter to us—like parks, lighting, school, and places to hang out.

Being part of the group has helped us learn more about our community and the issues that affect it. Most of us feel more confident now and are better at speaking up for what we believe in.

Recharge also runs youth forums for ages 15–18 and is looking to establish an S1 – S2 group soon. The youth forums will work together, offering peer support to help each other on their participation journey.

# Our plan to achieve Goal 2

## Goal 2 - HEARD Outcomes:

*Children and young people in East Lothian report their views are heard, listened to and acted upon. Opportunities for children and young people's ideas to shape decision-making will be strengthened.*

The **Lundy Model** helps shape outcomes and outputs for this goal.

### Context: These outcomes contribute to the following national and local priorities:

#### National Youth Work Outcomes and Skills Framework:

Outcome 6. Young people grow as active citizens, expressing their voice and enabling change

Outcome 7. Young people broaden their perspectives through new experiences and thinking

**Young people will gain skills** in organising and planning, leadership and communication, teamwork and creating change.

#### National Community Learning and Development (CLD) Outcomes:

1: CLD participants have increased skills and knowledge

2: Community groups have strengthened their capacity to address their own priorities and make decisions about their own communities.

**Local Priorities:** To work toward the vision of an East Lothian free from poverty the youth work sector will continue to work in partnership towards a shared vision of equality and equity. Continuing to adapt to the needs of children and young people, through listening to and acting upon the voice of lived experience from children and young people (**East Lothian Poverty Plan**). By upholding good practice participation, the youth vision will support young people to be strong, resilient and respected and able to share their views and take part in opportunities to shape decision making (**East Lothian Plan**). Youth Vision supports the priorities of the **Children and Young People's Services Plan** and the **Corporate Parenting Plan** by committing to Children's Rights and using good practice participation to empower children and young people to address issues, design solutions and shape services.

| Outputs |                                                                                                                                                                             | Measuring Impact                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2.1     | Continue to provide safe environments with supportive people to help children and young people developing confidence as active citizens ( <b>Space</b> ).                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The number of safe, inclusive spaces for Youth Work created or maintained.</li><li>• Youth work surveys capturing young people's feelings on being heard, and able to influence change.</li><li>• SEE Survey results show increase in number of young people involved in decision-making in communities.</li><li>• Numbers of youth participation opportunities.</li><li>• Feedback from young people/youth workers/stakeholders around National Youth Work Outcomes identified for this goal.</li><li>• Case studies highlight decisions influenced by children and young people.</li><li>• The number of professionals and decision-makers trained in youth engagement.</li></ul> |
| 2.2     | Create and strengthen inclusive opportunities for young people to express their views ( <b>Voice</b> ).                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 2.3     | Build the capacity of adults and decision-makers to actively listen and respond meaningfully to young people's views ( <b>Audience</b> ).                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 2.4     | Establish clear feedback loops to show how young people's input has influenced decisions and share examples of impact to build trust and transparency ( <b>Influence</b> ). |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 2.5     | Promote and share good practice in participation with decision makers, partners and communities.                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

## Goal 3 - INCLUDED

*Children and young people feel included in their communities*

### What children and young people told us:

*To feel included we need options for us, as young people, this could be more mental health support or help to find work or more free places to go. We want the same opportunities as other people get.*

*In youth club I feel I can be myself. It feels like stigmas are abolished here - where all people can feel included - LGBTQ, transgender people, ethnic minorities.*

*Volunteering at youth club helps me feel included.*

*Through youth work I now feel kinder. We have planned fundraisers and the skills I have built here have benefited the community. I have used them in other groups through teaching and mentoring younger people.*

Definition of Included – Young people have help to overcome inequalities and are valued members of their communities.

### How we know youth work makes a difference:

#### Amber's Peer Mentoring Story – Bridges Project

**Bridges Project's Listening Peers programme** supports young people aged 13–25 through peer mentoring. Trained Mentors, young people with lived experience themselves, offer one-to-one support and help others feel heard, included and empowered. Amber was referred at 14, facing bullying, poor mental health and a difficult home life. Receiving mentoring support was life-changing for Amber:

"I felt that my Mentor just got me. She completely understood me, more than anyone had done in the past. She also talked about her own experiences, which made me trust her more. If I didn't have Bridges Project, I genuinely don't think I would have been here."

Amber has now become one of Listening Peers' most prolific Mentors herself, giving back by supporting other young people to thrive.

#### Growing and Changing use their voices and experiences to create change

**Growing and Changing** is a group of five young people from Prestonpans who've faced challenges like poverty, bereavement, and additional support needs. Their experience of hardship led to further inequalities in the local community and in school and made them feel different from their peers.

Over the past year, they've built a strong peer support group and established that they want to use their voices and experiences to create change for the better for other young people experiencing hardship. They've launched a campaign called **What Makes a Supportive Person**. They've gathered views from over 250 children and young people across East Lothian to influence how adults work with young people.

They've hosted events, met with NHS professionals, councillors, and other decision-makers, and are already working on impact; hoping to influence East Lothian Council job descriptions based on their campaign findings and incorporation of their findings into training and support for youth workers.

Growing and Changing also have plans to make a film and are working towards their **Saltire Awards, Dynamic Youth Awards and Participative Democracy Certificates**.

# Our plan to achieve Goal 3

## Goal 3 Outcome:

*Children and young people feel a stronger sense of inclusion and wellbeing through inclusive youth work opportunities and access to helpful information in their communities.*

**Context:** This outcome contributes to the following national and local priorities:

### National Youth Work Outcomes and Skills Framework:

Outcome 1. Young people build their health and wellbeing

Outcome 3. Young people create and apply their learning and describe their skills and achievements

Outcome 7. Young people broaden their perspectives through new experiences and thinking

**Young people will gain skills** in leadership and communication, teamwork, creating change and organising and planning.

### National Community Learning and Development (CLD) Outcomes:

1: CLD participants have increased skills and knowledge

2: CLD participants have improved mental health and wellbeing

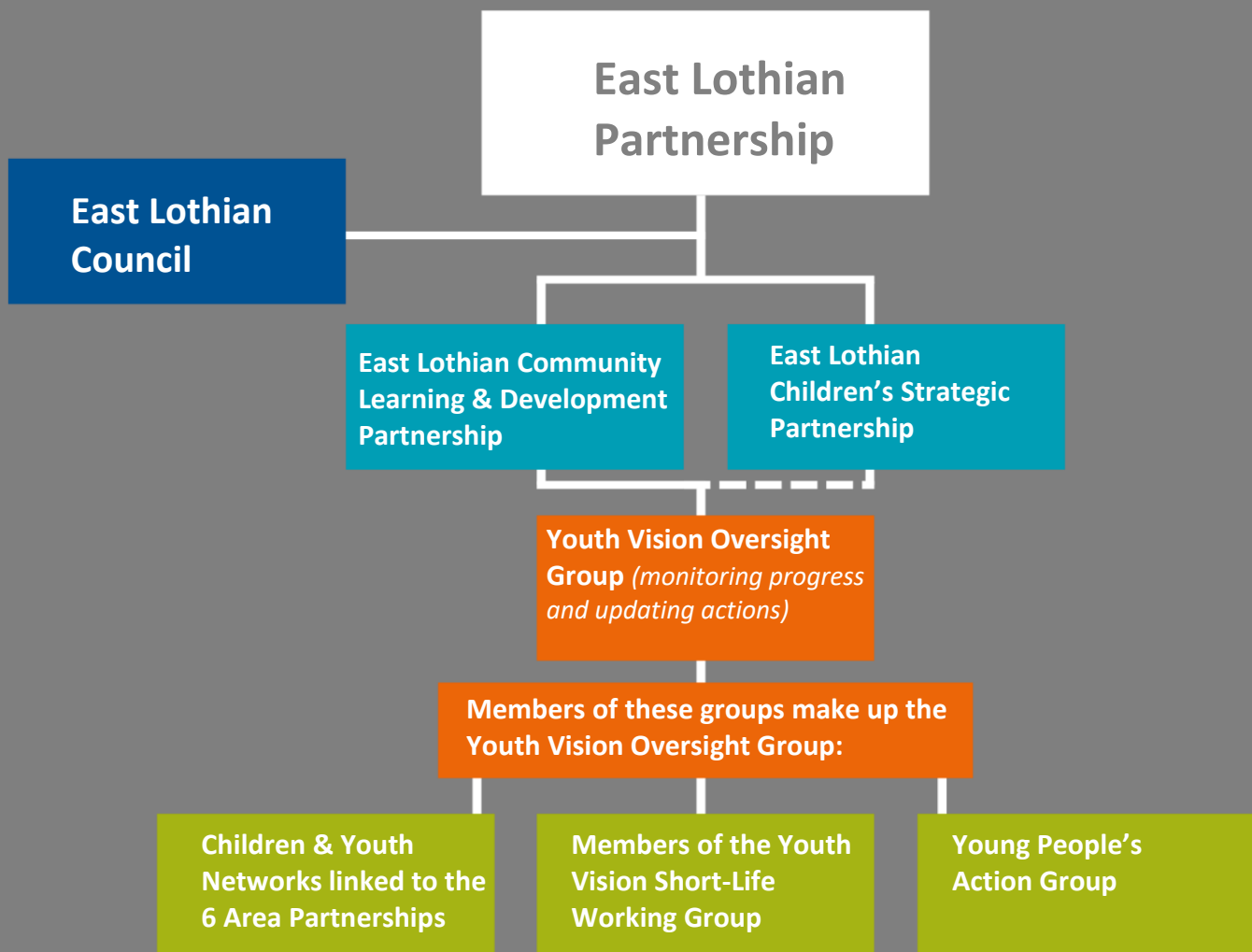
**Local Priorities:** Youth Vision contributes to children and young people's stronger sense of inclusion in their communities and increased wellbeing. This builds resilience, community mindedness and young people's ability to prosper supporting the priorities of the **East Lothian Plan**. The Youth Vision supports the work of the **Raising Attainment Strategy** in closing the poverty related attainment gap; by providing informal education opportunities to young people to building their learning, skills and confidence and opportunity to volunteer and gain accreditation and awards within and out with formal education settings. Youth work, through person centred practice, safeguarding and child protection procedures works within the **GIRFEC framework in East Lothian**, contributing to children's wellbeing (**Children and Young People's Services Plan**).

| Outputs                                                                                                           | Measuring Impact                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3.1 Children and Young people and youth workers co-design inclusive activities to reflect needs and interests.    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Data gathered on youth work attendance, participants, sessions.</li></ul>                                                                                                       |
| 3.2 We will support young people to manage their wellbeing through youth work.                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Youth work surveys capturing young people's feelings on inclusivity of youth work offer.</li></ul>                                                                              |
| 3.3 Provide access to and share information about local supports and opportunities for children and young people. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Youth work surveys capturing young people's feelings on managing their wellbeing through youth work opportunities and information shared.</li></ul>                             |
| 3.4 Create opportunities for young people to support their peers.                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SEE Survey results show increase in number of young people able to get mental health information in East Lothian.</li></ul>                                                     |
| 3.5 Offer youth work opportunities that enable volunteering and achievement.                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feedback from young people/youth workers/stakeholders around National Youth Work Outcomes identified for this goal.</li></ul>                                                   |
| 3.6 Celebrate and recognise the achievements and contributions of young people in the community.                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of peer leadership, volunteering opportunities and awards offered and competed.</li><li>• Case studies on achievements and celebration work with young people.</li></ul> |

# Governance of the Youth Vision

Governance of the strategy will be overseen by East Lothian Community Learning and Development Partnership, reporting to the East Lothian Partnership.

The Youth Vision Oversight Group will publish an annual impact report highlighting achievements and challenges. This will be shared with children and young people, their families and key partners.



# Next Steps

## Continue to Support High-Quality Youth Work in East Lothian

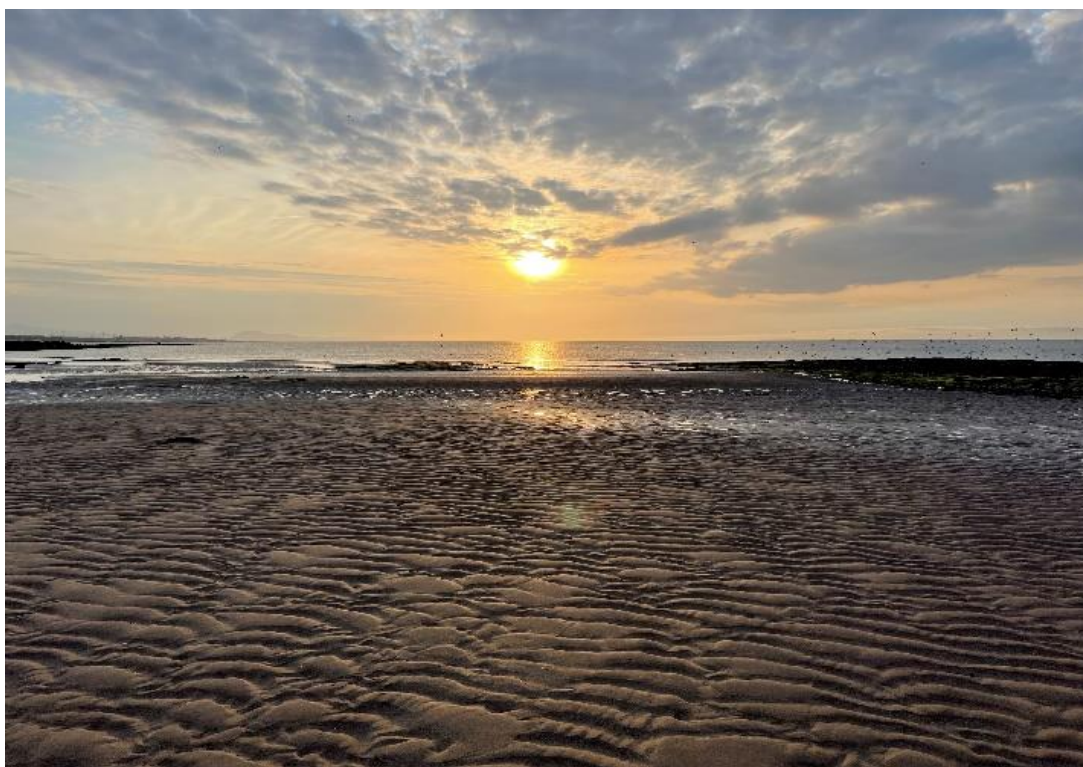
In East Lothian, our youth work is guided by the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work and the CLD Competences and Code of Ethics set by the CLD Standards Council.<sup>vii</sup> These frameworks help us stay grounded in good practice and strong values. We work closely across teams, organisations, and local areas—sharing ideas, learning, and what works well. This joined-up approach helps us plan strategically and to react, when possible, to emerging issues. Young people get consistent, high-quality support wherever they are.

## Sharing the Purpose and Impact of Youth Work

The Youth vision will be used as a springboard to strengthen communication about the purpose and impact of Youth Work. We will share this document, our plan on a page and a creative version of the Youth Vision with children, young people, parents and partners. Through our three key goals, safe, heard and included we will continue to celebrate and recognise the achievements and contributions of young people in the community.

## Working Together for Improvement

The Youth Vision can only be achieved by working together. Establishing a strong working group of young people and key partners will help us stay focused by creating and reviewing a shared action plan each year. By doing this, we can track progress and make sure we're delivering on our goals. Each year, we'll produce a Youth Vision report with key data and real-life examples to show how we're meeting our goals. This work will be led by a subgroup of the CLD Partnership and shared with the wider strategic partnerships to keep everyone informed and involved.



# How we developed our Youth Vision Strategy

The Youth Work Strategy was co-developed by young people, youth organisations, East Lothian Council, and key partners. A Young People's Advisory Group (YPAG) worked with professionals from 2021–2022 to consult peers and draft a Youth Vision, which was refined and approved in 2025.

## Youth Voice Highlights

### Initial Work:

- 6 young people made up the YPAG - The Young People's Advisory Group; young people aged between 12 and 24 played a major role in the development of this strategy.
- 85 young people in 2022 took part in an online survey about their communities.

### 2025 Engagement:

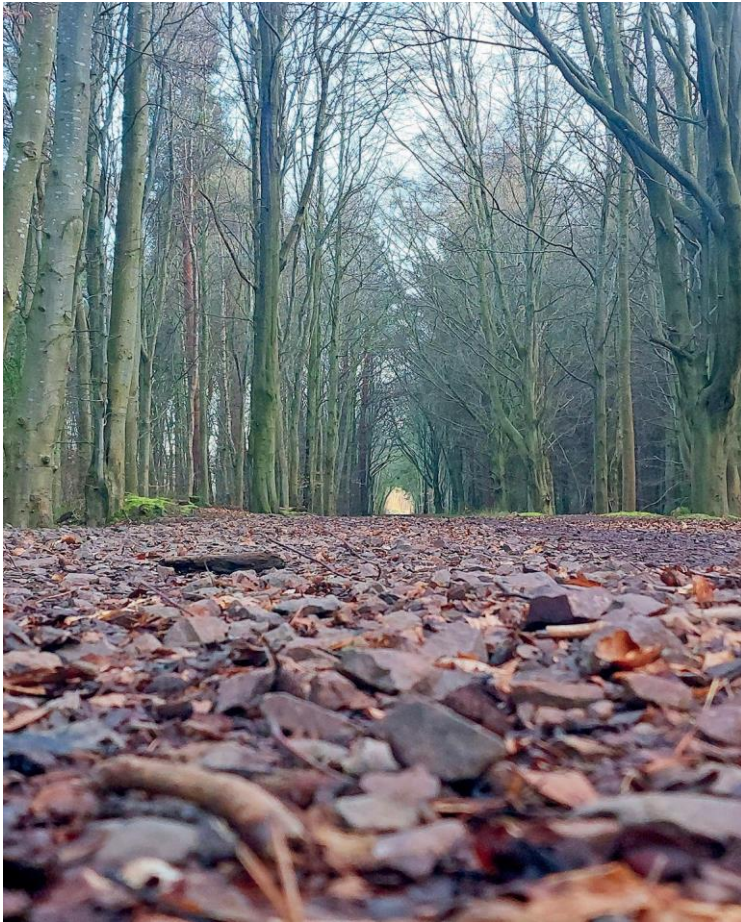
- 99 children and young people voted and commented on the Youth Vision's goals, based on YPAG priorities and GIRFEC wellbeing indicators.
- 117 secondary pupils participated in Scottish Youth Parliament sessions and a related consultation on community needs.
- 2,819 pupils took part in 2024/2025 Student Evaluation of Experience (SEE) Survey; 1059 in P6, 963 in S2 and 797 in S4. Their feedback on community-based wellbeing indicators shaped the Vision.
- 74 young people participated in the Autumn 2025 public consultation, leading to final revisions.

## Partner Involvement

- 29 partners attended an event in February 2025 to help refresh the Youth Vision.
- 17 professionals joined a Short Life Working Group to co-produce the final strategy.
- 42 adults (youth workers, parents and carers, partners) participated in the Autumn 2025 public consultation.

### Supporting Data Sources

- East Lothian by Numbers, 2022
- East Lothian Poverty Profile, 2025
- NHS Lothian Public Health Survey, 2023
- Young Scot BIG Survey Report, April 2024
- East Lothian Local Outcome Improvement Plan Consultation, 2025.
- East Lothian Education, Student Evaluation of Experience (SEE) Survey 2024/2025



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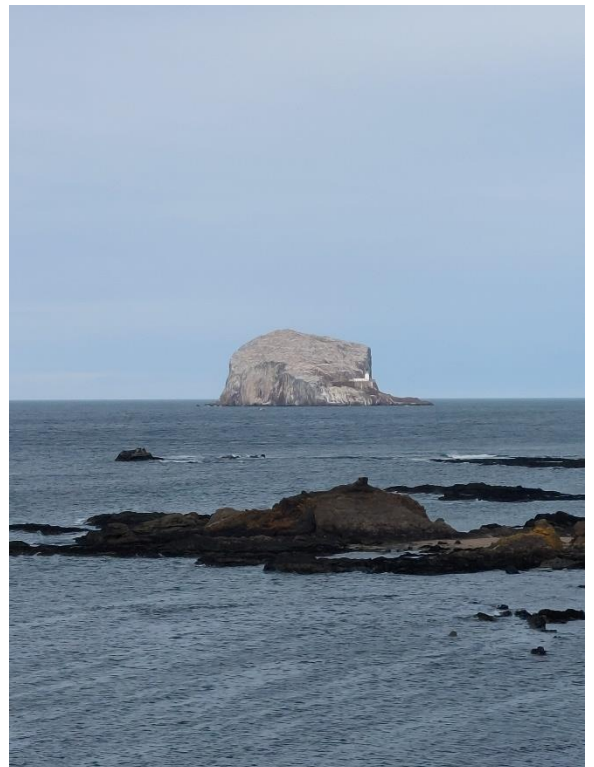
© Leo Hackett

## YOUTH VISION PHOTOGRAPHY GALLERY

WINNERS: Leo Hackett | Dylan MacFadden SECOND: Oliver Rhodes  
THIRD: Arwen Hopkins | Ayesha Norton COMMENDED: Mariana Leyden



@ Mariana Leyden



@ Ayesha Norton



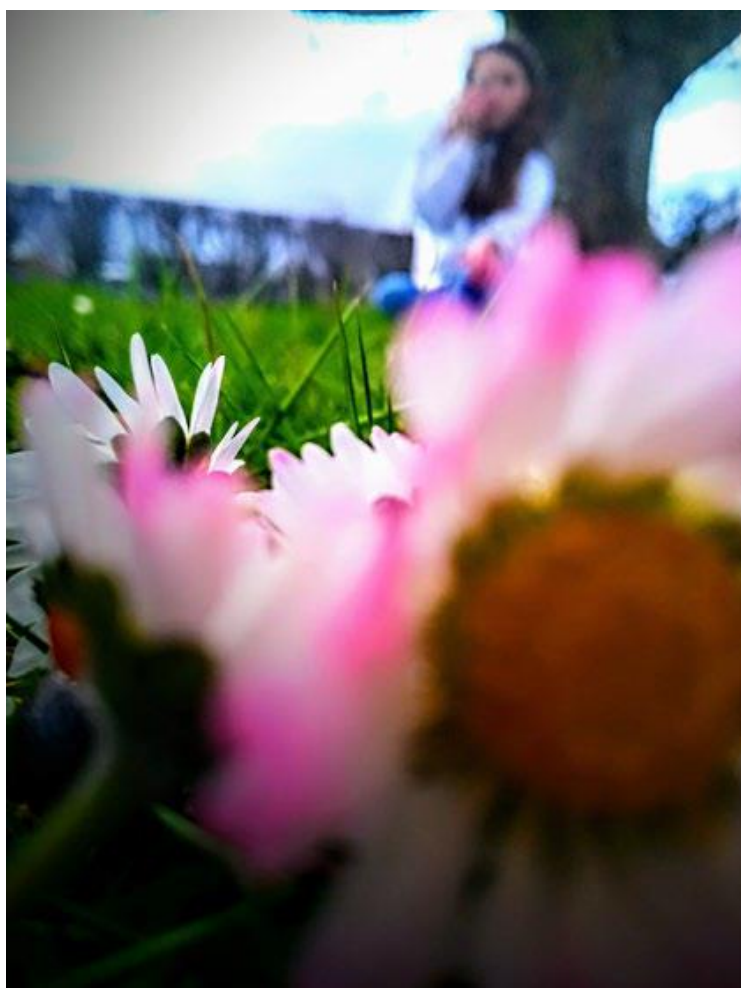
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# Acknowledgements

We'd like to thank all the young people, and the following organisations and teams involved in the development of the Youth Vision, including those who took part in the public consultation. Their contributed time, insight, and expertise have helped shape a document that reflects the needs and aspirations of young people.

**East Lothian Council Services involved:**

Connected Communities, Education & Children's Services, Housing, Library Service, Young Carers Service, Arts Service, Sports Development/Active Schools, Safer Communities Team

Recharge Youth Centre: <https://rechargecranent.org.uk/>

Circle <https://circle.scot/>

Bridges Project <https://bridgesproject.org.uk/>

North Berwick Youth Project <https://www.northberwickyouthproject.org.uk/>

Can-Do <https://www.can-do.scot/>

Choose Play <https://elpa.org.uk/chooseplay-training/>

Who Cares Scotland? <https://www.whocaresScotland.org>

Volunteer Centre East Lothian <https://www.volunteereastlothian.org.uk/>

NHS Lothian Public Health <https://services.nhsllothian.scot/publichealth/>

Police Scotland <https://www.scotland.police.uk/>

# Links to related strategies

## Local Context: Youth Work contributes to East Lothian's Strategic Outcomes

East Lothian Children and Young People Services Plan:

[https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/31411/children\\_and\\_young\\_people\\_services\\_plan\\_2023-2026](https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/31411/children_and_young_people_services_plan_2023-2026)

East Lothian CLD Partnership Plan:

[https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/34610/community\\_learning\\_and\\_development\\_partnership\\_plan\\_2024-27](https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/34610/community_learning_and_development_partnership_plan_2024-27)

The East Lothian Plan 2017-27 (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan):

[https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/22812/the\\_east\\_lothian\\_plan\\_2017-27](https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/22812/the_east_lothian_plan_2017-27)

East Lothian Partnership, Poverty Plan Priorities for Tackling Poverty 2024-2028:

[https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210705/elp\\_poverty\\_plan](https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210705/elp_poverty_plan)

East Lothian Partnership, Corporate Parenting Plan 2024-27

[https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/31781/east\\_lothian\\_corporate\\_parenting\\_plan\\_2020-2023](https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/31781/east_lothian_corporate_parenting_plan_2020-2023)

Area Partnership Plans

[https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210567/your\\_community/12397/area\\_partnerships\\_in\\_east\\_lothian](https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210567/your_community/12397/area_partnerships_in_east_lothian)

Raising Attainment Strategy

[https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/news/article/14312/decrease\\_in\\_poverty-related\\_attainment\\_gap](https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/news/article/14312/decrease_in_poverty-related_attainment_gap)

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## References

- <sup>i</sup> Youth Link Scotland, National Youth Work Outcomes & Skills Framework  
<https://www.youthlink.scot/education-skills/youth-work-outcomes-skills>
- <sup>ii</sup> Youth Link Scotland, Scottish Parliament Election 2021 The Report Resilient, Resourceful, Reimagined and Recognised A manifesto to support Scotland's youth workers and young people  
[https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Manifesto-Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Manifesto-Report_FINAL.pdf)
- <sup>iii</sup> The Impact of Community-based Universal Youth Work in Scotland, Youth Link Scotland, 2018  
<https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Impact-of-Universal-Youth-Work-in-Scotland.pdf>  
and The Impact of Universal Youth Work, Edinburgh 2020, Youth Link Scotland  
<https://www.youthlink.scot/wp-content/uploads/Impact-of-Universal-Youth-Work-in-Edinburgh.pdf>
- <sup>iv</sup> National Trauma Transformation Programme  
<https://www.traumatransformation.scot/>
- <sup>v</sup> Laura Lundy, the Lundy Model of Participation  
<https://participationpeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Compressed-PP--Lundy-Model-Explained-2.pdf>
- <sup>vi</sup> Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)  
<https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/wellbeing-indicators-shanarri/>
- <sup>vii</sup> CLD Standards Council Scotland  
<https://cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/resources/standards-and-benchmarks/national-occupational-standards/youth-work-nos/>

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British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us via [www.contactscotland-bsl.org](http://www.contactscotland-bsl.org)

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