



**Barnardo's Scotland briefing:
Debate on the National Youth Work Strategy
2nd May**

Barnardo's Scotland welcomes this Scottish Government debate on the National Youth Work Strategy and the overall ambition of the strategy to improve the life chances of young people in Scotland. The strategy itself references various policies which reflect the principles of the Christie Commission such as Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) and the Early Years Collaborative. This is to be welcomed, as noted in the strategy effective youth work can help to prevent negative outcomes for young people through early and effective intervention.

Barnardo's Scotland is the largest children's charity in Scotland and we work directly with more than 10,000 children, young people and their families across Scotland. We do not deliver any universally accessible youth work services, but provide specialist support to particular groups of young people, for example to reduce offending behaviour. This short briefing will focus on one of these specialist services.

Our '**Outside In**' service (formerly the Scottish Prison Service Youth Work Service) is provided in Partnership with Caledonia Youth within the two Scottish National Young Offender's Institutions HMYOI Polmont and HMP and YOI Cornton Vale.

Outside In provides a youth work service to young men aged 16 - 21 in Polmont and young women aged 16 - 21 in Cornton Vale. The Youth Work Service was commissioned by the Scottish Prison Service, to work with young people to enhance the skills and confidence they need for their transitions back to their communities. Young people choose to take part and are involved in planning the activities and making decisions for the service. Youth work is about taking part, being an equal, taking control and respecting others.

The youth work team offer a range of interventions including anti-bullying, self esteem, relationships and sexual health, song writing, peer tutoring, problem solving, equality and diversity, and anti racism.

One intervention run by the youth work team in Polmont is 'Mind your Head'. This course is run over 5 weeks and explores the themes of emotional health and wellbeing. 95% of the young people who participated in 'Mind Your Head' groups in 2012/13 identified that they were better able to cope with stress, had developed strategies for improving their mood and had therefore made changes to improve their physical health as a result of the programme.

During 2012-13, several young men also completed their bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award which is widely recognised as one of the highest standards in youth awards programmes and helps young people develop life skills, fulfil their potential and have a brighter future In the words of one participant, 'I can

seriously say it's changed my life. It has taught me I can do things I never thought possible'

We hope that in the debate on youth work in Scotland, the role of specialist youth work, such as that provided by organisations like Barnardo's Scotland, will be recognised alongside the role of more universally accessible youth work services.

Furthermore, we hope to see this diversity of youth work services reflected and supported as the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and YouthLink develop implementation plans for the new youth work strategy.

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