

YOUNG SCOT

Young Scot is ambitious for Scotland's young people. We want to activate, connect and empower young people aged 11-26 in order to support them in making meaning of their lives as they grow up and face transitions.

We believe that in order to engage meaningfully with young people, and to engender a culture of participation, we have to do it on their terms; in the spaces they operate, in a format that they understand, and in a context that is relevant to their lives.

Young people have told us that they want to have a bigger say in the decisions, made locally, nationally and globally, that affect their lives. They want to actively participate. Through our Co-Design approach we support young people to engage as early as possible in decision making processes; sharing knowledge and power, and working in partnership to develop new ideas and solutions to current challenges. Young people are assets to their communities, and are advocates for positive change. Through our innovative co-design approaches, we give young people a voice to share their experiences and insights.

The Young Scot Co-design process enables young people and organisations to share power, explore insights and experiences and develop ideas together;

- 1. Explore:** Uncover issues through gathering insights and genuine experiences from young people.
- 2. Create:** Generate ideas and co-create solutions with/by young people.
- 3. Reflect:** Consider the future impact and sustainability of the ideas produced.
- 4. Recommend:** Produce influential ideas/solutions with young people.

In the past year, Young Scot has engaged with young people on a wide range of projects, working with more young people than ever before on areas such as health, transport, culture, policing and education. Some highlights include:

- **Police Scotland Youth Volunteers** > strengthening links between Scotland's young people and the police with over 400 volunteers, 19 local groups and over 17,000 volunteer hours recorded.
- **Police Scotland Youth Advisory Panel** > a partnership between a team of young people from across Scotland, Police Scotland and Young Scot, who worked together to develop Children and Young People 2016/20 – Our Approach, which sets out Police Scotland's priorities and commitment to children and young people **Creating a Healthier Scotland Youth Investigation Team** > working with the Scottish Government and key partners across Scotland to support a team of 11 young leaders to identify ideas and actions for a healthier Scotland. This resulted in the creation of Scottish Governments 'Creating a Healthier Scotland – What Matters To You' report in 2016.

- **5Rights Youth Commission** > Scotland's national Youth Commission on Digital Rights was set up to make recommendations to the Scottish Government on how Scotland can become a nation that recognises young people's rights online as well as off. Throughout the exciting 12 month project, the Commission will gather evidence, insights and ideas from across Scotland, to recommend '*How Scotland can become a nation which realises children and young people's digital rights*'. The Youth Commission is led by 19 young people, aged between 14 and 21, who will make recommendations to key organisations, leaders and decision makers. The Commissioners will share learnings from their investigations; which will include their own primary research, expert witness hearings and engagement with young people, tech companies and policy makers.

The way that young people engage with content has changed, and is ever evolving. Young Scot understands that we are operating in an attention-economy, whereby only topics and content that are relevant to individual lives and circumstances attracts attention. Through their digital devices, many young people have a vast amount of information to decipher via a range of social and digital platforms. We also understand that you have to have an agile approach to engaging young people on different social media platforms – developing the right content/messaging in the right format for each individual platform. Young Scot therefore adopts a multi-platform approach to information dissemination and digital engagement, and works in partnership with a range of public and third sector bodies to ensure consistency of message/approach.

In the past year, Young Scot has delivered a wide range of information campaigns with partners such as Respect Me Scotland (Anti-bullying week 2016), Choices For Life (Police Scotland/Scottish Government) and Local Authority partners. Some highlights include;

- **Child Sexual Exploitation Campaign with The Scottish Government** > Young Scot delivered innovative Snapchat campaign to support the wider #CSETheSigns. Utilising this popular youth platform using the medium of storytelling, Young Scot and The Scottish Government were able to deliver key information around the signs of grooming. This campaign was the recent recipient of the best use of social media at the Scottish Herald Digital Business Awards 2016.
- **#AyeMind** > working in partnership with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, The Mental Health Foundation and Snook, we supported young people to explore and create content around digital mental health. This included running a competition to create social media gifs to deliver supportive messages to young people in Scotland.
- **Votes at 16 campaign** > young people met with Deputy First Minister John Swinney to discuss the change in the voting age in Scotland along with taking questions in advance via @youngscot Twitter platform using #askDFM and #VotesAt16 hashtags

Connecting young people with opportunities to engage and participate can contribute to reducing inequalities and improving health and wellbeing, as well as developing skills and experience for life and work. The Young Scot National Entitlement Card uses smart-tech to tackle inequalities by providing young people with a sense of agency and entitlement. Linking the Young Scot card with our innovative Young Scot Rewards programme encourages participation in positive activities and the opportunity for young people to have their say through offering incentives. Over the past year, we have seen more young people than ever before engage in opportunities linking the card and rewards. Highlights include;

- **North Ayrshire Participatory Budgeting** > In November 2016, over 5,000 young people accessed Young Scot's E-voting platform using their National Entitlement Card number to decide how £60,762 should be allocated to 67 youth projects in 6 localities in North Ayrshire. The first £40,000 in funding was from North Ayrshire Council's Youth Action Fund. The remaining £20,762 coming from the Scottish Government's Community Choices Fund – an initiative to enable people to have a greater voice on local priorities. All young people aged 11 to 25 from North Ayrshire were eligible to vote using the single transferable vote method. The project incorporated Young Scot Rewards whereby young people could collect points for voting and exchange them for meaningful opportunities and experiences.
- **Pre-EU Referendum Survey** > Young Scot conducted an independent survey using Young Scot Rewards platform to determine the issues that were important to young people when approaching the EU Referendum in June 2016. Using the digital platform to carry out a survey, young people were able to access via our full range of digital and social media platforms. Over 600 young people participated from 31 Scottish Local Authorities. Young Scot has recently launched a new follow-up survey looking at young people's opinions on the decision for the UK leaving the European Union. The new survey will examine to what extent the decision to leave the EU will affect young people and ask if young people feel they are being involved in preparations to leave the European Union.

Young Scot welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to the Commission on Parliamentary Reform around how we engage with young people to encourage participation. We hope that the Commission can use this evidence to further engagement around parliamentary reform in Scotland.