



#YSAttain: Tackling food insecurity with the Young Scot National Entitlement Card

Groups of young people in Inverness have used their Young Scot National Entitlement Cards to access free daily meals at local leisure centre.

As part of the Young Scot and Scottish Government Attainment Challenge: National Strategic Partnership, The Highland Council worked with High Life Highland to improve the health and wellbeing of young people. This was done by introducing a new model to provide free food entitlements.

Using the Young Scot National Entitlement Card (YSNEC) as proof of entitlement, groups of young people were given free access to meals and drinks after school, at weekends and during holidays at the Inverness Leisure centre.

Objectives:

- ① Increase the use of the YSNEC in rural areas.
- ① Provide free drinks outside of school hours to a targeted group of young people.
- ① Save young people and their families money on hot meals at weekends and during the holidays.
- ① Increase the use of the YSNEC in the Highlands.

The project:

With the support of Inverness High School, High Life Highland identified young people who are living in areas of high deprivation and are facing barriers to good health and wellbeing. Then, the young people's YSNEC details were connected to High Life Highland's IT systems.

A new partnership was then developed with the Inverness Leisure centre to use this popular destination as a non-stigmatised way of providing additional entitlements to young people. Staff at the cafe used their payments systems to verify the young people's card numbers. This created a fast and efficient way of identifying those eligible for additional entitlements.





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Impact:

- 80 young people across three high schools in Inverness offered additional food entitlements, including 70 young people in receipt of free school meals and seven young carers.
- £6,150 saved by young people through free meals, drinks and snacks at Inverness Leisure cafe*.
- £1,200 saved by young people and their families at the weekend.
- More young people eating evening meals when they normally wouldn't.
- Increased confidence and social opportunities for young people.
- Increased numbers of young people carrying and using their YSNEC in Inverness.

* Based on figures Sept 2018 - March 2019

Providing choice for young people was an important aspect of the project to further reduce any risk of stigmatisation, particularly when accessing free meals with their peers. By ensuring the full menu is available to everyone, the young people are offered the same choices as their friends who pay for their meals.

“I have enjoyed taking part in the Young Scot project as I have been able to attend the gym and the swimming pool on a Friday afternoon, then I have been going and getting my dinner from the [Inverness Leisure] Bistro.”

- Young person, Highland

Why this matters:

High Life Highland's use of the YSNEC to provide additional food entitlements, complements the local authority's objectives of tackling food insecurity. It also helps to put more money back into the pockets of young people and their families.

Over a quarter of Young Scot cardholders in Highland are living in SIMD 1 and 2**. Using their cards as a proof of entitlement is an effective way for local authorities to tackle attainment through additional food entitlements.

** Based on SIMD data collection from NECPO – October 2018

Get started:

Are you interested in introducing a similar initiative in your area? Here are some questions to consider:

- What local food providers are popular with young people and offer healthy hot meals?
- Are Young Scot discounts available for all young people to reduce any stigmatisation?
- Have you decided which young people would benefit most from the entitlement?
- Can use of the card be tracked to demonstrate impact?

To find out more and get involved, please contact us at attainment@young.scot