

### This strategy supports young people in Scotland to thrive

# We are Young Scot – the national youth information and citizenship charity for Scotland...



by Elma Murray OBE, Young Scot Chair

It gives me great pleasure to introduce you to our latest strategic plan.

As we begin our next chapter at Young Scot, it would be remiss of me not to reflect on the challenges that face Scotland and our young people as we start our recovery from the pandemic. The impact of the past two years on the lives of young people has been enormous – and the support that we offer them now is more important than ever.

At Young Scot, young people inform, drive and challenge our work. This is part of our agile approach to supporting them and their peers – and they are quite literally the framework within which we operate. As such, it was only right that their lived experience was central to developing this strategy. To support us, we recruited a group of young volunteers who named themselves #VisionMakers. They engaged with their peers, the sector and our stakeholders – running youth and stakeholder surveys – through to digital engagements and individual interviews. #VisionMakers set our strategic direction and shaped our future objectives – ensuring they reflect the new realities of growing up in Scotland.

From social identity and equality, to wellbeing, mental health, activation of rights, and the climate crisis, both #VisionMakers and young people told us their priorities. This insight will drive our work over the next three years. And to ensure we are agile, we will continue to work in partnership with #VisionMakers so that our focus remains relevant to them throughout the challenging years ahead.

Since the inception of Young Scot in the early 1980s, we have been working tirelessly to fulfil our role as the national youth information and citizenship charity for young people in Scotland. Our experience of providing young people with information, ideas and opportunities – and helping them navigate life's challenges as they grow up – stands us in good stead as we embark on delivering this ambitious new strategy. However, we cannot do this alone. Partnership working – both locally and nationally – is at the heart of how we work. Please join us on this journey – so that we can collectively support Scotland's young people to thrive.



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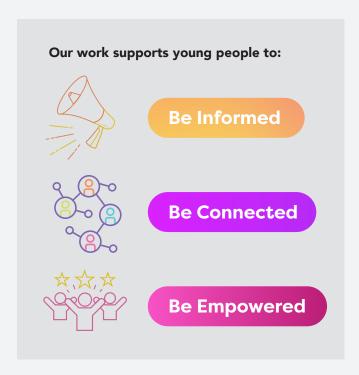


#### We have a clear mission...

#### We support young people to **thrive** and make the most of their lives as they grow up.

We do this by providing **universal services** for young people, combined with **targeted** and **bespoke support** to address stigma, inequalities and inaccessibility.

Supporting young people to thrive is a powerful way to provide **reassurance** in times of challenge, help build **confidence** and **resilience**, and support them to have **fun**!





Inclusion is at the core of this strategy – and young people rightly challenge us to be accessible for and relevant to all young people from across Scotland. We are working hard to become an explicitly anti-racist organisation. We are doing this by taking a close look at our organisation and identifying what it is we do that contributes to structural racism – and taking action. This work is taking place alongside the delivery of our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion strategy.

#### What drives us...

Our values define our culture and describe how we get things done:







#### We are inclusive

We challenge inequalities and ensure that all young people can access our services.



#### We are responsive

We make sure that young people's needs are at the centre of what we do.



#### We are supportive

We deliver our work with honesty and integrity.



#### We are passionate

We are positive and ambitious for young people.

### We understand young people...

We strive to deeply understand the environment that young people are operating in, recognising intersectionality and diversity of need.

We recognise the importance of **place** in a young person's life and the impact of our services at a local level. We know that young people cannot flourish without **equity, inclusion** and access to **non-stigmatising services.** We also understand that in order for young people to thrive we must play our part in tackling child poverty and empowering them with financial security.

We will further develop our data, insight and engagement work with young people at a local and national level to build a deeper understanding of need, and ensure the right information and services are available to support young people in Scotland.



#### We commit to being:



#### Inclusive, by:

- Continually working to become a truly anti-racist organisation and sharing our platform with others.
- Challenging inequalities, delivering our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy and ensuring that each young person in Scotland can benefit from our work.
- Ensuring that the rights of young people are embedded in all of our approaches, reflecting the incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Scotland.
- Building a strong team and inspiring our colleagues to achieve their best for young people.



#### Impact driven, by:

- Building evidence and insight that guides our decision-making and improves the impact of our programmes on young people's lives.
- Demonstrate how we are contributing to external goals, such as the National Improvement Framework, Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Communicate our impact using both data and insightful storytelling.



#### Collaborative, by:

- Developing and nurturing creative, equal, and productive partnerships.
- Developing and sustaining strong partnerships with Black- and people of colour-led organisations.
- Being open and accountable to young people, partners, funders, supporters and stakeholders.



#### Alert & agile, by:

- Keeping young people at the centre of Young Scot and supporting them to guide our work.
- Acting quickly to focus delivery on the areas young people tell us they need the most support.
- Keeping ourselves informed with the best external insight and evidence on young people and the issues that impact them.



#### Sustainable, by:

- Building a sustainable organisation with a focus on climate adaptation and net positive ambitions.
- Maintaining and developing our responsible purchasing and procurement approaches.
- Creating an environmentally sustainable, supportive and motivating hybrid working environment for our people and volunteers.
- Keeping the wellbeing of our staff and volunteers at the forefront of everything we do.

# We support young people to lead our organisation...

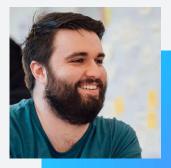
Our **#VisionMakers** volunteers are directing us to focus on the following priorities as part of our work to support young people to thrive:

- **Social identity and belonging:** diversity, equity & inclusion, identity, social justice
- **Positive futures and journeys/destinations:** wellbeing, living well, education, employment
- Activism and self-advocacy: rights, politics, activism & engagement
- National progress: climate emergency, COVID recovery, mental health, poverty & deprivation



We will embed these priorities into the information, opportunities and services we provide, and as part of our external engagement narrative with partners and stakeholders. We will also seek collaborative partnership opportunities to further support young people around the priority themes identified.

We will also continue to work with **#VisionMakers** for the duration of this strategy to ensure that we remain agile, responsive and reactive to the changing priorities of young people. This action will be reflected in our annual delivery plans.



Ross, 25, Glasgow

I believe that Young Scot has so much potential to respond to the challenges that we will face following the COVID-19 pandemic, by helping build reassurance, confidence and resilience going forward.



Jordon, 21, Aberdeen

I joined #VisionMakers to give seldom heard young people like myself a voice in a world where they often feel ignored or unwanted by those who should be listening to them.



Haleema, 14, East Dunbartonshire

Taking part in #VisionMakers has helped me to develop new skills, gain confidence and it has given me the opportunity to voice my opinion as well as work as part of a team.

I joined the #VisionMakers because it is important that the voices of young people are heard and listened to, and that we have a seat at the table discussing the issues that matter most to us.

Rosa, 13, Edinburgh





Eisean, 12, Fife

In the future I hope that young people in Scotland will have the chance to be involved in more groups like these because I think they can play a vital role in helping young people have more of a role in their future. I have developed loads of skills from being involved in Young Scot that have been helpful at school and at clubs. I've definitely seen a big change in my teamwork skills at school.



lmaan, 15, Dundee

I joined the #VisionMakers group because I wanted to help shape the direction of Young Scot's work, as I feel it's a key in making sure that children and young people can grow up in the best Scotland possible. I hope in the future that young people in Scotland will take a more instrumental role in shaping their future.





Darcey,14, Moray

I hope in the future that Young Scot will continue to educate young people to help form a society that is more diverse, welcoming and free from social issues like poverty and homelessness.



Aurelia, 15, Orkney

I hope in future that young people in Scotland will continue to work together to make Scotland a better place.

Alex, 19, Glasgow

Taking part in #VisionMakers has taught me to work with and amplify the voices of other young people and work together to form a strategy that will help to improve the lives of young people across Scotland!



Finn, 17, Aberdeenshire

I hope that the work with #Visionmakers will change the lives of young people, support progress from the pandemic, as well making Scotland the best possible place to grow up.

Lauren, 15, South Lanarkshire

Taking part in the **#VisionMakers group has** helped me to develop my confidence and social skills, it pushed me out of my comfort zone which allowed me to meet some truly amazing people! Being a part of this project has taught me how important it is that young people are involved in decision making and how valuable our voices are. I have enjoyed every second of being part of the **#VisionMakers group and I** can't wait to see the impact of our work.

### We work with others to achieve our mutual goals for young people...

Our work supports young people to claim their rights...

By embedding the United Nations Convention on The Rights of The Child (UNCRC) in our services, we support young people to understand, claim and exercise their rights including;

- Article 12 Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.
- **Article 13** Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions, and to access all kinds of information, as long as its within the law.
- Article 17 Every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources, and governments should encourage the media to provide information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them.

- **Article 26** Every child has the right to benefit from social security. Governments must provide social security, including financial support and other benefits, to families in need of assistance.
- Article 29 Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.
- Article 31 Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.
- Article 42 Everyone should know about the UNCRC.



#### We deliver on a range of national policy frameworks...

We support Scotland to achieve its 'National Outcomes' – the values and aspirations of the people of Scotland that are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, including:

- We grow up loved, safe and respected so we realise our full potential.
- We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society.
- / We are healthy and active.
- We respect, protect, and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination.
- We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth, and power more equally.

#### **Sustainable Development Goals**

- / Sustainable Development Goals
- / Good health and wellbeing.
- / Quality Education.
- Decent Work and Economic Growth.
- / Reduce Inequalities.

#### **Reducing Health Inequalities**

- **Mitigation:** taking action to reduce the impact of social inequalities on individuals' health and social outcomes.
- **Prevention:** working towards preventing social inequalities having an impact on health and social outcomes.

#### Scotland's Public Health Priorities

- / A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities.
- / A Scotland where we flourish in early years.
- A Scotland where we have good mental wellbeing.
- A Scotland where we reduce the use and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
- A Scotland where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all.

In addition, we also support an extensive range of key strategies and policy frameworks, including Place-based frameworks, Christie's 'Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services', Scotland's 'Covid Recovery Strategy: for a fairer future', Developing Young Workforce, 'Best Start, Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty' Delivery Plan and 'A changing nation: how Scotland will thrive in a digital world'.

#### How we will make this happen...

#### Theory of change

What we want to address..

Young people need to be informed, connected and empowered to make informed decisions, to make the most of opportunities and entitlements available to them, and to have the skills and confidence to influence decision making and share power

Our delivery commitments for young people are...

- Providing quality assured, accessible, and relevant information to young people on the topics that are important to them and impact their lifes
- Including young people's voices and feedback in the development of information campaigns
- Providing young people with digital information literacy skills development and misinformation training

We want young people to experience...
(short-medium term outcomes)

- Increased access to high-quality and targeted information
- More opportunities to be content creators and to develop and produce information
- More opportunities to develop digital information literacy skills and to challenge misinformation

So that they can... (long term outcomes/ strategic priorities)

#### Be Informed

Make informed decisions and challenge misinformation

Young people across Scotland are supported

In order to ensure...

intended impact)

to thrive and make the most of their lives as they grow up, building their confidence and resilience, and having fun

- Providing young people with a programme of universal opportunities and entitlements
- Providing young people with local national, and European discounts
- Developing responsive and targeted opportunities and entitlements engagement programmers for young people
- Providing young people with support and training to grow their skills and confidence as system changers
- Connecting young people to opportunities to use their skills as system changers to influence decision-making and share power
- Providing young people with opportunities to express their views and participate in decision-making at a local and national level

- Increased awareness of local and national opportunities, discounts and entitlements
- Access to an expanded, improved and accessible range of universal opportunities, discounts and entitlements
- Increased access to improved targeted entitlements
- Improved access to support and training to become system changers and to connect them to opportunities
- Increased opportunities to express their views and participate in decision-making processes, locally and nationally.
- More confidence about being system changers, influencing decision-making and sharing power.

#### **Be Connected**

Maximise our opportunities, discounts and entitlements to support their wellbeing and improve equity

#### **Be Empowered**

Exercise their rights as system changers, influence decision-making, and share power both locally and nationally



To **empower young people towards positive futures** and realise the ambitions of our #VisionMakers, over the coming years we will support young people to:

#### **Be Informed**

#### Young people make informed decisions and challenge misinformation



Young people have increased access to high-quality and targeted information.



Young people have more opportunities to be content creators and to develop and produce information.



Young people have more opportunities to develop digital information literacy skills and to challenge misinformation.



#### **Be Connected**

Young people maximise our opportunities, discounts and entitlements to support their wellbeing and improve equity.





Young people have increased awareness of local and national opportunities, discounts and entitlements.



Young people have access to an expanded, improved and accessible range of universal opportunities, discounts and entitlements.



Young people have increased access to improved targeted entitlements.

#### **Be Empowered**

Young people are empowered to exercise their rights as system changers, influence decision-making, and share power both locally and nationally.



Young people have improved access to support and training to become system changers and to connect them to opportunities.



Young people have increased opportunities to express their views and participate in decision-making processes, locally and nationally.



Young people are more confident about being system changers, influencing decision-making and sharing power.

### We are a partnership...

We are collaborative by nature and strive to be an honest, transparent and accountable partner to our stakeholders, including young people.

We understand the importance of developing and maintaining strong and ethical connections that positively impact young people in Scotland. We commit to engaging in proactive dialogue with a diverse range of stakeholders, communities, sectors, and influencers to develop partnerships and relationships to meet our objectives, as set out by the #VisionMakers.

We will continue to nurture our strong strategic partnerships that already support the delivery of core services for young people in Scotland and build connections at a local, national and European level. This will encourage a wider outlook and support youth mobility and opportunities for young people in Scotland.



#### We understand the importance of place in the lives of young people...

We fully understand that the local communities and places where young people spend their time can impact opportunities, enjoyment, and future prospects. As such, our critical strategic partnerships with local authorities are integral to us supporting young people to thrive.

We will support our valued local partners to understand place through the lens of young people. We will do this by sharing young people's place stories and ensuring that information and services are relevant and responsive to their needs. This will support us to input to and align with Local Outcome Improvement Plans and support the use of Place Standard Tools for young people in their local communities.

We will also strengthen our relationship building with schools and tertiary education establishments – supporting young people to access our local and national services as they progress towards adulthood.



# We demonstrate our impact...

We work hard to ensure we can demonstrate the difference we make to young people's lives in Scotland.

Our focus on data and insight approaches allows us to make informed decisions around our service delivery – guided by our amazing Data & Insight Advisory group of academics and cross-sector professionals.

Aligned to this strategy is our Impact Framework. It combines quantitative and qualitative data and insights to help us measure our impact. Crucially, it commits us to ensuring we capture wide-ranging impact stories directly from young people.

Impact assessments on Rights and Wellbeing, Equalities and Health Inequalities ensure our core services and projects are as inclusive as they can be. The results of these are available publicly, together with our Impact Framework.



# We invest in our Young Scot people...

We continuously invest in our dedicated Board and staff team to enable them to effectively support young people in Scotland. From training and development opportunities to providing the right tools to get the job done, we are committed to delivering on the aims of Our People strategy.

Wellbeing is at the very core of our organisation. We have a Wellbeing Team made up of staff from across the organisation, co-creating seasonal wellbeing programmes that focus on making Young Scot a caring environment to work in, and recognising life balance. We will continuously seek innovative wellbeing approaches as the nature of the workplace evolves.

Our Board and Advisory Council provide support, guidance and challenge and we continue to work towards a more diverse and representative boardroom, with lots of representation from young people! And we will be exploring and creating innovative governance approaches that ensure the effective inclusion of young people.





# Supporting young people to thrive!

**Young Scot** 

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Follow **#VisionMakers** and keep up to date on how we are delivering for young people in Scotland. If you would like to partner with us to help make this happen, please get in touch.





























