

PROGRESSION ROUTE INTO YOUTH WORK 2025-26



Professional Development
Award in Youth Work



READY FOR YOUTH WORK

Ready for Youth Work is a practical course for youth workers and volunteers to ensure that they can: create a safe space for young people; plan, deliver and evaluate fun youth work sessions for young people; engage young people meaningfully and celebrate and recognise their achievements.

SQ accredited qualification at SCQF Level 3

PARTICIPANTS REFLECTION



Leading an icebreaker gave this participant valuable practical experience and built on the confidence they already had. The course also increased their awareness of trauma-informed practice, prompting them to think more carefully about how they support and engage young people.

Feedback suggests that the course strengthened their confidence and readiness to apply a reflective and trauma-informed approach in their youth work practice. The participant also expressed an interest in further developing their knowledge through additional training in this area.

RFYW Participants JUNE 2026

Enjoyment and active participation were central to this participant's experience of the Ready for Youth Work course. The range of activities encouraged them to challenge themselves, develop their confidence and deepen their understanding of youth work practice.

Feedback highlighted that they developed new skills, including the use of icebreaker activities, and gained a better understanding of children's rights, trauma-informed practice, and how to support young people in a thoughtful and practical way. They particularly enjoyed leading a game, participating in discussions, interactive activities and quizzes which helped them stay focused and build confidence throughout the course.

RFYW Participants JUNE 2026





PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD

The Professional Development Award in Youth Work (PDA) has been designed for those working with young people in a Community Learning and Development context. It is suitable for people who have experience of youth work in a paid or volunteering capacity but who might not have formal qualifications in youth work. The PDA in Youth Work offers a nationally recognised, SQA accredited qualification at SCQF Level 6.

PARTICIPANTS REFLECTION

Paula @ Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity



Motivation to do the PDA in Youth Work

I chose to complete the PDA in Youth Work because, although I have worked with children and young people for many years, I had never completed a formal youth work qualification. My role within Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity involves providing practical support, emotional support and creative opportunities for children and young people. I felt that the PDA would help strengthen my knowledge and understanding of youth work theory and practice, building on the training and experience I already had within a youth work.

Impact on Practice

The course has strengthened my practice and helped me think more intentionally about how I deliver sessions. One area where the PDA has made a difference is in the wellbeing sessions I facilitate. The course has influenced the way I plan and deliver these sessions and has helped me ensure that they better reflect youth work values and approaches.

The PDA also encouraged me to link my work more closely to youth work outcomes, which has improved my reflective practice. This has helped me think more critically about the impact of my work and how activities support the needs and development of children and young people.

Personal Growth and Professional Development

Completing the PDA has encouraged me to make some important changes to my practice. I am now more comfortable allowing space and silence during sessions, recognising that children and young people communicate in different ways and that silence does not mean they are not engaged. I have also increased my focus on actively involving children and young people in decision-making and ensuring their voices shape the activities and support that are offered. At the same time, I continue to prioritise active listening, which remains a key part of my practice.

My role has developed and my job title has changed to Youth Work & Family Support Officer. Having a recognised youth work qualification has been valuable in supporting this progression and providing recognition of my youth work role and skills.

PARTICIPANTS REFLECTION

Adam @ Spartans community foundation

Motivation to do the PDA in Youth Work

The PDA gave me an opportunity to expand my knowledge, skills and learn more about youth work practice. I had heard positive feedback from people who had completed the course and was told it was beneficial for learning and sharing ideas. One of the things I enjoyed most was meeting other youth workers and hearing about the different types of work they do. This gave me new ideas and helped me think about activities and approaches that could be used in my own setting.

Impact on Practice

The PDA has had a positive impact on my work with children and young people. The course has helped me understand young people better and recognise that different young people need different approaches and support. Through the learning and discussions on the course, I developed a better understanding and skills of how to build positive relationships with young people and support them effectively.

The course also increased my awareness of safeguarding and professional boundaries. While I already understood the importance of boundaries, the PDA encouraged me to think more carefully about how these are managed in practice and how small actions can help maintain professional relationships.

The PDA also encouraged me to reflect more on my programmes and practice. It reinforced the importance of youth-led work and involving young people in decisions about activities and programmes. As a result, I have made a greater effort to include young people's ideas and views when planning sessions.

Personal Growth and Professional Development

The PDA helped build my confidence both personally and professionally. One of the biggest things I gained from the course was reassurance that I was already doing many things well in my practice. It helped me realise that I had a good level of knowledge and experience.

The course introduced me to new ideas and ways of working. It helped me believe in myself more and feel more confident in my abilities. Completing the PDA is something I am proud of and I believe it will be valuable for future opportunities.

"I feel upskilled and more knowledgeable. I had a great time on the course."

Learning about legislations, policies and how to interact with uncomfortable situations and issues was really helpful.



PARTICIPANTS REFLECTION



Val @ Youth Vision

Motivation to do the PDA in Youth Work

I first became involved with youth work through volunteering with Youth Vision while I was considering a change in career direction. I was looking for something different that aligned more closely with my interests, particularly working outdoors and being part of a community. Through volunteering, I developed positive relationships with young people, staff and volunteers and quickly recognised the value of youth work in supporting young people's development.

After completing the [Ready for Youth Work programme](#), I gained a better understanding of youth work principles and practice. When I was successfully appointed as a Young Leaders Youth Development Worker, I saw the PDA in Youth Work as a natural next step to build on my knowledge and develop my skills further and strengthen my ability to support the young people.

Impact on Practice

The PDA has had a significant impact on my confidence and self belief. The course provided me with a much broader understanding of the youth work profession and the many different skills involved. I developed my knowledge of safeguarding, legislation, policies and procedures, group development and programme planning. The course also helped me better understand how to engage young people through activities and games while ensuring that sessions meet the needs of individual young people. Learning about the history and development of youth work gave me a greater appreciation of the profession and the important role it plays in supporting children and young people.

As a result of the course, I feel more equipped to respond to challenges, access guidance when required and continue developing my practice in a reflective and informed way.

Personal Growth and Professional Development

The course has encouraged me to further develop my planning and evaluation skills and to be more flexible in responding to the needs and interests of young people. It has also reinforced the importance of building trusting relationships, creating welcoming environments and recognising that every young person engages differently. One of the key things I have learned is that I do not need to have all the answers. Instead, I can support young people by listening, being non-judgemental and helping them explore solutions while recognising when additional support may be needed.

The PDA has strengthened my commitment to youth work and sparked a particular interest in outdoor learning. I continue to seek opportunities to develop through my role and volunteering.

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