Introduction

As part of the Scottish Government’s programme of themed years, 2018 has been identified as the Year of Young People, aiming to celebrate the very best of Scotland and its young people.

To start the journey towards 2018, the Scottish Government commissioned Children in Scotland, the Scottish Youth Parliament and Young Scot to engage with young people to co-design what shape the Year should take. The partnership recruited and supported an Interim Planning Group (IPG) of 18 young people, aged 8 to 22, to lead a process of engagement with their peers and stakeholders across Scotland. This process would enable them to make informed recommendations for a vision for the 2018 Year of Young People.

With the support of the partners, the IPG planned and facilitated three regional Discussion Days and one National Event. The regional events explored participants’ views, experiences, insights and ideas. The National Event showcased these findings and encouraged participants to further drill down into the aims and objectives to be set for the 2018 Year of Young People. Scottish Government officials and Ministers have been involved in these events, listening to young people from across Scotland to hear what their hopes and aspirations are for the 2018 Year of Young People. Engagement through events has also been complemented by engagement of young people and stakeholders through digital channels.

The commitment of the Scottish Government to collaborate with young people on the journey to 2018 and beyond is part of Ministers’ wider ambition to allow all children and young people to enjoy their rights and be fully involved in matters that affect them at a personal, local and national level.

The remainder of this report presents the reflections of the Interim Planning Group on the engagement process and their recommendations for the Minister for Children and Young People, her co-chairs and the Year of Young People Advisory Board on what the aims, objectives and outcomes of the 2018 Year of Young People should be, as the co-design period concludes and moves into the delivery phase.
Loving hearing about everybody's big ideas for Y.O.Y.P in 2018 😊

Discussion Day

NATIONAL EVENT!

Planning
- Discussion days
- National event
- Report
  To be continued...!!!

Our Future!

YOUNG PEOPLE OF SCOTLAND
1. Who we are

In July 2015, we were just a group of strangers who each wanted to have an impact on the Year of Young People. Over the last seven months, we have become the Interim Planning Group for the 2018 Year of Young People.

We came from all over Scotland with different experiences and perspectives. Our youngest member was 8 years old and our oldest was 22. Brought together and supported by Children in Scotland, the Scottish Youth Parliament, Young Scot and the Scottish Government, we are now friends and a great team.

We have travelled the country, expressed our opinions, built our self-confidence and learnt new skills. We are now more confident individuals, proud of our work as the IPG and extremely enthusiastic about what the Year of Young People in 2018 could achieve.

2. What we did

At our first meeting, we took part in interactive group work to help us think about what questions we should ask young people and stakeholders. We also brainstormed how we might ask these questions. We took into account the size of the event, our resources and if different methods might suit young people compared to stakeholders. We wanted the events to be bright and creative. For example, we suggested
using balloons with the hashtag (#YOYP) to help create a fun atmosphere and encourage people to talk about the 2018 Year of Young People on social media.

It was important to make sure we thought about how the participants might find the YOYP engagement experience. One early unanimous decision was to separate the young people from the adults during the Discussion Day activities. We based this on a strongly-held belief that young people’s confidence, views and behaviour can be significantly affected by an adult’s presence. To check we were correct in our theory, we included an evaluation opportunity for participants at the end of every event.

As a group, we met to review each event and identify any areas for improvement. As we were committed to gathering the views of participants all over Scotland, we were careful to record the discussions we had heard and analyse the main themes and topics that came up. This analysis formed the basis of the agenda for the National Event. We used the National Event as an opportunity to sense-check the aims we had identified so far and receive feedback on our proposed aims and objectives for the 2018 Year of Young People.

In addition to planning three regional Discussion Days (in Glasgow on 3rd September, Perth on 1st October and Aberdeen on 10th November) and one National Event (in Edinburgh on 2nd December), we also attended as many of these events as possible. Each event was different and we enjoyed trying the different roles of participant, facilitator, presenter and host.

In total, 203 young people attended these events and 143 stakeholders also took part.
Recognising the role of young people’s organisations and supporting adults in our lives, we were keen to include as many stakeholder voices as possible. For this reason, representatives of the IPG ran condensed YOYP workshops at the 2018 YOYP Advisory Board meeting in September 2015 and the YouthLink Scotland Conference in November 2015.

**Online engagement**

From our own experience, we know how difficult it is to physically attend lots of events on a regular basis while also juggling school or work. We concluded we needed to have a strong online presence to help as many people as possible to participate in planning 2018’s YOYP. We highlighted the need for a website, individual surveys online and a toolkit. We thought the toolkit would be a great resource for schools and youth groups to use to run their own ‘discussion day’ if they were unable to attend ours.

388 responses were received from young people to the online tools and 68 responses were also received from stakeholders.

**3. What we heard from children, young people and stakeholders**

We heard a lot of interesting opinions from young people and adults all over Scotland. The section below largely references activities from the 2018 YOYP engagement events, however the data and analysis is fully supported by the Children and Young People’s survey responses which were conducted online for those who were unable to attend the events in person.

**What is important to children and young people?**

We started each Discussion Day with a large group activity to find out what is important to young people in 2015. We discovered that family and friends are the most important features in a young person’s life.

The top ten commonly identified themes were:

1. Family
2. Friends
3. Music
4. Education
5. Food
6. Community
7. Arts
8. Sport
9. Equality
10. School
What are the challenges and issues young people face?

Using smaller group work, we asked young people at the Discussion Days what challenges they faced in their daily lives. One of the most common issues young people talked about was the pressure they felt to do well in exams. Many thought that there was too much focus in schools on gaining qualifications and they would like more time to spend on their interests and hobbies.

The top 10 issues identified were:

1. Too much focus on exams
2. Not enough opportunities to get involved in local activities
3. Intergenerational barriers
4. Self-confidence
5. Money to be able to take part in extra-curricular activities
6. Funding to help go to further and higher education
7. Negative stereotypes
8. Representation
9. Financial knowledge
10. Discrimination

What do children and young people want to focus on in 2018?

Young people were very clear that the main focus of 2018 should be to celebrate the achievements of young people. This overarching aim was represented in the large majority of responses we heard.

We weren’t surprised to learn that education was the top ‘theme’ raised by young people, as we recognise it is extremely important to shaping a young person for the future.

Another significantly common response regarded participation and young people’s desire to have more say in the activities and issues that affect them. They would like more opportunity to get involved in different activities outside school. Many also reported wanting better representation for young people in Parliament.
Another topic of high importance centred on society’s attitude to young people as a social group. There was much discussion surrounding the negative view of young people as unproductive, disrespectful and even intimidating. Young people felt this discrimination and bias was unjustified and are keen to see it changed.

We heard a lot of opinions about equality and discrimination, with the majority of young people stating that they would like to see a fairer Scotland where differences were celebrated. We heard that young people are proud of their country and would like to make sure that all members of society are treated equally and that young people aspire for Scotland to become a world leader in this.

During the events, we heard many comments highlighting the importance of young people maintaining healthy and active lifestyles. To do this, young people suggested increasing the availability of leisure and sports facilities as well as youth-specific concessions. Illustrating a strong link to the previously mentioned exam stress and perceived lack of respect in society, young people believe it is important to focus on mental health and invisible illnesses in 2018. We heard that they would appreciate more education, awareness raising and support in this area.

4. Recommendations for the 2018 Year of Young People

Based on what we heard through the engagement process, we have set out our recommendations below for what the aim, objectives, outcomes and priority themes should be for the 2018 Year of Young People.

Aim

The Year of Young People 2018 aims to inspire Scotland through its young people, celebrating their achievements, valuing their contribution to communities and creating new opportunities for them to shine locally, nationally and globally.

Objectives

- Provide a platform for young people to have their views heard and acted upon
- Showcase the amazing talents of young people through events and media
- Develop better understanding, co-operation and respect between generations
- Recognise the impact of teachers, youth workers and other supporting adults on young people’s lives
- Provide opportunities for young people to express themselves through culture, sport and other activities

Outcomes

- Young people have a greater say in decisions that affect their lives
- Improved public perception of young people
- More opportunities for intergenerational work and conversations
Young people have more opportunities to take part in positive activities and experiences

**Key themes and activities**

The Year of Young People in 2018 will be an amazing opportunity to celebrate the amazing talents and achievements of young people in Scotland.

In realising the aim and objectives, there should be a particular focus on planning activity which addresses the themes of:

- **Participation** – young people should significantly influence public services and decisions which affect their lives.

- **Education** – young people have a stronger role in shaping their learning.

- **Health and Wellbeing** – young people are supported to lead healthier, active lives and have opportunities to learn about and improve their mental health and resilience.

- **Equality and Discrimination** – broadcasting the value of young Scots, challenging negative perceptions of young people, and supporting young people to take leading roles in challenging discrimination in all its forms.
5. Recommendations for the role of young people in planning and implementation

As the ‘Interim’ Planning Group, we always knew our role was for a short period of time, to develop initial recommendations for the 2018 Year of Young People, which would then be discussed with the Scottish Government before new structures were put in place to involve young people in planning of the Year, based on our recommendations.

We believe that the Scottish Government should continue the co-design approach, involving young people at all levels of planning and delivery in the 2018 Year of Young People. Specifically:

- We believe young people should be equal partners in the governance arrangements that are developed to oversee the planning and delivery of the Year.

- A formal Planning Group should be recruited to work alongside the Scottish Government in taking forward our recommendations in planning the 2018 Year of Young People.

- There are opportunities for a wider network of young people and youth organisations across Scotland to feed in to the Planning Group and governance structures.
6. Reflections

We would like to thank:

- The Scottish Government for their commitment to supporting young people to co-design the 2018 Year of Young People;

- The staff at Children in Scotland, the Scottish Youth Parliament and Young Scot for supporting us through the process over the past seven months; and

- Most importantly, all the children, young people and stakeholders who shared their views and aspirations with us for the 2018 Year of Young People.

We are glad we have been able to play a part in developing a vision for the 2018 Year of Young People and can’t wait to see what comes next!

The 2018 Year of Young People Interim Planning Group

Abi Reid          Fraser Innes         Martin Gallacher
Alicia Santana    Ilia Tafazzoly      Melody Ramsay
Ben Procter       Isabella Webster    Rachael McCully
Brian Iroegbu     Isla Lawson         Ryan McShane
Emmie Leigh Main  Madeleine McGhie    Samiksha Viju
Finlay Morse      Madni Ahmed Tahir   Terri Smith

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