

Winter Fund 2022

IMPACT REPORT



Youth Borders



Scottish Borders Council
Financial Inclusion Fund

www.youthborders.org.uk

Introduction

In February 2022, YouthBorders administered the Winter Fund from the Scottish Borders Council's Financial Inclusion Fund. YouthBorders is a membership network of 45 voluntary and community-based youth organisations across the Scottish Borders, supporting and promoting good quality youth work. YouthBorders vision is to create a voluntary and community-based youth work sector which is connected, collaborative, respected, and recognised; working together to improve the lives of young people in the Scottish Borders.



YouthBorders are trusted partners of Scottish Borders Council. YouthBorders were invited to submit a proposal, giving consideration of how third sector youth organisations could meet the aims and outcomes of the Financial Inclusion Fund. YouthBorders and our member organisations recognised that community-based organisations were well placed to identify and reach children, young people and their families experiencing financial hardship. This view was supported by the Scottish Borders Council Financial Inclusion Fund Officers Group.

The Winter Fund allocation of £71,150 was split into two elements: a financial hardship fund – this enabled YouthBorders member organisations to purchase vouchers up to £100 for families and young people experiencing financial hardship. Funding was also approved to support member organisations to increase their youth work activity throughout February and March, ensuring that young people, experiencing hardship, had access to safe, warm and welcoming activities and experiences. There was a particular focus on the February half-term, but activities reached beyond that up to and including 31st March 2022.

Total number of organisations involved:

32

Total number of young people reached through vouchers:

549

Total number of young people in youth work settings:

1170

“With rising costs of living now, I wouldn't have been able to do very much with my kids. Since having the fund, it meant we could have a day out and not have to worry about taking the money from elsewhere that we would need.”

Parent/Carer

Element 1: Hardship Funding

YouthBorders identified organisations from within its membership who were able to identify individual households that met the fund priorities, and where there was capacity to administer a voucher payment scheme. An initial allocation of funds to organisations was revised upwards based on increased identification of needs and additional organisations with capacity to administer voucher payments. In agreement with Scottish Borders Council, the hardship funding allocation for vouchers increased from £20,000 to £26,800.

A total of 18 YouthBorders member organisations were granted hardship funding. Member organisations purchased a total of **274 vouchers** for young people and their families. The majority of these vouchers were used to buy food from supermarkets however, some vouchers were used for homeware, fuel, clothing, heating, data and transport. These vouchers reached at least **549 children and young people** under the age of 18.

Below is the list of YouthBorders member organisations who identified families and administered a local voucher scheme. All vouchers were allocated with discretion and sensitivity and took account of local availability of food stores and services.

Member Organisations and Localities	
Beyond Earlston (Eildon)	Quarriers (Borders Wide)
Borders Additional Needs Group (Borders Wide)	Rowlands (Eildon)
Cheviot Youth (Cheviot)	School's Out Peebles (Tweeddale)
Connect Berwickshire Youth Services (Berwickshire)	CHIMES, Action for Children (Borders Wide)
Eat, Sleep, Ride CIC (Berwickshire)	TD1 Youth Hub (Eildon)
Escape Youth Services (Teviot)	The Learning Space (Berwickshire)
Interest Link Borders (Borders Wide)	The Splash Project (Berwickshire)
One Step Borders CIC (Borders Wide)	Tweeddale Youth Action (Tweeddale)
Peeblesshire Youth Trust (Tweeddale)	Works+ (Eildon)

Below is the number of specific households/families that were targeted through the hardship funding. Please note that some households/families fall into multiple categories. People living in households on low incomes, those in fuel poverty, followed by those who are eligible for free school meals were the top three factors targeted by our members.

Specific Households/Families	Number of Targeted Households Supported
People living in households on low incomes	213
Those in fuel poverty	149
Those eligible for free school meals	141
People living in the most deprived areas	120
Lone parent families	111
People living in households with a disabled family member	65
Larger families (3+ children)	64
Disabled People	52
Mothers under the age of 25	14

“Thank you so much for this – it will make a real difference and help get some credit on our electricity and see us through the next month and a bit.”

Parent/Carer

Element 2: Additional Youth Work Activities

YouthBorders identified organisations from within its membership who were able to reach children and young people living in households that met the fund priorities and who were participating in youth work. Funding was made available to support member organisations increase youth work activity throughout February and March 2022. This funding ensured that young people and families who are experiencing hardship could participate in youth work sessions, without any barriers including transport. In addition to the youth work activities and experiences, members also reduced holiday hunger by the provision of food.

A total of 32 YouthBorders member organisations were granted funding for additional youth work activities. Altogether, **1170 young people** benefitted from additional youth work sessions. Below is the list of YouthBorders member organisations who were granted funding for additional youth work sessions.

Member Organisations and Localities	
Alchemy Film & Arts (Borders Wide)	One Step Borders CIC (Borders Wide)
At Birkhill House CIC (Borders Wide)	Peebles CAN (Tweeddale)
Beyond Earlston (Eildon)	Peeblesshire Youth Trust (Tweeddale)
Borders Additional Needs Group (Borders Wide)	Quarriers (Borders Wide)
Borders Youth Theatre (Borders Wide)	Rowlands (Eildon)
Branching Upwards CIC (Tweeddale)	School's Out Peebles (Tweeddale)
Bright Start Borders CIC (Eildon)	CHIMES, Action for Children (Borders Wide)
Cheviot Youth (Cheviot)	Scottish Borders Rape Crisis Centre (Borders Wide)
Children 1st (Borders Wide)	TD1 Youth Hub (Eildon)
Connect Berwickshire (Berwickshire)	The Learning Space (Berwickshire)
Eat, Sleep, Ride CIC (Berwickshire)	The Splash Project (Berwickshire)
Escape Youth Services (Teviot)	Transform Arts CIC (Eildon)
Interest Link Borders (Borders Wide)	Tweedbank Youth Club (Eildon)
Langlee Youth Club (Eildon)	Tweeddale Youth Action (Tweeddale)
Nature Unlimited CIC (Borders Wide)	Volunteer Centre Borders (Borders Wide)
Newlands Youth Group (Tweeddale)	Works+ (Eildon)

Below is the number of member organisations who targeted specific households/families through the youth work activities element of the Winter Fund. The top three main target categories were people living on low incomes, those living in deprived areas and lone parent families.

Specific Households/Families	Number of Members Providing Targeted Support to Priority Households
People living in households on low incomes	29
People living in the most deprived areas	21
Lone parent families	21
Those eligible for free school meals	20
Larger families (3+ children)	20
People living in households with a disabled family member	15
Those in fuel poverty)	13
Disabled People	12
Minority ethnic households	9
Mothers under the age of 25	4

What is Youth Work?

Youth work is an educational process that engages with young people in a curriculum that deepens a young person's understanding of themselves, their community and the world in which they live and supports them to proactively bring about positive changes. Youth work has three essential and definitive features: young people choose to participate; youth work must build from where young people are; and youth work recognises the young person and the youth worker as partners in a learning process (Youth Scotland, 2022).



What was this funding used for?

The majority of funding was used to provide new experiences (28%) the provision of food (25%) and additional youth work sessions (21%) for young people. Young people visited new places, tried something new for the first time, and met new people – which exemplifies Scotland's youth work outcome seven: "young people broaden their perspectives through new experiences and thinking" (YouthLink Scotland, 2018). *"First time in the big city, first time getting fast food, first time playing laser tag, first time attending a demo – so many firsts and so much excitement!"* Young Person

Members delivered youth work sessions which included arts and crafts, horse riding lessons, gardening, music, drama, film, health and wellbeing, outdoor activities such as crate climbing, ropes course, team building exercises, food tasting, calligraphy courses, theatre workshops covering creative writing, speech and general presentation skills, and volunteering opportunities. *“We have seen new friendships forged, increased confidence, definitely from those who were a bit frightened about venturing into the unknown – and some pulling together and random acts of kindness.”* Youth Work Practitioner



In addition, members took this opportunity to provide new experiences for young people by taking them on day trips. Young people went on a variety of different trips including the beach, cinema, swimming pool, Ryze, Laser Station, Edinburgh Zoo, Blair Drummond Safari Park, National Museum, Dynamic Earth, Camera Obscura, Deep Sea World, Knockhill Go-Karting, 6 Nations rugby match, and At Birkhill House. These experiences were especially appreciated by families who face financial hardship as parents remarked that they would have struggled to afford such experiences for their children otherwise. *“Thank you so much for taking my son on a trip in February break, he absolutely loved it. I am a single mum, and I can’t afford to take my kid anywhere, so for him getting to do something with his friends was a big relief.”* Parent/Carer

Members reported that 17% of the funding was used for transport to enable young people to participate in activities without any barriers. The remaining 9% of this funding was used to provide young people with self-care boxes, 50 personal alarms, 5 mobile phones and warm clothing so they could participate in outdoor activities. Funding was also put towards staffing costs which allowed more young people to take part in activities and additional one to one time for those with additional needs (see figure 1 below). *“Parents were grateful for the opportunity their young people were having. Many said they don’t have the transport to attend such places as you would need three different buses to get to the destination.”* Youth Work Practitioner

Winter Fund – Spend

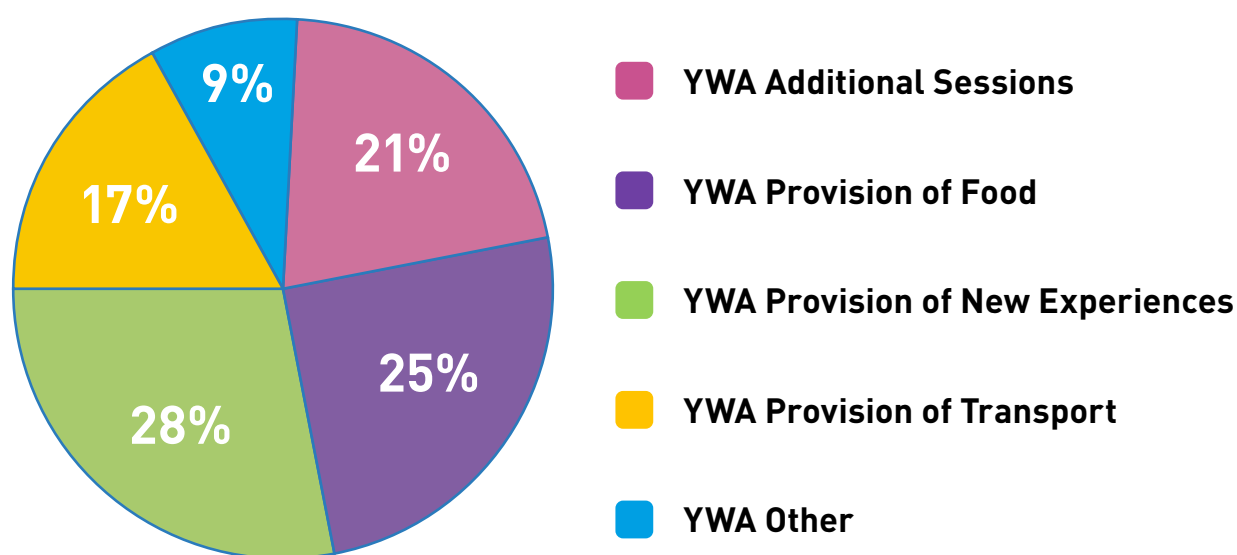


Figure 1: Breakdown of how Youth Work Activities member groups spent the Winter Fund.

Where did youth work activities take place?

Youth work activities took place in the following Scottish Borders postcode areas:

Postcodes and Locations	
TD1 – Galashiels	TD9 – Hawick
TD4 – Earlston	TD11 – Duns
TD5 – Kelso	TD12 – Coldstream
TD6 – Melrose	TD14 – Eyemouth
TD7 – Selkirk	EH45 – Peebles
TD8 – Jedburgh	

Young people, their parents/carers and youth work practitioners have noted the positive impact the vouchers and additional sessions have made. Young people have stated that;

- their confidence has improved,
- they have a greater sense of hope,
- they feel they are valued as part of their community.

“It felt better because I didn’t feel really isolated after stuff like school and clubs. It felt really good to be with people who actually like me, because there’s a few people in my school who don’t like me.”

“Even before lockdown, I think [youth group] helped with my mental health because of the routine, seeing people regularly, it’s making me feel a bit more confident and it is people who like you.”

“It gave me the confidence and help to develop my initial idea into the finished short film that I wanted to make. I hope this will be the first of many. I can’t wait to see the films the rest of the group have made.”

Families highlighted their gratitude for these youth work opportunities as it provided new experiences for their young people as well as positive developments in self-confidence and self-esteem.

“She had a great time, she said she was anxious at parts but felt proud she overcame it, thank you so very much guys, it was brilliant.”

“It has been lovely to see her grow in confidence when trying new things.”



What difference has this funding made?

Case Study 1: Branching Upwards C.I.C

Parents expressed huge gratitude as their young people were offered an opportunity to be part of activities in Peebles. Parents said that their children came back buzzing with excitement from their time at youth club and they were very appreciative of the inclusion and support they were given. They stated that anxieties for transitioning to High School were high coming from such rural areas however, being able to attend the youth club had improved well-being and reduced their fears.

Parents facing financial difficulties, to whom outdoor clothing was offered to help support their children attend Forest School after school/holiday activities, were extremely appreciative as they said it relieved their concerns that their child would be warm and dry during sessions. Young people were delighted with the clothing and by ensuring they were warm and dry impacted positively on their enjoyment and engagement during sessions.

Parent feedback: *"The opportunity for him to have supported opportunities to start to feel a bit more independent, and have the opportunity to meet some of the peers he will go to high school with is incredibly important for him. He struggles to manage his own money, so even having to buy his own meal at McDonald's is a huge confidence booster for him. The opportunity to access the free transport makes attending the youth club possible. I really appreciate your support in running this initiative."*

Case Study 2: Works+

X received Cafe Recharge meal vouchers as he still does not have access to a cooker in his home. He relies on foodbanks and help from family and friends. Takeaways are too expensive, and he mainly consumes tinned products which he can heat in the microwave.

X has required a lot of support from us to help with his finances after he started college. We felt that it would be very beneficial for X to be able to go out for a proper home cooked meal and to take his girlfriend who has been a great support to X through some very difficult times. X was absolutely delighted to receive these vouchers and was so grateful. He is really looking forward to taking his girlfriend out and having a hot home cooked meal.

Case Study 3: Peeblesshire Youth Trust

The team building aspects were amazing at the outdoor centre. This enabled some of the shyer young people to become both leaders and team players. It was great to see them grow in confidence which was made possible by the choice of activities being led by the outdoor centre. The trip to Ryze was brilliant for including as many young people as possible. We were able to take a larger group than usual due to the cost of transport and entry being covered by the funding. The children were so excited about going, and one reported it was their *"best day ever"*! We could observe the boost in self-esteem in young people, letting them enjoy a rare trip out with a big group of their peers.

Case Study 4: Beyond Earlston

We were able to provide additional sessions – mainly At Birkhill House, as well as vouchers to distribute to families in need during this period. This enabled young people to come together, some of whom were new members to have new experiences which they would not normally have. Families were also glad to have this additional financial support.

We supported a single mum who had no contact with dad and was looking after her family of five without any child allowances. The oldest child attends youth groups sporadically but is withdrawn and is not involved socially with peers. This family struggles to make ends meet and finds it challenging to replace broken items, buy clothing and fuel for their car. The voucher helped the family to buy school clothes for the oldest child and support the food bill which allows mum to put money towards a car repair bill. Parent said: *“This is a great help. It’s very challenging at the moment and we just manage to pay for essentials.”*

Case Study 5: Escape Youth Services

We used the funding to provide additional food during our usual drop-in sessions and offered an additional trip day to a 6 Nations rugby match, which for many was a new experience. We also went to the local cinema and had a taster session at a local Boxing Club.

This funding meant the young people could participate in all the activities free of charge, where we could target members who may not usually attend when there is a small cost involved. The sessions were run as part of our wider offer to our full membership so that all young people were included with no stigma. Parents were very grateful of the offer of free spaces and feedback from parents and young people after the trips were very positive, as highlighted above, for some was their first experience of an international rugby game and an introduction to a new sport they could attend.



Case Study 6: Quarriers

As a service, we considered the people we supported against the funding criteria and purchased supermarket food vouchers that were distributed to families during the school holiday period. This lifted the financial pressures they were experiencing during this time. Our families were incredibly grateful, and one parent shared that they had 50 pence left in their bank account and had no idea how they would have been able to be able to make it through the half-term holidays without this voucher. Another parent said that nobody would ever truly understand what this voucher would mean and the difference it would make to the whole family during the school holidays. A young person told their practitioner that the voucher made his mum cry happy tears.



References

1. Youth Scotland (2022) *What is Youth Work?* Available at: [What is Youth Work? \[youthworkessentials.org\]](https://youthworkessentials.org) (Accessed: 6 May 2022).
2. YouthLink Scotland (2018) Outcome 7: *Young people broaden their perspectives through new experiences and thinking.* [YouthLink Scotland | Outcome 7](#) (Accessed: 6 May 2022).

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