



Youth Strategy 2012 – 2015



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Youth Strategy 2012 – 2015

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This document is publicly available through the ACHA website (www.acha.co.uk) or a copy can be obtained from any ACHA office.

It is intended that this strategy be current, readable and relevant and we welcome any comments you may have on its content. Please send comments to Gillian McInnes (gillian.mcinnnes@acha.co.uk or 01546 605801).

Aim of This Strategy

We acknowledge that young people are one of the most vulnerable groups in society, especially in the current global economic crisis, and in our ageing society, young people are a precious resource. We are ideally placed at the heart of local communities to help deliver services available to young people and to seek funding to encourage projects to assist young people. We have experience of working in partnership with public sector agencies, with the local voluntary and community sector and with local employers.

This is our first Youth Strategy and it discusses issues of direct business relevance and also wider youth issues. We would also like this strategy to help erase the negative stereotypes associated with young people and youth culture.

Areas covered in this strategy include youth employment, education, housing, social and financial inclusion and communication. The strategy also emphasises the importance of partnership working and this will be mentioned throughout. The aim of this strategy is to better understand the many issues around the provision of services for young people and build upon existing work.

- ACHA has approximately **5,100 houses** located all over Argyll and Bute including 11 islands.
- At the time of writing this strategy there were **2,554 tenancies** recorded as being family homes with children under 18 which represents around 50% of all our tenancies.
- There are also **43 tenancies** (0.85%) where the tenant is a young person aged 16 – 18. All but one of these tenancies is located within a large settlement.

Mission Statement

We would like to work in partnership with young people, with families and local and national bodies to see continual improvement in the services provided for young people across Argyll and Bute.

Definition of 'Youth'

This strategy covers a broad age range of young people including:

- Children (under 12 years old)
- Secondary school age young people (12 – 18 years old)
- Young people (school leavers) 16 - 24

Youth Link Scotland defines young people as those between 12 and 24 years old with the under 12's being considered as children, however definitions and age ranges within those definitions vary from organisation to organisation.

www.youthlinkscotland.org

ACHA and Young People

Employment

Around one in five young people in the UK are not in employment, education or training (NEET). Youth unemployment costs the UK economy £10 million a day in lost productivity, while youth crime costs £1 billion every year. The urgency to tackle youth unemployment is recognised as of great importance to young people to achieve independence. Yet, since the start of the economic crisis mid-2008, more than 20% of young people are unemployed. We are attempting to contribute to youth employment in Argyll and Bute in a number of ways:

Modern Apprenticeships and Traineeships

We have appointed 4 new trainees since September 2010; 2 under the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme who are studying for HNC level qualifications through Argyll College, 1 Graduate Trainee and 1 Housing Trainee. All trainees have access to professional mentoring through our Human Resources section which allows regular review and support.

Summer Student Placements

Each year ACHA commits and budgets for Summer Student Placements who are employed on a casual contract. During summer 2011 we successfully appointed 8 students for a 10 week placement.

Future Jobs Fund

This scheme which includes Government funding saw us working in partnership with Argyll Training and resulted in the employee securing permanent employment with Argyll and Bute Council as a result of the experience gained working with us.

'Get Ready for Work' Placements

This scheme is designed for 16-18 year olds enabling young people to gain first-hand experience in the work place for 20 weeks and paid a weekly allowance by Argyll Training. Since last year we have taken on 7 'Get Ready for Work' placements within our offices.

Communities Jobs Scotland

The purpose of this Scottish Government funded scheme is to provide young people with work experience to increase chances of getting a permanent job. At the time of writing this strategy we have one person on a placement through this scheme (Marion, pictured right) who will be working with us for 40 weeks. The previous placement went on to permanent employment with Argyll and Bute Council. Marion said "This job is going to help me in the future as I have learned how to do various tasks and will also help me when I apply for other jobs or apply to college. I feel I am gaining in confidence the longer I'm here and find all the staff really helpful".



Future Pathways Project

We are working in collaboration with Oban High School on the Future Pathways Project to provide work experience on a half day a week basis for 3 interested pupils.

Work Placements/Experience

For the past few years we have supported work placements within our In House Repairs Teams for students from Rothesay Academy on Bute.

Argyll Construction College

We have worked in partnership with the college to provide work experience with our trades for young people currently at the Construction College. Pictured right are some students from the College Completing a mobility scooter storage unit at our sheltered housing in Oban.



Trade Apprenticeships Linked to ACHA's Investment Programme

As part of our larger Investment contracts, we have set a 'key performance indicator' requiring the contractors to demonstrate that they have created apprenticeships. We review the number of apprentices they employ annually.

We are currently introducing a new Housing Modern Apprenticeship which sits at SVQ Level 2. We will encourage all new Trainees or Customer Service Assistants to undertake this when appointed.

In terms of future workforce planning, we are modernising our recruitment criteria to rely less on previous knowledge and qualifications and more on attitude, potential and capability for the future. This will allow young people and trainees to apply for posts that they may have been excluded from in the past.

Our Positive Approach to Employment Policies

We are extremely aware of the importance of giving our employees with young family members as flexible a working environment as possible. The following are policies created specifically to enable staff to be able to work round the unique set of circumstances that go hand in hand with being a parent or carer:

- Maternity/Paternity Support and Leave Policy
- Paternal Leave Policy
- Domestic Emergencies Policy
- Flexible Working

Financial Inclusion

FISH Argyll is the project name for all the work we do in the area of financial inclusion. We aim to help young people as well as existing tenants where possible. A theatre production 'At Home with the Wiltons' (Solent Peoples Theatre – registered educational charity) gave financial capability training to pupils in some of our secondary schools during November 2008.

Prevention is always better than cure and the feedback was excellent:

88% said they now know more about credit cards, loans and sensible budgeting.



Campbeltown Grammar School

A personal finance handbook for young people has been produced. It includes information on banking, credit, insurance, savings and of course debt but also including sections on:

- Support while in education, training or an apprenticeship;
- Managing money conflicts with parent;
- Basic information on housing options;
- Managing a first home;
- Managing a credit card for the first time;
- Being an intelligent shopper.



These handbooks were distributed to secondary schools in Argyll and Bute where they have been used in PSE (personal, social education) classes and in some cases in maths classes. The handbook is available on ACHA's website www.acha.co.uk

Our FISH Welfare Rights service has provided specific help to families with children and over the two year period (March 2010 – March 2012) helped 483 families with children (290 of which were lone parent families). The team of welfare rights officers assisted these families with welfare benefit and tax credit claims amounting to almost £985,000 (nine hundred and eighty five thousand pounds), the majority of which is spent in the local community adding further benefit to the service.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies figures released in 2011 indicated that planned changes being brought about through the new welfare benefit system called Universal Credit was likely to bring about a rise of 800,000 **new** cases of child poverty across the UK by 2020. *The Scottish Government has long been aware of many examples of excellent local practice in tackling child poverty through work with stakeholders.* Extract from the Scottish Government's Child Poverty Strategy 2011.

Grants to Assist Youth Groups

We provide many community groups with grant funding through our Community Action Fund grant. Application forms are available from ACHA's website www.acha.co.uk or by contacting any of our offices. Some of the recipients in recent years have been:

- Play area on the island of Coll
- Mid Argyll Under 14 Football Club
- Route 81 Youth Group, Garelochhead
- Campbeltown Girls Group
- Kirn Story Sacks
- Park Primary School – IT equipment
- Soroba Young Families Group
- Blue Light Disco's, Helensburgh
- Ardchattan Primary School – Eco Garden
- Lochgilphead Golf Club – Junior Training Sessions
- Atlantis Leisure, Oban – Play Area Upgrade
- Islay/Jura Youth Wind Band
- Oban High School – Pipe Band
- Ardrishaig Youth Sailing Club (pictured right)
- Southend Play Park Committee
- Rhu/Shandon Play Area Association
- Kintyre Youth Cafe
- Tiree Youth Club
- Oban Thistle Junior Football Team
- Islay/Jura Dolphins – Swimming Club
- Cove/Kilcreggan Youth Cafe
- Bowmore Primary School – Gaelic Choir
- Home Start MAJIK
- Tarbert Music Centre



The fund was increased to a maximum of £500 per applicant in 2011.

Play Areas

We recognise the importance of play in the development of young people of all ages. Our Play Area Strategy 2008 states:

We aim to ensure that all larger communities with young tenant families have reasonable access to safe and inspiring play facilities, whether provided by ACHA or other public/private bodies.

We currently hold the title deeds of 41 play areas across Argyll and Bute although there may be 'rights in common' with some Right to Buy owners (people who have bought their home from the Council or ACHA). We inspect, maintain and insure these play areas which range from fully modernised and well equipped to those sites where, for safety reasons, old and damaged equipment has been removed. We understand the benefits of partnership working and there are several sites on land leased to community groups where the groups have attracted grant funding to replace equipment.

RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) carried out a complete Risk Assessment in November 2006 and this has helped with the prioritisation of upgrading works to existing play areas.



ACHA's play area in Soroba, Oban



Machrihanish, Kintyre play area – ACHA contributed some of the funding

In addition to refurbishing the play areas where we are the leaseholder, the Strategy also provides for some match funding to enable other play area providers to refurbish play areas on land that we own or lease to community groups.

All of our staff engaged in estate management work are RoSPA trained to carry out regular play area inspections.

Care and Support of Vulnerable Young People

ACHA's Child Protection Policy

The aim of this policy is to promote good practice when employees are in direct contact with children. In terms of the child protection policy a child can be defined as those under 16 (who are children of tenants) or those young people between 16 and 18 who can have their own tenancy and would be regarded as vulnerable.

The policy includes information on awareness of abuse, recognising behaviour which might be of concern and how to deal with these incidences including recording information and the safe storage of such sensitive material.

ACHA works in partnership with local authorities, the Police, the Scottish Prison Service and the NHS. This process is known as MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements). The agencies use a range of methods to manage offenders and reduce the risk of further offences.

Tenancy Support

New tenancies for young people aged 16 – 18 are fairly uncommon (at the time of writing there were only 43 tenants in this age group) but each case is handled carefully to ensure any support from other agencies is put in place. In addition to support offered by other agencies such as Argyll and Bute Council, our staff may increase the number and frequency of visits to ensure that the young tenant is settling in well and overcoming any barriers to sustaining their tenancy. Although some young tenants are given extra care there is still a high level of tenancy turnover within this group as they are a more mobile section of the community often choosing to move to another location for work, training or education

Throughcare and Aftercare

Argyll and Bute Council co-ordinate a throughcare and aftercare service through a central point and a number of local forums. We actively participate in these quarterly meetings with the aim of the service being to deliver co-ordinated and formal support and assistance to children and young people leaving care. This is known as 'pathways planning'. In the first instance children and young people are given advice and assistance about their statutory rights as well as advice on housing, health, training, education, employment and other opportunities available locally.

Our involvement is to ensure that young people leaving care are given appropriate advice about how to apply for housing and that any prospective tenants are aware of their rights and responsibilities. In addition, through the Throughcare and Aftercare Forums, we engage with multiple agencies to ensure support provision is co-ordinated as appropriate and tenancies are sustained.

Referrals to Other Agencies

We are part of the partnership known as ABAN (Argyll and Bute Advice Network). During 2011 an On-line Referral System was set up to enable secure (encrypted) transfer of referrals between agencies in Argyll and Bute. The system also enables us to track referrals to ensure that young people are getting the care and advice that they need.

Housing Support

Argyll and Bute Council's Housing Services contracts several support providers to deliver contracts. These contracts are locally based and are split for 16-24 year olds and another for the over 25's. The Council assesses support needs of individuals and contracts the providers to deliver a specified number of hours of support as needed. ACHA staff make referrals for support to the Council using the on-line referral system as mentioned above.

Advice Organisations:

If you are concerned about the welfare of a child:		
National Child Protection Helpline	0800 022 3222	Website: www.infoscotland.com/childprotection
A confidential, freephone helpline for people who might be worried about their own thoughts and feelings towards children or the behaviour of others; parents and carers of young people with sexually worrying behaviour; and professionals needing help with difficult cases. Operates from 9am – 9pm Mon-Thurs and from 9am – 7pm on Friday:		
Stop it Now!	0808 1000 900	Website: www.stopitnow.org.uk
An Argyll and Bute based helpline and website to raise awareness and stop sexual abuse and cyber bullying:		

TESSA youth project	0800 121 4685 (girls) 0800 032 0399 (boys)	Website: www.tessaproject.co.uk
For general information about keeping children safe:		
Children 1st	0131 446 2300 Helpline: 0808 800 2222	e-mail: info@children1st.org.uk
Free and confidential national helpline for parents and carers. Opening hours are Mon, Wed and Fri 9am – 5pm, Tue and Thurs 9am – 9pm:		
ParentLine Scotland	0808 800 2222	
For advice on online and internet safety for young people, teachers, professionals:		
The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre	Website: www.ceop.police.uk	
For advice on online and internet safety for Parents:		
The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre	Website: www.thinkuknow.co.uk	

Data Protection – The Use of Photographs

The Data Protection Act 1998 regulates the use of all personal information including photographs and relates to all individuals whether they are tenants (or children of tenants), staff, private owners or the general public.

We have guidance for all staff based on these regulations and these include consent forms for the use of photographs. It is important to be aware that photos taken in a public space and people who are in them are not covered by the Act. Photographs which are not close enough to identify people are not classed as personal information because no one can be picked out. Photos which include people incidentally are also not covered by the Act. However close ups, portraits, or pictures where people can be easily identified do count as personal information and are therefore subject to the provision of The Act. The member of ACHA staff organising the documentation that will include photographs needs to ensure that specific consent to obtain and use the photographs is obtained before anyone takes photographs. It's really important to consult parents where children are concerned, even if children are keen to be photographed. The same rules regarding identification apply to children.

Note: all of the photographs used in this Strategy with people in them have had consent forms signed or have been obtained from non-copyright images available on the internet.



Partnership Working

HELP Project, Dunoon

The Help Project is a charity based in Dunoon which employs 10 people to work with young people in Cowal and Bute. The primary area of business is to help young people with housing support to sustain their tenancies but also to give advice on employment, health, lifestyle and social and community issues. During 2011 the project assisted 120 young people. Help provide both pre and post tenancy work with young people and have also joined us in an environmental project at one of our sheltered housing complexes. This has had positive results for both the area around the complex and allowing an intergenerational experience. Partnership opportunities continue to be explored for example, a garden competition for Help clients where we have supplied vouchers as prizes.

Youth Outreach Projects with other Housing Associations

Partnerships were developed with both Dunbritton Housing Association and West Highland Housing Association to provide youth outreach work in Helensburgh and Oban.



This has been facilitated through 'Streetlinks' which is part of Community Links Scotland, a registered charity set up to facilitate relationships between community and voluntary groups, agencies and local people. Streetlinks' main aim is to identify and address the needs of young people between the age of 12-25 who are not currently accessing centre-based activities and spend more time on the streets.

Two successful projects to engage with young people were part funded by the Scottish Governments grant stream, wider role, and began in 2009. Both projects have included 'an introduction to youth work' which gave staff from partner housing associations the chance to learn more about the issues affecting young people and our estates.



Pictured left is the Gladiator Inflatable and on the right the MUGA (multi use games area) which were part of the activities on offer at the Fun Day in Soroba, Oban.



Another partnership project engaged Streetlinks more recently with the 'Re-cycle' project in the Helensburgh and Lomond area which has engaged 20 young people plus 3 adult volunteers to help young people learn more about bicycle maintenance and road safety (while having some fun).



ACHA's Gypsy Travellers Strategy 2012 – 2015 contains information about working in partnership specifically within the three sites provided for Gypsy Travellers. Pictured left are young people enjoying the facilities provided by Fyne Families at our Duncholgan Travelling Persons site.

Definition of Youth Work

Youth work is a broad term covering a large scale of activities of a social, cultural or educational nature, but also sports and services for young people. Youth work has an impact on young people's life and helps them to reach their full potential. It contributes to their personal development, but also facilitates social and educational development. It enables them to develop their voice, influence and place in society.

Some examples of youth work activities:

- youth exchange
- leisure/cultural activities (drama club, reading circle, sport activities)
- peer support for young people facing unemployment
- after-school clubs
- attending a youth centre
- long-term membership of a youth organisation

Youth work is based on non-formal learning processes and comprises any form of learning and acquisition of skills and competences in an out-of-school setting. Youth work can provide quality leisure time but also help to deal with unemployment, school failure, and social exclusion. It can also increase skills and support the transition from youth to adulthood.

Youth work is managed by professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders. Youth workers have to be equipped with the necessary knowledge, tools and skills to balance the relevant interests and motivations of young people. They are increasingly confronted with young people with poor career prospects, motivation and marginalisation due to unemployment and other forms of social exclusion.

Argyll and Bute Council Youth Services

Argyll and Bute Council's *Youth Services Team* work with young people aged 11 – 25 with an emphasis on 14-18 year olds. Youth Workers engage with young people in a range of formal and informal settings to identify learning needs and assist them to develop appropriate responses. Youth Work staff are attached to secondary schools and are actively involved in school based work with young people including 'Curriculum for Excellence' and 'Opportunities for All'.

The key outcomes for the service are:

- To develop effective partnership working in schools
- Young people take part in recorded and accredited learning
- Young people are involved in democratic, civic and voluntary activities
- Young people improve their health and well-being
- Young people are supported at difficult/transitional stages in life
- A range of opportunities for young people are available in our communities

Homelink workers located in Campbeltown, Helensburgh and Oban provide a range of family learning services and are also part of the Youth Services Team. For more information contact: Martin Turnbull, Youth Services Manager, Argyll and Bute Council. martin.turnbull@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Argyll and Bute Youth Forum (ABYF)

There is a network of forums across Argyll and Bute which are co-ordinated by a Management Committee which meets annually and has reps from each area. The Argyll and Bute Youth Forum is currently working on the development of 'Youth Banks' which will offer an introduction to grant funding and decision making and a platform for young people in Argyll and Bute to make decisions on funding for other young people.

Members of Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP)

Argyll and Bute Council encourages members of the Youth Forum to also join the Scottish Youth Parliament. Young people from Argyll and Bute join others from across Scotland to meet in Edinburgh to campaign to improve services and provision for young people.

Roanna Clark, roanna.clark@argyll-bute.gov.uk Argyll and Bute Council

Generations Working Together (GWT)

GWT is a national organisation which aims to strengthen mutual understanding and support between young and old. It is encouraging local intergenerational networks to be set up and there are currently twenty of these set up across Scotland with ACHA being a member of the Argyll and Bute network. The GWT also offer courses, guidelines, good practice (seeing what others are doing) and an information-packed website.

www.generationsworkingtogether.org

Funding Opportunities

ACHA aims to take advantage of funding opportunities to enable community projects to be developed. There are many national funding sources aimed specifically at projects for young people, for example:

St Nicholas Care Fund

encourages applications from groups and organisations working with people in need in the following categories:

- Children, young people and older people
- Those disadvantaged by poverty, disability or unemployment
- Those who have suffered or are suffering from mental health problems.

Heritage Lottery Fund's Young Roots Programme

is designed to respond to the changing needs of the heritage and youth sectors. These include:

- An increased UK-wide budget of £4m per year (up from £3m);
- Project grants of up to £50,000 (raised from £25,000);
- A wider age range for those who take part, now from 11-25 year olds
- A longer period for delivery, now up to two years (formerly 18 months).

Since 2002, more than 65,000 young people from across the UK have taken part in 1,250 projects exploring a wide range of topics: from social history and the built and natural environment to archaeology and even the heritage of sport, disability, fashion and culture.

Young Start fund - Big Lottery Fund

A new fund aimed at unlocking the potential of Scotland's children and young people will invest dormant accounts money in projects that encourage young Scots aged 8 to 24 to be confident, healthy, connected (intergeneration) and enterprising. Young Start is forecast to invest £8.9 million by March 2013 and will award grants of between £10,000 and £50,000 for up to two years. The fund is aimed at third sector organisations including voluntary organisations, community groups, social enterprises, **housing associations**, sports organisations, cooperatives and charities.

Inspiring Scotland

Their 14:19 fund aims to significantly reduce the number of young people who have not been able to make a successful transition between school and further education, training or work. The 'Early Years' programme is funding to assist in the first few years of a child's life – this has a significant impact on their ability to grow into happy and healthy adults.

'Go to Play' fund supports the opportunities for children to benefit from free play.

National Youth Organisations

Young Scot is a Scotland wide organisation with a fully interactive and informative website (www.youngscot.org) packed with interesting items for young people including discounts and rewards. The website also has lots of opportunities to give (and hear) opinions through surveys and blogs. The Argyll and Bute branch of Young Scot is located within the Youth Project building in Lochgilphead and can be contacted by email youngscot@argyll-bute.gov.uk or by phone 01546 604752.

The **Prince's Trust** is a youth charity that helps change young lives giving practical and financial support, developing key workplace skills such and increasing confidence and motivation. Prince's Trust works with 14 to 30-year-olds who have struggled at school, have been in care, are long-term unemployed or have been in trouble with the law.

Live UnLtd backs people aged 11 – 21 with awards and support to launch projects that can change their world for the better. Live UnLtd supports young people to run inter-generational projects, start sports, arts, environmental and community projects; projects to address bullying, isolation and much more. www.liveunltd.com

Young people and Community Development

Campbeltown Allotment project

When we built new homes in Campbeltown in 2010 we included an allotment area in the plans. We leased one of the allotments to Dalintober Primary School, had pupils cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony and also ran a design competition with the school for a name plaque for the site.



Dalmally Primary School and Dalmally Playpark

In 2011 Dalmally Primary School filled up their planters with some expert help from one of our grounds maintenance contractors (ISS Facilities Services). The Dalmally play park also got a bit of help from us when we ran a competition to design a new entrance sign. The colourful new acrylic sign was produced and installed by us.



Ardenslate, Dunoon

In 2009 students from Dunoon Grammar school worked in partnership with Argyll and Bute Council and ourselves to see the refurbishment of an area near the school. Pupils were involved in the re-design of the area including new railings and litter bins.



We will continue to involve young people wherever possible in the development of community facilities, housing projects and in all the work that we do.

Consulting with Young People on this Strategy

This strategy has been given to the following groups of young people to allow them to comment and ultimately to improve the services that we provide:

- All ACHA tenants between the age of 16 – 18 years of age
- All applicants for housing between the age of 16 – 19 years of age (HOME Argyll)
- Argyll and Bute Youth Forum Management Committee
- Youth Workers (via Argyll and Bute Council)

Top Tips for Participating with Young People

A lot of people get it wrong, the bottom line is that adolescents are not children and they are not adults. So, techniques that get children talking will not necessarily work. Neither will tactics which get adults talking.

- Make it clear who you are and what you want from them.
- Talk with them, not at them.
- Listen to them then show them you've listened to them by asking questions about the answers they've given to you.

Let's look at the main elements above in more detail.

1. Focus groups work best if people want to be there and want to participate.
2. Sometimes, however, participants may have been nominated by others to attend and may be resistant or unwilling to participate.
3. This way of recruiting people is best avoided. If unavoidable, make sure they attend with their consent and with encouragement from you, both beforehand and again at the start of the discussion.
4. Express your appreciation. Spell out any ways by which the research may prove beneficial and anything specific that may come out of it.
5. It is in any case worth stressing the value of the research at the start of the focus group session. Make people feel they are part of a worthwhile venture and how important it is that they contribute as fully as possible. If you also say that there are 'no right answers' regarding the subjects to be discussed, and people may both agree and disagree, this could remove a possible reason for people later looking bored.
6. Their 'boredom' may actually be silent disagreement with what is being said. If a person appears bored, sighs often, glances repeatedly at their watch, or begins reading material they have brought with them you need to try something else.

If all of this seems obvious, you should pay attention next time to how adults address teenagers. Or if you have teenage children yourself, try to remember how you last spoke to them.