

Building Confidence, Connection and Safer Communities:

A Pilot Project Supporting Violence and Knife Carrying Prevention Through Youth Work

March 2026– May 2026



About the Project

The Youth Work Preventing Violence Project is a targeted national pilot delivered under the No Knives Better Lives banner.

The project will fund and support 10 established grassroots youth work organisations working in geographical “hot spot” areas across Scotland where youth violence and knife carrying are of particular concern.

Through focused youth work delivery, early intervention, and strengthened local partnerships, the project aims to:

- Contribute directly to a reduction in youth-related violence and knife carrying
- Increase access to high-quality youth work in targeted communities
- Engage more young people (aged 11–16) in positive activities
- Support those at risk of disengaging from education
- Strengthen relationships between young people and trusted adults
- Improve collaboration between youth work, schools, police and community safety partners
- Contribute to School Improvement Plans and longer-term violence prevention planning

Why This Matters

While Scotland has made significant progress in reducing violence over the past decade, recent data and local intelligence show ongoing concerns in specific communities.

Key Areas of Focus

- Glasgow – particularly wards experiencing resurgence of youth “young teams”, assaults and knife possession
- Dundee – areas identified through local policing and community safety monitoring
- Edinburgh – specific wards including city-centre and areas of deprivation in North and South localities
- Parts of Aberdeen, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire and Fife

These areas have been highlighted in national recorded crime statistics and local community safety reporting as having notable pockets of youth violence. This project responds proactively — supporting young people before risk escalates.



Local Partner Organisations

- Geographically situated in 'hot spots' in the most up to date data on youth violence and knife carrying.
- Established youth work organisations with a track record of delivery and best practice/value.
- Established partnership links with schools, police and community safety teams.
- Robust youth work delivery approaches in place, reaching the target group of young people i.e. detached youth work, universal youth work services aimed at those aged 11-16yrs, not currently engaging to their full potential within schools and wider community-based services.
- Existing relationships with young people in the community who would benefit most and are deemed 'at risk'.

Youth Work Organisation	Geographical Locality
Castlemilk Youth Complex	Glasgow South; Castlemilk
Hot Chocolate	Dundee; City Centre
YIP World	East Ayrshire; Auchinleck and Cumnock
Jack Kane Community Centre	Edinburgh East; Niddrie
Kirkcaldy YMCA	Kirkcaldy; Valley Gardens/Central
Granton Youth	Edinburgh North; Granton/Royston
Royston Youth Action	Glasgow East; Royston
North Ayrshire Youth Services: LA	North Ayrshire; Ardrossan Saltcoats/Stevenson/Irvine
Aberdeen Council	Aberdeen
Inverclyde Council	Inverclyde





~~No knives~~
Better lives

About Our Approach

✓ **Specialist Training**

Youth workers will receive training in:

- Violence and knife carrying prevention
- Positive masculinity
- Active bystander approaches
- Brief interventions
- Monitoring and evaluation

✓ **Community of Practice**

A national network bringing delivery partners together to:

- Share learning and best practice
- Problem-solve challenges
- Strengthen collaborative approaches

✓ **On-the-Ground Support**

Additional in-person youth work support in each locality to:

- Enhance delivery
- Build practitioner confidence
- Strengthen local partnerships

✓ **Resources & Messaging**

- Distribution of No Knives Better Lives materials
- Shared social marketing guidance
- Collective messaging aligned with the Scottish Violence Prevention Framework

✓ **Sustainability Focus**

The project will support the development of locality leads for No Knives Better Lives — strengthening the link between national strategy and grassroots delivery.

What Will Young People Experience?

Activities will be shaped locally but may include:

- Educational residentials with group work on violence prevention
- Peer education training and youth-led workshops
- Co-designed community action plans
- Extended evening and weekend youth provision
- Detached and outreach youth work
- Tailored support for young people disengaging from school
- Partnership-based interventions feeding into School Improvement Plans

A Collaborative Call to Action

The Youth Work Preventing Violence Project demonstrates how:

- Early intervention works
- Youth work strengthens communities
- Partnerships improve outcomes
- Young people are part of the solution

This pilot provides a practical, evidence-informed model for locally rooted, nationally connected violence prevention.

For Further Information:

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