



Planet Youth – From Policy to Practice

What is Planet Youth?

Planet Youth, the Icelandic Prevention Model, is a primary prevention process designed to have a long-term impact in communities by reducing youth substance use. This whole systems approach is achieved through creating a healthy built environment and viewing society as the 'patient'. This approach has now begun in Scotland and is based on over 20 years of success in Iceland; where communities came together to improve the lives of young people.

Iceland had struggled with teenagers' excessive alcohol use, smoking, and other risky behaviours. Scotland struggles with similar challenges, with young people engaging in significant levels of risky behaviours, and increasing levels of mental health concerns. A similar downward trajectory of these behaviours can be achieved by adapting the model to fit the Scottish context. We must consider the protective and risk factors that affect our communities, in order to build a happier and healthier country.

Policies & Planet Youth

Below are a selected of local and national policies that link with Planet Youth:

The [Highland Children's Service Plan](#) articulates how partners work together to provide services which are organised, equipped to deliver high quality, joined-up, trauma-informed, responsive and preventative support to children and families. The plan includes The Icelandic Prevention Model.



Planet Youth is also included in Outcome 3, Stay Well section of [NHS Highland's Together We Care Strategy](#) annual delivery plan.

[The Promise](#) is a national initiative which states Scotland's Children and Young People will grow up loved, safe and respected.



[The Highland Community Planning Partnership](#) have identified Drugs and Alcohol as one of the themes that must be focussed on, through listening to children, young people and their families.

[Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership](#) (HADP) is accountable priorities and plans to minimise the effect drugs and alcohol have on children, young people and their families. Piloting aspects of Planet Youth is one aspect of the HADP [strategy](#).

[Alcohol Framework 2018: Preventing harm](#) highlights the World Health Organisation's 3 A's prevention approach: Affordability, Availability and Attractiveness. Planet Youth aligns with the Attractiveness aspect well, and the Alcohol Framework overall.

[UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) is an international declaration of children's rights, with a Bill progressing through the Scottish Parliament towards enactment into becoming a law. The UNCRC lays out 54 articles related to the additional rights of children which fall into 4 general principles:

1. Non-discrimination (Article 2)
2. Best interest of the child (Article 3)
3. The right to life, survival and development (Article 6)
4. Right to be heard (Article 12)

The following UNCRC articles most closely align with Planet Youth:

Article 12 "Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously."

Article 24 "Every child has the right to the best possible health."

Article 27 "Every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and social needs and support their development."



[Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\)](#) is the Scottish Government's commitment to provide all children, young people and their families with the right support at the right time. This is so that every child and young person in Scotland can reach their full potential and the community based, prevention based approach of Planet Youth will contribute to this.



Planet Youth can address youth substance use, complement the wider policy landscape, be considerate of health inequalities and community needs, by identifying needs and building trusted relationships and shared decision making, to improve the mental, emotional and physical health of young people.

The Planet Youth programme puts the best interests of the child at the heart of decision making and works towards positive and sustainable improvements to the health of the young people in our communities.

Vicki Clark

Health Improvement Specialist, Public Health Directorate

January 2024