



NatureScot and Youth Engagement

Young people aren't just tomorrow's leaders, they're today's leaders. Find out how NatureScot is working with young people, to connect people with nature.

Access to, and involvement in, nature is important for the wellbeing of everyone in Scotland – for young people it can help develop new skills and confidence, and improve their health, wellbeing and quality of life. Looking after nature and wildlife benefits not just this generation but also future generations. We need to involve young people in the decisions we all take about our environment and about the future of Scotland's nature.

NatureScot, YoungScot and ReRoute

Since 2015 we have been working closely with YoungScot to increase access and participation of young people in nature. Using co-design methods with young people,

we set up [ReRoute](#), Scotland's Youth Biodiversity Panel. Together, with ReRoute and YoungScot, we have identified a number of ways in which we can better ensure young people have access to nature and greenspace and encourage them to engage with the natural world.

The panel, and partnership officer, pulled together a number of recommendations that NatureScot is enacting to improve our services and meet our ambitions:

- [NatureScot Partnership Report 2019-2020](#)
- [NatureScot Partnership Report 2018-2019](#)
- [Reroute Report](#)

Some of our key projects

We are collaborating and engaging with young people in a variety of projects and initiatives including outdoor learning, volunteering on our National Nature Reserves, through grants to key partners to deliver opportunities for young people, and through our own Youth Employment Programme.

- [Learning in Local Greenspace](#) - Aims to support 100 schools across some of the most disadvantaged areas of Scotland, to take lessons in the greatest classroom of all – the great outdoors. It's about linking schools to their local greenspace for outdoor learning.
- **Path Skillz** - A five day programme aimed at inspiring young people to make a difference in their local community while gaining the local knowledge and practical skills to successfully plan, manage and deliver a community path project.
- [Scotland's Junior Rangers](#) - Junior Rangers gives 11-18 year olds the opportunity to look after the countryside and environment. NatureScot supported the production of the [Scotland's Junior Rangers Co-ordinators toolkit](#) developed by Scottish Countryside Ranger Association.
- [FreshSpace](#) - Co-designed with young women, the FreshSpace Project aims to address and highlight some of the barriers preventing young women spending time outdoors and to promote the range of health and wellbeing benefits that our natural environment can provide for young women aged 14-18 in Scotland. Learn more on the [Young Scot website Freshspace Animation Series Page](#).
- [#KnowTheCode](#) - The Scottish Outdoor Access Code is all about your rights and responsibilities when you're making the most of Scotland's great outdoors.

We worked with a range of young people, to highlight some of the key parts of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code most relevant to the young people of Scotland through the #KnowTheCode campaign.

- **[Future Routes Fund](#)** – The fund is for projects run by 11-26-year olds aiming to help young people to improve their local environment, increase their knowledge and understanding of Scottish biodiversity, and to provide more opportunities for them to connect with nature.

NatureScot's young employees

Our [project and practical placements](#), along with a variety of apprenticeships, offer young people early career opportunities into NatureScot or as a development opportunity before environmental employment elsewhere. [In these videos](#), a few of our young NatureScot staff share their experiences and tips on how to get started with a career in the environmental sector.

To help address some of the recommendations that arose from the NatureScot and YoungScot partnership, NatureScot set up the Young Employee Network and Panel. This is an internal employee network that allows younger views to be represented in organisational decision-making.

NatureScot's Youth Engagement Action Plan

As we enter a new decade, we want to go above and beyond ensuring young people have access and opportunities to participate in nature. We are working to provide opportunities and empowering young people to be included in the design and development of NatureScot's future projects, funds, and policies. This year we have launched our Youth Engagement Action Plan which outlines our objectives to empower and equip young people to be involved in nature and environmental decision-making.

NatureScot is one of the founding signatories for the [#PowerOfYouth Charter](#), committed to ensuring all young people are empowered to take action, make a difference, and influence change.

"Young people are one of our key stakeholders in realising a nature-rich future. A stronger youth voice is critical to improve biodiversity loss and deliver the nature-based solutions we need to address climate change. The next generation has always challenged the prevailing consensus. They are both the current and future guardians of our environment."

FRANCESCA OSOWSKA
NATURESCOT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

