

YOUTH LOCAL ACTION GROUPS

2026 EXPLAINER

The purpose of a Youth Local Action Group (YLAG) is to empower rural and island young people to be decision-makers in their own communities.

THE CRITERIA

1. A YLAG is **youth-led**. The youth members decide their group's aims, priorities and activities.
2. A YLAG has the support of their region's **Local Action Group (LAG)**, hence the name, Youth LAG!

THE STRUCTURE

A YLAG is usually managed as **a longterm project** by the LAG. As of May 2026, no YLAG was yet incorporated as its own entity.

The LAG usually commissions **a facilitator** for its YLAG. The LAG might further secure **a pot of funding** for the YLAG to manage on its own, to distribute locally as grants and/or to apply to the group's own projects.

Scottish Government does **not** currently ringfence any funding for YLAGs, and LAGs have full discretion on how much to allocate to their YLAG.

A GROWING NETWORK

There are currently eight YLAGs whose staff meet online regularly to share updates:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 📍 Orkney | 📍 Outer Hebrides |
| 📍 Highland | 📍 Moray |
| 📍 Cairngorms | 📍 Forth Valley and Lomond |
| 📍 Fife | 📍 Borders |



YOUTH LOCAL ACTION GROUPS

2026 EXPLAINER

PLACE-BASED DIFFERENCES

There can be notable differences between how each YLAG operates. These variations reflect local youth voices and needs, and can bring valuable learnings to the wider LAG and YLAG network.

- Each YLAG has unique **priorities**: members' focus might be on funding local groups and projects; connecting with other young people; influencing policy; or many other activities!
- The day-to-day running of a YLAG is supported by a paid **facilitator**, who might be a community development worker, a local youth worker, or even one of the youth members themselves.
- The **pot of funding** which each YLAG manages varies per region and year (in 2025–26, it ranged from £0 to almost £700,000) and can be from different Scottish, UK, or even European sources.
- **Membership** wise, a YLAG's age range is usually between 16 to 30 years old, with some YLAGs leaning on the younger or older side. Groups currently range in size from 4 to 16 active members.



Above: A YLAG stall at the 2025 Royal Highland Show.

Top left: The YLAGs co-designed and co-delivered the 2025 European Rural Youth Parliament with other rural leaders.

Bottom left: The YLAGs gathered for the first Scotland-wide YLAG Network residential in 2025.

YOUTH LOCAL ACTION GROUPS

2026 EXPLAINER

FURTHER INFORMATION

Scottish Rural Communities Policy Review: Case Study of Community Development with Young People including Youth Local Action Groups, a 2026 report by UHI for Scottish Government summarising the performance of the existing YLAGs. [View the Scot Gov report](#)

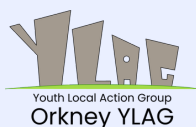
Legacy Report: Scottish Borders Community led Local Development Fund 2024–25, a detailed summary of a LAG's and YLAG's recent activity including data from the Social Value Engine. [View on Scottish Borders Council website](#)

Review of the Outer Hebrides Community Led Local Development YLAG Programme 2023–24, a report of a YLAG's first year including a breakdown of its project strands and planning. [View on Comhairle nan Eilean Siar website](#)

The Possibility of a Moray Youth Local Action Group, a 2025 blog by a young person to (successfully) persuade their local LAG to start a YLAG. [View on Moray LAG website](#)

YLAG Orkney at the European Rural Parliament, a writeup in a YLAG member's own words about their recent experience and takeaways from the 2025 European Rural Youth Parliament. [View on Facebook](#)

Video: National YLAG Network, a collaboration from 2024 by the existing YLAGs to showcase their achievements and ambitions. [View on Youtube](#)



If any questions, please contact Mia Lalanne at Scottish Rural Action: mia@sra.scot