

THE YOUNG STEM LEADER PROGRAMME

Inspiring and developing young people through STEM

Annual Report

Academic year 2025/2026

YOUNGSTEM leader

led by sserc

Introduction and foreword



The Young STEM Leader Programme is uniquely placed to support Scotland's educational priorities. As Scotland's Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC) places greater emphasis on knowledge, skills progression, interdisciplinary learning and learner agency, the Young STEM Leader Programme (YSLP) is already positioned to support these priorities in practice.

The evolving curriculum framework aims to make learning clearer, more relevant and more connected to real-world experiences, while strengthening what learners should know, do and understand. These areas are well served by the Young STEM Leader Programme's approach to learning.



Gayle Thomson
Project Specialist YSLP



Rebecca Hands
Programme Administrator, STEM Engagement

This academic year, 4,679 learners completed the programme to achieve an award and this report celebrates the achievements of the Young STEM Leader Programme (YSLP). The programme is only possible through the dedication of our YSLP Team and our wider community; our Scottish Government supporters and Ocean Winds sponsors; our Tutor Assessors; our partners and of course the innovative approaches to leadership and learning that we see in our Young STEM Leaders day in, day out.

Dr Sharon Macnab
Young STEM Leader Programme Manager

YSLP has been a brilliant way to build engagement in science with pupils across the school, it has significantly improved positive relationships both peer to peer, and peer to teacher.

Introduction and foreword

I am delighted to introduce SSERC's Young STEM Leader Programme Annual Report for 2025/2026. It captures a year of achievement and inspiration, showing what young people can accomplish when given the opportunity to lead.



Across 30 Scottish Local Authorities, 4,679 learners achieved a Young STEM Leader Award. The stories in this report reveal the value of those experiences: learners growing in confidence, putting their ideas into practice and sharing their enthusiasm for STEM with others in their schools and communities.

The continued development of STEM Leader 7 and our new partnership with CREST Awards expand opportunities, helping learners gain recognition for their achievements and explore where their interests might take them next.

As Chief Executive, I am particularly proud of how the programme trusts young people and gives them space to discover their strengths. Their creativity, initiative and willingness to encourage others are qualities that will serve them well throughout life and contribute to Scotland's future.

I hope you enjoy reading this report and share my enthusiasm for all that our Young STEM Leaders have achieved. Their successes give us every reason to look ahead with confidence.

Alastair MacGregor
Chief Executive Officer, SSERC

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Developing Scotland's next generation of STEM Leaders

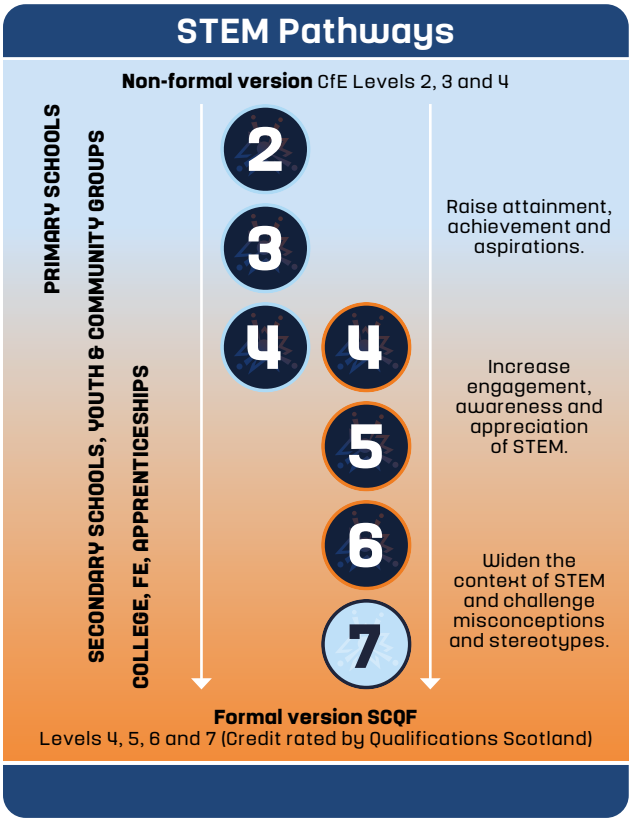
The Young STEM Leader Programme (YSLP) continues to inspire young people across Scotland to explore STEM, develop leadership skills and make a positive impact in their schools and communities.

Thanks to continued support from the Scottish Government, for Levels 2-6, and additional support from Ocean Winds, for Level 7, the programme is free for all young people in Scotland.

As such the programme has been delivered across 30 local education authorities including our largest cities and most remote communities. Indeed, almost a third of centres are based in more rural and remote areas of Scotland.

The free access also ensures that there are no financial barriers to participation and 9% of centres have 70% or more of their learners living in areas within the 20% most deprived SIMD data zone.

Interestingly, the YSLP has a broad appeal to both males and females. Of those who shared this information, 49% were female and 41% male showing that there were no gender barriers to participation.



Level	Specific themes	LOs	SCQF Credit points	Insight points	UCAS points
YSL4(F) SCQF 4	The impact of STEM and its ability to solve problems; Scotland's role in STEM	8	3	3	
YSL5 SCQF 5	Opportunities, pathways and futures in STEM; YSL's own potential in STEM	8	3	5.5	
YSL6 SCQF 6	Challenging stereotypes, misconceptions and outdated views in STEM	8	4	18.7	7
SL7 SCQF7	Generating and leading a project question; Analysing and presenting findings	6	6	51	

Key achievements 2025/2026

The programme continued to provide fully-funded opportunities for learners across Scotland, ensuring equitable access to high-quality STEM leadership experiences.

Estimated **155,850** hours of STEM Leadership activity as a result of YSLP

Total of **5,004** SCQF points earned by Young STEM Leaders

Total of **19,597** Insight points earned by Young STEM Leaders

1,109 hours of professional learning delivered

4,679 YSLP Awards achieved

30 Local Authorities



49% female participants

41% male participants

10% not known/disclosed



947 delivering centres

9% of centres have 70% or more pupils in top 20% SIMD

30% centres from most rural and remote areas (URL 3-6)

Developing Scotland's next generation of STEM Leaders

Building Young STEM Leaders

The Young STEM Leader Programme is about more than science, technology, engineering and maths. There is increasing emphasis on helping learners build deep knowledge, apply skills in meaningful contexts and develop the confidence to shape their own learning. The Young STEM Leader Programme already delivers this in practice by placing young people at the centre of STEM learning and leadership.

Participation

Thirty Local Authorities across Scotland participated in the Young STEM Leader Programme with 4,679 awards achieved across the seven levels.



Awards issued during academic year 2025/2026

Award Level	Total Awards
2 YSL2	2,611
3 YSL3	330
4 YSL4 (NF)	540
4 YSL4 (F)	339
5 YSL5	290
6 YSL6	434
7 SL7	135

4,679 Awards issued

See appendix 1 for list of Certification Centres for 2025/2026 by Local Authority.

> *The YSLP adds value to young people's curriculum. It enhances their communication and leadership skills. And helps develop skills vital for a career in STEM.*

Developing Scotland's next generation of STEM Leaders

Training for educators

The YSLP is delivered across seven levels and supported by trained Tutor Assessors (TAs). TAs are any educators in Scotland (PVG checked) who regularly engage with young people and who have undertaken a 2-hour training course, delivered by the YSLP Team.

Once complete, TAs have access to the Support Notes and Resources required to deliver the award. TAs work with learners to choose a YSLP Level that best suits their needs and supports them to gather evidence for the Award. They also work with other trained TAs who can Internally Verify (IV) their award quality standards. Professional judgement, sharing of assessment decisions through IV and a selection of External Verifications by the YSLP Team underpin the quality assurance of the YSLP Award.





The benefits?

- Boosts confidence and enthusiasm for STEM
- Sets learning in context
- It's FREE - fully funded by the Scottish Government
- SCQF Credit, Insight and UCAS (YSL6 only) points at Formal Levels
- Evidence gathered through logs can be used:
  - For assessment
  - To support Development Plans around STEM
  - To contribute towards Education Scotland's STEM Nation Award
- Flexible training time and ongoing support
- Building skills for learning, life and work
- No timeframe to complete
- Award underpinned by professional judgement and direction
- Multiple levels from Level 2 (CfE Second Level) to SCQF Level 7



Developing Scotland's next generation of STEM Leaders

During the 2025/2026 academic year over 1,100 professional learning hours were delivered to educators with 871 new Tutor Assessors joining the YSLP. 78 External Verifications were carried out (68% of centres).

1,100
sessions delivered to
871
delegates from schools and community groups across Scotland

The YSLP and ARTAV teams have continued to offer Information and Training sessions to Local Authorities, clusters, schools and other organisations. This training is always delivered through live interactive sessions either online or face-to-face. Training is tailored for small or large groups, e.g. school departments. The training needs of centres and the Tutor Assessors are always met.



This year Tutor Assessor training was embedded into the teacher training provision at the University of Strathclyde.

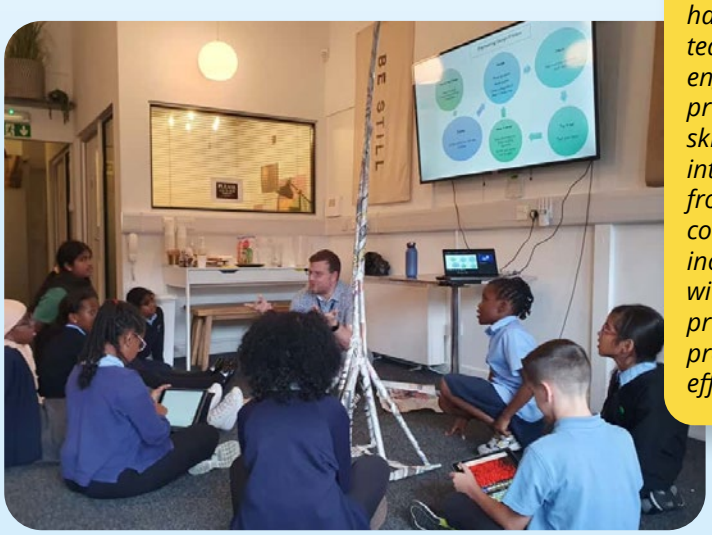
> *It gave the children structure to work within, completing the log books helped them see themselves grow as Young STEM Leaders, they grew in self-confidence delivering a science experience to younger learners and showed leadership during our whole-school STEM fair. As a teacher I have observed a huge increase in their awareness of the importance of STEM and its relevance to them, as we have worked through the programme.*

Case Study - Initial Teacher Training

Embedding Young STEM Leader Programme Tutor Assessor training in Initial Teacher Education

Raising participation in STEM and, in turn, increasing the number of young people entering STEM-related fields and/or employment has been a long-term goal of all involved in Scottish education. The Young STEM Leader Programme (YSLP) has been immensely beneficial in trying to achieve these lofty goals. Taking advantage of my role as an Associate Regional Trainer and Verifier (ARTAV) for YSLP, we at the University of Strathclyde undertook a programme to embed Tutor Assessor training in the course programme for all initial teacher education students from session 2025/2026 onwards. This includes all PGDE primary and secondary students, as well as those studying undergraduate "with teaching" degrees. We also offered training to all BA Primary Education students in years three and four. Overall, this resulted in 600 new Tutor Assessors being trained and ready to launch YSLP in their centres upon completing their studies.

Our main rationale for this programme was to allow students to gain experience of a nationally recognised programme early in their careers. It allowed everyone the opportunity to get involved in the programme while on placement, an opportunity a number of them took. One particularly eager PGDE primary student ran YSL2 with two different classes during a six-week placement and will aim to finish it off before the end of the year. Three PGDE chemistry students also took part in the programme in a community setting, organised by the University of Strathclyde, working with primary pupils in P5, 6 and 7 on YSL2. They all commented that they found the experience beneficial and aim to continue their own YSLP journey during their NQT year and beyond.



Debbie McLeod, PGDE course leader:

"The Young STEM Leader training programme is a valuable addition to the PGDE programme and has been highly successful in enhancing student teachers' confidence and capability in delivering engaging STEM learning experiences. Through the programme, students developed key leadership skills and improved their ability to design interactive, pupil led STEM activities. Feedback from student teachers highlighted increased confidence and encouragement in creating a more inclusive approach to STEM education, supporting wider participation among learners. Overall, the programme's success demonstrates its value in preparing future teachers to inspire and lead effective STEM learning in schools."

>>

Jackie Marshall, BA(Hons) Primary Education course lead:

"I was delighted to hear from a student and their school placement on how they had been using their YSLP training during their placement. This training has definitely helped students to develop self-efficacy within science which schools are recognising."

Building on the success of this pilot programme, it has been agreed that Tutor Assessor training will now be added to the timetable for all ITE programmes at the University of Strathclyde going forward. BA Primary students will be offered training as part of a dedicated STEM module, which they complete as part of their year three studies.

This approach will ensure that all probationers graduating from the University of Strathclyde will be able to bring this National Programme and the opportunities for learners to schools across Scotland.

John Cochrane
Teaching Fellow, University of Strathclyde and Associate Regional Trainer and Verifier (ARTAV), SSERC - YSLP.

AUTHOR PROFILE

John Cochrane is a teaching fellow with the Strathclyde Institute of Education, University of Strathclyde, with responsibility for the PGDE Chemistry cohort. Prior to taking up this post, he was a chemistry teacher for 18 years with North Lanarkshire Council and a previous PSDO within the RAiSE programme. A current ARTAV within the Young STEM Leader Programme, providing support for training development and quality assurance.

Developing Scotland's next generation of STEM Leaders

Young STEM Leader Team

The Scottish Government-funded Young STEM Leader Programme (YSLP) is led by SSERC and delivered by a core team comprising a Programme Manager, Project Specialist, part-time Project Administrator and supported by an expert group of Associate Regional Trainers and Verifiers (ARTAVs).

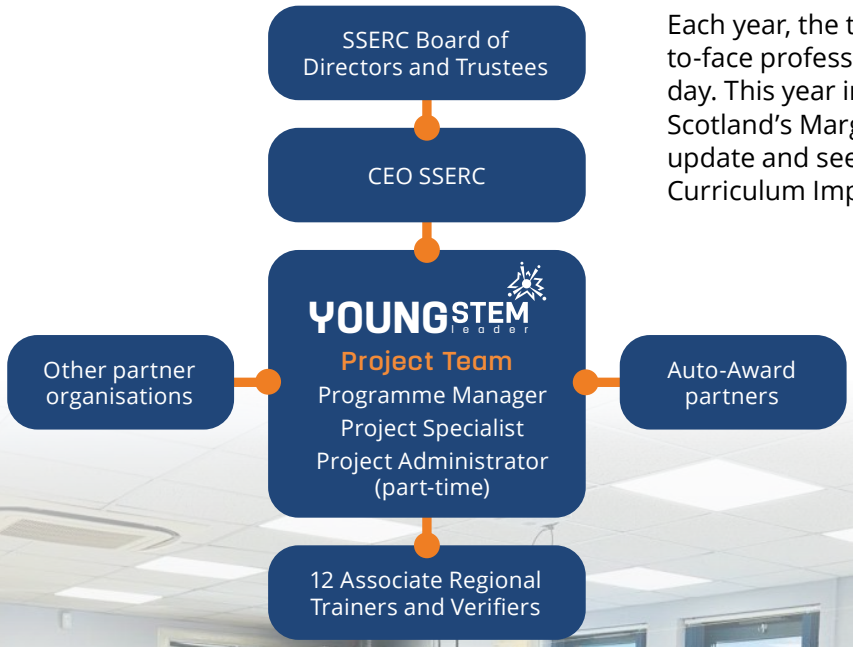
The core team work collaboratively with Auto-Award providers and other partners to coordinate programme delivery nationally, including training, quality assurance, award development, and verification activities.

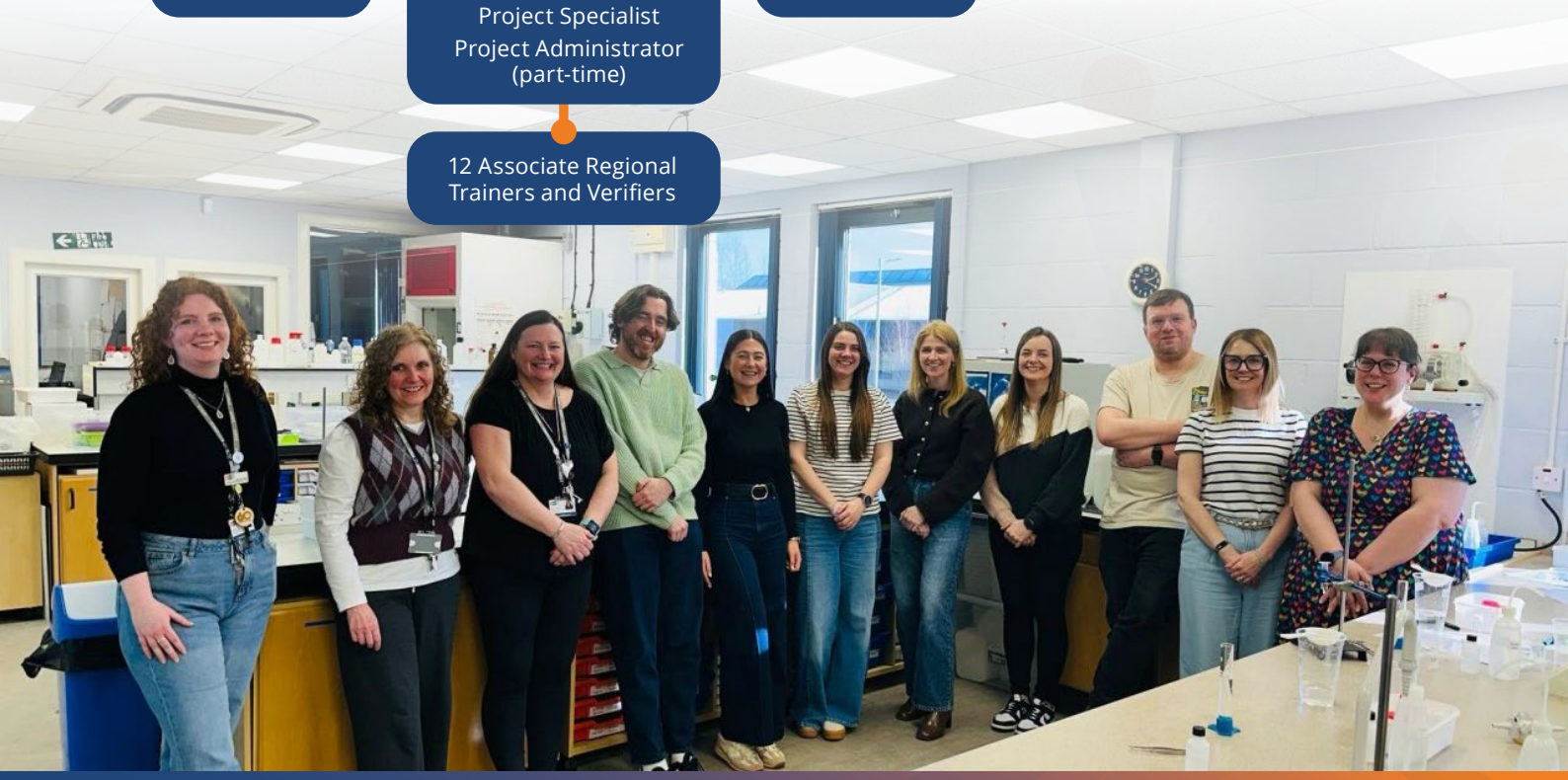


Associate Regional Trainers and Verifiers (ARTAVs)

The 12 ARTAVs are experienced STEM educators from a range of sectors, including primary, secondary, higher education, and ASN settings. They play a key role in supporting the programme by delivering Tutor Assessor training, undertaking external verification, providing ongoing support to Tutor Assessors, and contributing to the development of programme resources and materials.

Each year, the team comes together for a face-to-face professional learning and team building day. This year included input from Education Scotland's Margaret Craw. This was invaluable to update and seek input from the YSLP Team on the Curriculum Improvement Cycle.





STEM Leadership in action

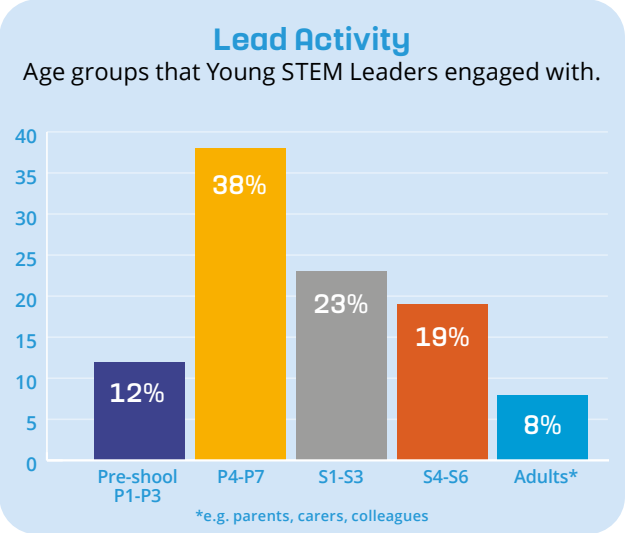
The Young STEM Leader Programme places young people at the centre of their own learning, empowering them to shape and lead STEM activities that reflect their interests, skills and local contexts. By giving learners the autonomy to determine what they deliver and who they engage, the programme fosters authentic leadership experiences and supports a diverse and vibrant range of STEM activities in schools, communities and other organisations.

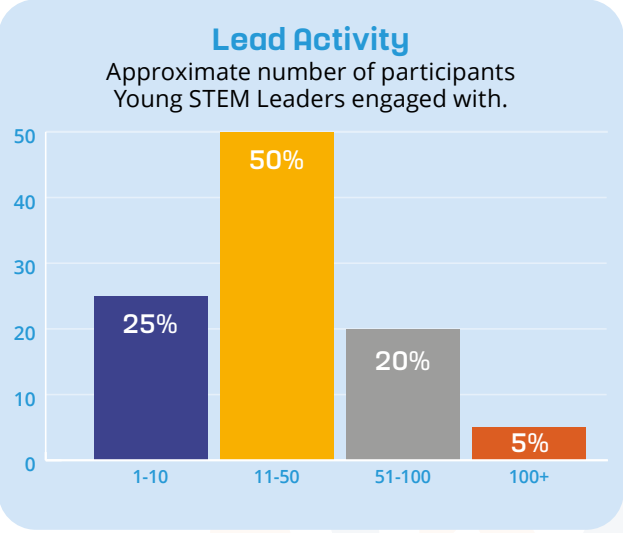
For example, across Scotland, young people have:

- Led STEM learning with younger learners, families, adults, communities and their peers.
- Organised community STEM events.
- Worked with STEM Ambassadors, industry and university partners.
- Investigated sustainability challenges.
- Explored future STEM careers.
- Challenged stereotypes and misconceptions about who participates in STEM.

Through these experiences, learners are not simply consuming knowledge. They are **applying it, sharing** it and creating **meaningful learning** opportunities for others. Feedback shows that Young STEM Leaders are engaging with wide age groups across the education sector and often interacting with large groups.

Young STEM Leaders reach





> *The programme allowed pupils to engage in leadership roles and this really helped them to become more positive, identify their own meta-skills and realise that they are capable of leading young people through STEM activities. A number of the pupils were quite shy at the start but managed to build their confidence presenting.*

STEM Leader 7

Part of the Young STEM Leader Programme family of awards and fully funded by Ocean Winds, STEM Leader 7 (SL7) is a free, SCQF Level 7 qualification, credit rated by Qualifications Scotland. It is available to anyone in Scotland aged 16+ who is supported by a trained Tutor Assessor.

Tutor Assessor training click here

At the heart of STEM Leader 7 is learner choice. By giving learners the freedom to explore issues they care about, the programme nurtures confident, independent learners who can think critically, lead effectively and make a positive contribution to the world around them. SL7 develops the skills and experience needed for further study, employment and active citizenship.

More STEM Leader 7 information here.

This year saw continued growth of STEM Leader 7 (SL7), enabling learners to investigate real-world STEM challenges and undertake independent research projects linked to sustainability, innovation and industry. During 2025/2026, 135 learners completed the qualification, undertaking projects such as:

SL7 example research questions

- How can green hydrogen production be used to achieve sustainable hydrogen production in the future?
- Why is GMO not used more in research & therapy?
- How does poverty affect the quality of STEM education in primary schools?
- Why are the NHS neuro-developmental assessment waiting lists so long and what could be done to shorten them?
- How can we improve energy storage infrastructure to maximise renewable energy usage?
- Why do so many IVF embryos not develop fully despite successful implantation?
- How can I increase public awareness on the benefits of stem cell research?
- How can AI improve the standard of healthcare in the UK?
- How can skills gained in computing be better linked to careers in the real world?
- How can we reduce the number of injuries in people who play football?
- What are the key legal and ethical challenges involved in the use of biometric data in healthcare, and how can these challenges be addressed to protect patient privacy?
- How to reduce inequalities in engineering and why it's an issue?
- How are schools being built to be more sustainable for the future?
- How can my school become more sustainable and help tackle climate change?
- How can CAD optimise the use of the development of small wind turbines to create efficient energy compared to other forms of energy?

Pilot SL7 and SSERC Research Placements and Experiences

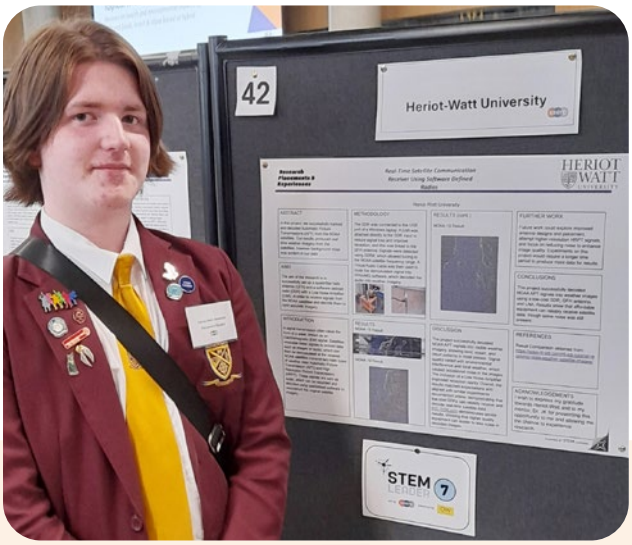
Research Placements and Experiences, co-ordinated by SSERC, provide young people in S5 with an invaluable opportunity to undertake a challenging two-week summer project. Placed within a host organisation and supported by a STEM Ambassador mentor this experience develops young people's confidence, enhances their skills and deepens their engagement with STEM-related subjects.

Young people work within organisations on a research question and then present their findings through the creation of a scientific poster which they present at a celebration event held at the University of Glasgow.

Research Placements & Experiences

Formerly Nuffield Research Placements

This approach directly aligns with learning outcomes of the STEM Leader 7 Award and so together with some additional evidence, Research Placement students were offered the opportunity to complete a SL7 Award in addition to their placement. 27 young people gained an SL7 Award through this route, carrying SCQF credit points, credit rated by Qualifications Scotland.



I really enjoyed my research placement. It was an amazing experience to work in a professional laboratory setting. It has been a wonderful learning opportunity and has helped me develop both my practical skills and my confidence.

Case Study - Supporting Nursery Practitioners

STEM Leader 7
Supporting Nursery Practitioners

Last year the YSLP Team worked with South Lanarkshire Council and Education Scotland to pilot a programme that encouraged Nursery Workers to complete the SCQF Level 6 YSLP award. Evaluation strongly showed that due to YSL6 participation confidence, leadership skills and pedagogy grew in practitioners whilst their early years learners showed greater curiosity, problem solving and independence and enjoyment of STEM. However, the programme could not continue without additional funding.

The same early years practitioners extended their learning this academic year by undertaking the STEM Leader Level 7 qualification. This approach has further developed their leadership and STEM skills. The reflections below summarise the experience of the STEM Leaders, their Tutor Assessors and the authority leads as a whole.



My project title:
Paper recycling and sustainability in an Early Years setting

As part of my Young STEM Leader Level 7 project, I explored how effective paper recycling bags were at measuring paper waste in a nursery before and after raising awareness over two weeks. I used practical activities, video clips, sticker charts, recycling badges and certificates to make recycling fun and engaging, with support from our school sustainability group.

I found that the amount of paper recycled increased after the awareness activities were introduced. The project showed how making sustainability fun and age appropriate can help children develop important life skills and understand how they can care for their environment from an early age.

Completing Young STEM Leader Level 7 helped me develop my leadership, planning, organisation, communication, and STEM skills, while giving me greater confidence to bring STEM into early years learning. It inspired me to continue developing my STEM practice and further my learning, leading me to extend my project and achieve a Gold CREST Award.

Amanda Steven - SL7 candidate



My project title: To what extent does junk modelling improve creativity in children

My aim was to find out how children used their problem-solving skills, creative thinking and imagination when using the junk modelling resources in the nursery setting.

I observed children before, during and after each junk modelling session and I found that children could be seen working collaboratively by helping one another to make things. They were sharing their ideas with one another of what they were going to make when choosing their own items from our junk modelling supplies. My biggest observation was the use of masking tape and how much children love to use it when making their masterpieces. I also found that there wasn't much literature about junk modelling for 3-5 year-olds when researching for my project. This has encouraged me to write my own book which I am currently illustrating for.

Overall, I found that junk modelling within the playroom is greatly beneficial to children's creativity. All-important skills could be seen such as turn taking, sharing, social skills as they would share their ideas with one another, using their imagination whilst being creative and most importantly having lots of fun.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working on my project and can see many benefits that STEM Leader 7 can bring to the nursery setting such as helping young children develop early skills and positive attitudes towards Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) through play and everyday experiences. It creates a nursery environment where children are encouraged to be curious, investigate, experiment, solve problems and develop a love of learning from an early age.

Samantha Whitelaw - SL7 candidate

My project title: How we can reduce paper wastage

I really enjoyed taking part in the STEM SL7 course. I found the course engaging and informative. The course has helped me to incorporate more data analysis and has also given me more/new ways to display information to make it more engaging and interactive.

Also, with the research question: "How can we reduce paper wastage?"

I feel this helped me to identify the amount of paper being wasted within our setting which was something I wasn't aware of. Therefore, this allowed me to reflect on our current practice and as a staff team have put measures in place to reduce this.

Overall, I feel more confident using STEM to identify real life problems and work together to find solutions.

Chloe Carmichael - SL7 candidate



Claire Reilly – Tutor Assessor, Head of Establishment

"The Level 7 STEM Leadership Programme provided Chloe with an excellent opportunity to strengthen her leadership capacity and refine her data analysis skills while leading a meaningful sustainability initiative within our establishment. By engaging children and guiding her peers through targeted STEM experiences focused on paper waste reduction, Chloe gathered and analysed key baseline and post-project data. This evidence clearly demonstrated the positive environmental impact of her project, providing valuable momentum to our ongoing Eco-Schools journey and wider sustainability goals."

Mairead Maxwell – ELC Locality Manager

"The completion of the STEM Leader Programme has had a significant impact on practice, increasing practitioner confidence, knowledge, and leadership in delivering high-quality STEM experiences. Practitioners have developed a deeper understanding of how STEM learning can be embedded through play, inquiry and real-life problem-solving, fostering children's curiosity, creativity and critical thinking skills. This enhanced capacity has strengthened our learning environments, promoted greater collaboration among practitioners, and ensured more intentional planning of STEM opportunities that support children's early development and lifelong learning skills. As STEM leaders, staff are now well placed to champion innovative practice, mentor colleagues, and drive continuous improvement across our settings. Practitioners were very well supported by their Tutor Assessors and also by SSERC."

Celebrating #YoungSTEMLeaderWeek

SSERC's Time Capsule

As a precursor to Young STEM Leader Week and with SSERC celebrating its 60th Anniversary, there was an opportunity to not only reflect on SSERC's 60 years of successes, but also to look forward. The STEM Engagement Team worked together to celebrate a 60-year legacy and asked Young STEM Leaders and STEM Ambassadors to contribute their ideas on how they imagined 60 years into the future.





Five key themes were selected, and entrants were encouraged to think about Space, Power, Health, Gadgets and Planet Earth. A range of submission types were accepted and visible on our digital gallery such as drawings, collages and articles. All were then carefully packed into a time capsule and will be stored at SSERC until 2085, when future generations will be able to revisit the entries and can see how close our thoughts came to reality.



60 YEARS
ANNIVERSARY

Imagining 2085

Building on SSERC's 60th Anniversary Theme and called 'Imagining 2085' #YoungSTEMLeaderWeek took place from 27th-31st October 2025.

Advances in STEM will continue to shape the way we live, learn, work and care about our planet and so #YoungSTEMLeaderWeek encouraged young people to think 60 years into the future, to 2085. Young STEM Leaders were encouraged to ask big questions and share hopes for the world we would want to see around 5 key themes.

Young STEM Leaders were supported in their thinking by STEM Ambassadors. Experts in each of the five themes shared their thoughts and ideas on the topics to help stimulate ideas and discussion. Resources were available each day of Young STEM Leader Week to stimulate engagement and discussion in centres around the country.



Throughout the week Young STEM Leaders and Tutor Assessors were encouraged to engage via social media using #YoungSTEMLeaderWeek. During the week over 5,800 people engaged with the content on the website and there were more than 10,000 impressions on our X posts. The content and resources remained live until the end of 2025 acting as an additional resource for the YSLP community.









Expanding opportunities

The YSLP believes in supporting and building the STEM Learning Community in Scotland. The programme partners with many other organisations and Award programmes to ensure that young people engaged in excellent STEM Learning and leadership can gain support and additional recognition.

Auto-Award Partnerships

- North Lanarkshire Council Leadership Academy (STEM) at National 5 carries an Auto-Award for YSL5.
- North Lanarkshire Council Leadership Academy (STEM) at Higher carries an Auto-Award for YSL6.

East Lothian Council Foundation Apprenticeship in Scientific Technologies carries an Auto-Award for YSL6.

- FunSTEM Programme carries an Auto-Award for YSL2.
- Industrial Cadets Bronze Project carries an Auto-Award for YSL4 (Non-Formal).
- Insight Into Apprenticeships Programme carries an Auto-Award for YSL5.
- Industrial Cadets Gold Project carries an Auto-Award for YSL6.

- #DigiInventors Challenge (Primary) carries an Auto-Award at YSL2.
- #DigiInventors Challenge (Secondary) carries an Auto-Award at YSL4(NF).
- #DigiInventors Challenge (Secondary Bootcamp) carries an Auto-Award at YSL4(F).

Schools Air Race Challenge carries Auto-Awards for YSL2 and YSL3.

Aberdeenshire Council Foundation Apprenticeship in Scientific Technologies, carries an Auto-Award for YSL6.

TechFest STEM in the Pipeline carries an Auto-Award at YSL6.

Saturday school carries an Auto-Award at YSL3.

The Climate Smarter and Carbon Capture and Storage projects both carry Auto-Awards for YSL2.

- Primary Class carries an Auto-Award for YSL2.
- Entry Class carries an Auto-Award for YSL3.
- Development Class carries Auto-Awards for YSL4, YSL5 and YSL6.
- Professional Class carries Auto-Awards for YSL5.

The partnership between Stemovators and the Young STEM Leader Programme helps ensure that young people's STEM achievements are recognised and celebrated. By embedding leadership, teamwork and learner-led activity across our projects, we are creating meaningful opportunities for young people to gain accreditation and build confidence in their skills. We are delighted that our projects have contributed to over 1,000 Young STEM Leader Awards.

Thomas Wild – Head of Stemovators, Prosper

Other partnerships

Ocean Winds

Thanks to ongoing support from Ocean Winds, the STEM Leader 7 Award is available free of charge to anyone aged 16+ in Scotland.

This includes training of TAs, access to resources, operational management and SCQF accreditation, Credit Rated by Qualifications Scotland.

The Institute of Physics (IoP)

IoP Scotland generously support young people engaged in the YSLP, to apply for a £100 grant to support an activity event or interaction that is delivered with a physics theme.

This year £900 in grants were awarded to Young STEM Leaders in Primary, Secondary and CLD settings to support delivery of their leadership activities.

Education Scotland and the STEM Nation Award

Completing the YSLP programme is a great way to contribute to the STEM Nation Award for your centre. We work closely with Education Scotland and their STEM Nation Award Programme (SNAP) which exists 'to celebrate, promote and build on effective practice in STEM education'. Any centre involved in delivering the YSLP will already be well down the road of fulfilling these aims and working towards their SNAP.

Awards Network Scotland

The Young STEM Leader Programme is an active member of the Awards Network which works to raise awareness of the range and impact of youth work awards that accredit learning and achievements of young people. YSLP contributes to the Award Network's purpose to recognise the amazing things that young people learn, do and achieve in Scotland.

Dynamic Earth

The Young STEM Leader Team worked with the creative Learning and Development Team at Dynamic Earth and together produced some extra badges that Young STEM Leaders can engage with to learn more about the science and careers rooted in the Oceans.

The 'Dynamic Earth' digital badges can be chosen by learners for interest, or to achieve their Discover badge. This badge is delivered through three online chapters and supported by Dynamic Earth staff and a range of experts working in various fields. This year over 90 Young STEM Leaders achieved their Dynamic Earth badge, fully completing the chapters.

Partner with us and support the delivery of the Young STEM Leader Programme

As you'll see from this report there are many different ways to partner with YSLP to help engage learners with this inspirational Award in STEM Leadership. YSLP is all about building valuable attributes for life, learning and future pathways and we always welcome new ideas and partnerships.

PARTNER UP

Contact the team at youngstemleader@sserc.scot

New partnership with CREST Awards

This year SSERC and the YSLP partnered with the CREST Awards programme – marking a major step forward in celebrating and championing young people in STEM across Scotland.

For the 2025/2026 academic year (1st August 2025 –31st July 2026), every young person who earned a Young STEM Leader Award at Levels 3 to 7 (YSL3-SL7) was eligible to automatically claim a free CREST Award. By simply uploading their YSLP certificate, learners unlocked CREST Awards ranging from Discovery to Silver. For those ready to go further, there was the opportunity to progress to Gold.

CREST Award levels are aligned with the following YSLP levels

YSLP Level	CREST Level
YSL3	Discovery CREST Award
YSL4 (NF) and YSL4(F)	Bronze CREST Award
YSL5	Silver CREST Award
YSL6	Silver CREST Award
SL7	Silver or Gold CREST Award



Pupils gain lots of experience of presenting, delivering lessons and organising events throughout their time in S5 and S6. This is the 6th year of running the programme and is well embedded in our curriculum with events now expected across the year from our cluster primaries and younger pupils.

Young STEM Leader Programme Internationally

The Young STEM Leader Programme (YSLP) is firmly established across Scotland, with participation also extending into England. During the 2025/2026 reporting year, SSERC continued to explore opportunities to build on this success and develop the programme's international reach.

Engagement with international English-speaking schools in Colombia and China has created opportunities to introduce YSLP to learners beyond the UK. These developments represent an important step in establishing the programme internationally and demonstrate the potential for the YSLP model to support STEM leadership, skills development and learner engagement across different educational contexts.



> *Students have the chance to engage with pupils and external partners in a positive way. Developing confidence and communication skills, and acting as role models.*

Supporting the Curriculum Improvement Cycle

The Curriculum Improvement Cycle is reinforcing the importance of helping learners understand what they **know**, what they **can do** and how they apply that learning in real-world contexts, highlighting what they **understand (KDU)**. The Young STEM Leader Programme aligns naturally with this KDU approach.

YSLP supports learners to:
- Connect knowledge across curriculum areas
- Apply learning through authentic challenges
- Develop leadership skills
- Explore sustainability and global issues
- Build aspirations for future learning and careers

As Scotland's curriculum evolves, YSLP provides an established model that translates curriculum ambitions into meaningful learner experiences.

By combining STEM learning, leadership and personal achievement, YSLP helps young people develop the curiosity, knowledge and transferable skills needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

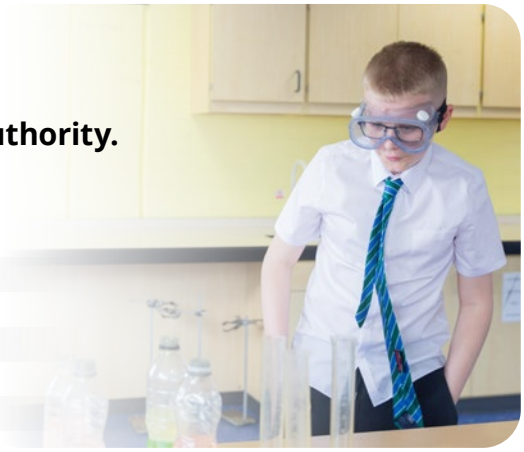
As Scotland's curriculum evolves, and the careers of now and tomorrow shift, the need for confident learners who can lead, collaborate, innovate and solve problems has never been greater. The Young STEM Leader Programme provides that opportunity today.



The Young STEM Leader Programme has increased pupil confidence, leadership, communication, and teamwork skills while promoting engagement with STEM subjects. It has also provided opportunities for learners to lead activities, inspire peers, and develop valuable skills for future learning and careers.

Certification Centres 2025/2026

List of certificates achieved per Local Education Authority.



Aberdeen City

- Aberdeen Grammar School
- Braehead School
- International School Aberdeen
- Lochside Academy
- Robert Gordon's College
- St Machar Academy
- St Margaret's School for Girls
- St Peter's RC School
- Stoneywood School

Aberdeenshire

- Alford Academy
- Banchory Academy
- Banff Academy
- Bracoden School
- Fishermoss School
- Hill of Banchory School
- Inverurie Academy
- Kemnay Academy
- Kintore School
- Mackie Academy
- Mearns Academy
- Meiklemill School
- Meldrum Academy
- Peterhead Academy
- Portlethen Academy
- Rayne North School
- Tough School
- Turriff Academy

Angus

- Arbroath Academy
- Arbroath High School
- Birkhill Primary School
- Brechin High School
- Ferryden Primary School
- Forfar Academy
- Grange Primary School
- Lathallan School
- Maisondieu Primary School
- Montrose Academy
- St Margaret's RC Primary School

Argyll and Bute

- Barcaldine Primary School
- Cardross Primary School
- Colgrain Primary School
- Dunoon Grammar School
- Hermitage Academy
- Kilninver Primary School
- Kirn Primary School
- Lochnell Primary School
- Rothesay Academy
- Tarbert Academy

City of Edinburgh

- Balerno Community High School
- Boroughmuir High School
- Broughton High School
- Currie Community High School
- Erskine Stewart Melville School
- George Watson's College
- James Gillespie's High School
- Leith Academy
- Merchiston Castle School
- St Thomas Of Aquin's High School
- The Edinburgh Academy
- The Royal High School
- Trinity Academy
- Trinity Primary School

Dumfries & Galloway

- Belmont School
- Douglas Ewart High School
- Dumfries High School
- Garlieston School
- St Joseph's College
- Stranraer Academy

Dundee City

- Fintry Primary School
- Glebelands Primary School
- Sidlaw View Primary School

East Dunbartonshire

- Baldernock Primary School
- Bearsden Academy
- Bearsden Primary School
- Boclair Academy
- Douglas Academy
- Lenzie Academy

East Lothian

- Dunbar Grammar School
- Knox Academy
- Musselburgh Grammar School
- North Berwick High School
- Preston Lodge High School
- Ross High School

Appendix

East Renfrewshire

- Belmont House School
- Carolside Primary School
- Mearns Castle High School
- St Joseph's Primary School (East Renfrewshire)
- St Luke's High School
- St Ninian's High School
- Williamwood High School
- Woodfarm High School

Falkirk

- Beancross Primary School
- Bo'ness Academy
- Larbert High School



Fife

- Auchmuty High School
- Balwearie High School
- Canmore Primary School
- Commercial Primary School
- Cowdenbeath Primary School
- Dalgety Bay Primary School
- Denbeath Primary School
- Duloch Schools and Community Campus
- Dunbog Primary School
- Dunfermline High School
- East Wemyss Primary School
- Glenrothes High School
- Kelty Primary School
- Leslie Primary School
- Lochgelly High School
- Madras College
- Methil Community Education Centre
- Saline Primary School
- Sandy Brae Community Centre
- South Parks Primary School
- St Joseph's R C Primary School
- St Margaret's R C Primary School
- Strathallan Primary School
- Woodmill High School

Glasgow City

- Bannerman High School
- Bellahouston Academy
- Castlemilk High School
- Eastbank Academy
- Glasgow Life
- Govan High School
- Holyrood Secondary School
- Hyndland Secondary School
- King's Park Secondary School
- Lourdes Secondary School
- Medhavi Learning Hub
- Notre Dame High School
- Rosshall Academy
- St Andrew's Secondary School
- St Catherine's Primary School
- St Mungo's Academy
- St Paul's High School
- St Thomas Aquinas Secondary School
- The Education Academy Scotland Ltd (TEAS)
- University of Strathclyde

Highland

- 1st Culloden Brownies
- Abernethy Primary School
- Alness Academy
- Avoch Primary School
- Bun-sgoil Ghaidhlig Inbhir Nis
- Charleston Academy
- Culloden Academy
- Dingwall Academy
- Dingwall Primary School
- Dornoch Academy
- Farr High School
- Farr Primary School
- Fortrose Academy
- Glen Urquhart High School
- Golspie High School
- Grantown Grammar School
- Invergordon Academy
- Inverness High School
- Inverness Royal Academy
- Kingussie High School
- Kyleakin Primary School
- Lochaber High School
- Millburn Academy
- Milton of Leys Primary School
- Muirtown Primary School
- Nairn Academy
- Ness Castle Primary School
- Tain Royal Academy
- Wick High School

Appendix

Inverclyde
- Clydeview Academy

Midlothian
- Rosewell Primary School

Moray
- Buckie High School
- Elgin Academy
- Elgin High School
- Forres Academy
- Keith Grammar School
- Lossiemouth High School
- Milne's High School

Na h-Eileanan an Iar
- Castlebay Community School

North Ayrshire
- St John Ogilvie Primary School

North Lanarkshire
- Bellshill Academy
- Braidhurst High School
- Buchanan High School
- Clyde Valley High School
- Coatbridge High School
- Dalziel High School
- Eastfield Primary School
- Greenfaulds High School
- Kilsyth Academy
- New Monkland Primary School
- Our Lady's High School (Cumbernauld)
- Riverbank Primary School
- St Aidan's High School
- St Ambrose High School
- St Andrew's High School (Coatbridge)
- St Helen's Primary School
- St Maurice's High School
- St Patrick's Primary School (New Stevenston)
- Taylor High School

Orkney Islands
- Glaitness Primary School

Perth and Kinross
- Abernyte Primary School
- Kinross High School
- St John's RC Academy
- Viewlands Primary School

Renfrewshire
- Fordbank Primary School
- Gryffe High School
- Kirklandneuk Primary School
- Langbank Primary School
- Linwood High School
- Park Mains High School
- Renfrew High School
- St Anthony's Primary School
- St Benedict's High School
- St Fillan's Primary School
- St Margaret's Primary School
- Todholm Primary School

Scottish Borders
- Eyemouth High School
- Jedburgh Grammar School
- Trinity Primary School

Shetland Islands
- Anderson High School
- Mid Yell Junior High School

South Ayrshire
- Ballantrae Primary School
- Colmonell Primary School
- Girvan Academy
- Kirkmichael Primary School
- Marr College
- Newton Primary School
- Wellington School

South Lanarkshire
- Biggar High School
- Calderglen High School
- Calderside Academy
- Carluke High School
- Duncanrig Secondary School
- Glenlee Primary School
- High Blantyre Primary School
- Lanark Grammar School
- Larkhall Academy
- Law Primary School
- Lesmahagow High School
- Mossneuk Primary School
- Avondale Early Learning Centre
- Halfmerke Community Nursery
- South Lanarkshire Council Early Learning Centre
- Woodhill Early Learning Centre
- South Lanarkshire Council
- St Andrew's and St Bride's High School
- St John Ogilvie High School
- St Mary's Primary School (Lanark)
- Strathaven Academy

Stirling
- Balfron High School
- St Modan's High School
- Stirling High School

West Dunbartonshire
- Clydebank High School

West Lothian
- Addiewell Primary School
- Armadale Academy
- Broxburn Academy
- Inveralmond Community High School
- Linlithgow Academy
- Linlithgow Bridge Primary School
- St Joseph's Primary School (Linlithgow)
- West Calder High School
- Whitburn Academy
- Winchburgh Academy

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