

**#Youth
VIP**

Power of Youth Day

case studies from the YouthVIP Panel

**written by NM
panel member since 2024**

Can you tell me a bit about your progression through your own volunteering roles and what this progression has meant to you?

I started volunteering when I was 12 years old for my schools anti-bullying committee. I will always thank the teacher who ran that group for my progression in volunteering, as she suggested to me that I should join Respect Me's Youth Action Group, Scotland's national anti-bullying service, and the role that led to my 7-year journey in social action. The group was created so that young people could design Scotland's national anti-bullying campaign for schools across the country. This role gave me my first volunteering friend group, those who I spent many hours developing campaign resources and attending Scottish parliament events with. This was also the first public speaking role that I had, delivering our campaign to the Education Secretary for the second time in Scottish Parliament.

From this, I moved to the #iwill movement, an organisation focused on helping young people become involved in social action. Being an #iwill ambassador is one of the best decisions I ever made – the various conferences, meetings and opportunities that I have been able to attend through this role has been incredible, and I could not imagine my life without it. I have been able to speak in the House of Lords, attend parliament events and meet inspiring young people through this organisation, achieving goals that I never thought were possible.

The movement led to my participation in Volunteering Matters YouthVIP panel group through Young Scot, focusing on accessibility and equality for youth volunteering. The panel has provided me with opportunities to facilitate roundtables with key youth charities, work on national reports on youth volunteering, and allowed me to meet my best friend. *When I look back at my progression after 7 years in volunteering and now studying a degree to help young people across the world, I am so proud of what I have achieved, and immensely grateful for the opportunities that I have been given. Social action is my safe space, something that has become a part of who I am and has helped me through overcoming some of the most difficult challenges in my life* such as dealing with chronic illness and university life. I think that every young person should get involved in volunteering, as it is a journey that opens a variety of opportunities and experience for all.

What has been your biggest volunteering achievement so far and why?

My biggest volunteering achievement so far has been my maiden speech in the House of Lords. This opportunity was run by The Speaker's Trust, a partnership charity with UK Youth, and was a chance for 13 young people from across the UK to deliver a speech in the heart of UK parliament. Not only was I the only Scottish participant, but I was also able to speak to a room of over 100 people about an issue I care deeply about: the rise in domestic violence in the UK. This has been my biggest achievement as I was able to use my own personal experience with this subject to share the importance of adding domestic violence awareness to the curriculum as a preventative measure. Through this opportunity, I developed my confidence, communication and public speaking skills, going from someone who hated speaking in front of a group, to delivering a speech in one of the most crucial decision-making spaces.

Without this opportunity and the support that I received from my friends on the programme, I would not be where I am today with the amazing memories and support group I created along the way. This opportunity also highlighted to me the importance of pushing yourself out of your comfort zone.

With the amount of travel and commitment involved in this London based role, I initially was not going to take part as I was over 400 miles away and in the middle of exams, but the countless hours of revision done on trains and in hotel rooms was worth it. Being an alumni of this project has opened a range of connections for me with key changemakers, and I could not be more grateful for the position that I am in now.



What role does YouthVIP provide to young people in Scotland?

“YouthVIP provides opportunity, a support network and crucial communication skills to young people across the country. It is a community that teaches young people how to effectively communicate with changemakers, and gives them a platform to speak out about issues they are passionate about. YouthVIP empowers young people, allows them into decision-making spaces, and shows them how much their voices can make a difference. The range of skills that a young person can develop through working with YouthVIP is incredible, from confidence to public speaking, so many participants grow and develop through this organisation, benefitting them further on in life.”



“Accessibility and equality are a crucial component for YouthVIP, as they want to ensure all young people feel free to take part in social action. The range of in-person and online opportunities reduces barriers in youth participation and takes stress away from young people wanting to become involved in the volunteer sector. YouthVIP provides a safe space for youth volunteers, somewhere for them to share their concerns, connect with like-minded people and is a welcoming, friendly environment for all. I believe it is one of the key organisations in youth volunteering in Scotland and has an enormous impact on young people across the country.”