



Callander Hostel

Callander Hostel was bought in 2012 by the Callander Youth Project Trust (CYPT), with financial support from Social Investment Scotland and the European Union.

Providing jobs and qualifications for local young people

The hostel, which has been awarded four stars by the Scottish Tourist Board, is run as a social enterprise to support the Youth Project's aims of improving the lives of local young people. In the case of the hostel, this is done primarily by creating job opportunities for young people. CYPT staff are trained as SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority) assessors, meaning that apprenticeships can gain national qualifications. However this is a very burdensome activity for staff - smaller organisations often find that using external SQA assessors is more efficient.

As well as rooms in the hostel, there are pods to rent in the garden, including a fully accessible pod, which opens up opportunities for disabled people to visit the town and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

The main benefit of working in the hostel is that young people become accustomed to the routines and discipline of paid work and gain confidence. Apprentices at the hostel have gone on to become, for example, butchers, electricians, dental nurses and to join a variety of university courses.

Whilst the hostel is self-catering for overnight guests, it does provide food for functions, including weddings. During COVID, food was prepared in the hostel and distributed to vulnerable households, with staff involved in packaging the meals.

COVID brought opportunities and challenges to the hostel. The opportunity was taken to renovate the hostel and to reconfigure the multi-bunkbed rooms as family rooms. Early signs are that this change makes financial sense. On the other hand, recruitment of apprentices became more difficult from about 2020 onwards, at the same time as the UK holiday season and staycation-ing were both extending.

The hostel reduces the Youth Project's dependency on grants for its running costs, with any profits being used to further develop youth services in the area.

“It's about employability. What happens when you leave school is crucial - the Hostel provides a great opportunity for young people to learn about the world of work. We provide a service for visitors, but also support our own young people.”

Patricia Kent, CYPT Manager



Location: Callander, Stirling

Type: Stay & Enjoy

When Set Up: Bought 2012, opened 2014

How Funded: The hostel is income generating. Additional grants from many funders, including Social Investment Scotland, the EU and the Callander Community Hydro Fund.

Beneficiaries: Young people through apprenticeships and other CYPT activities.

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