



IMPACT REPORT



2024 - 2025



**Through the power of youth work, we transform
young people's lives, unite communities, and
tackle inequality of opportunity.**

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NOTE FROM OUR CEO & OUR CHAIR

We have the privilege of supporting the youth sector across Oxfordshire, training between 1000 - 1500 staff and volunteers each year, providing ways to connect and learn via conference and impact events, plus, through our quarterly Children and Young People's Forums, we share best practice and insights. The voluntary youth sector in Oxfordshire plays a significant role in positive outcomes for young people and their transition into adulthood, and the more resourced and equipped we are to provide high-quality opportunities and services for young people the better the long-term outcomes are.

Our recent work addressing burnout amongst youth work practitioners and focusing on digital upskilling for the sector has shown the significant progress and impact that we can achieve. Extending the reach of these programmes and enhancing the capacity of the sector and its work is where we will focus over the next few years. As the national and local governments switch their focus to prioritising youth work, we have a real opportunity to collaborate and transform outcomes for young people for the long term.

Alongside this, we are extremely passionate about co-production with young people, creating ways to shift power and decision-making, and creating meaningful ways for young people to shape the world around them. The foundational work we are laying with partners across the county enables more young people to engage in decision-making and influence the change they want to see. Watch this space!

We are very grateful to work within a passionate and skilled sector, with many partners and supporters from the public and private sectors. Thank you to everyone who contributes their time, energy, and resources to creating a better Oxfordshire for all young people to live, learn and thrive.



Chair of Trustees : John May O.B.E



CEO: Jodie Lloyd-Jones



OUR WORK 24/25

We want young people in Oxfordshire to access high-quality youth work and youth work practices that meets their needs. UK Youth report that two thirds of youth organisations are seeing an increase in both demand for services and more complex needs from young people. We are the only infrastructure organisation in the county providing essential training, policy, and tailored support to the youth sector. Our work focuses on capacity building and infrastructure support for the organisations and practitioners to ensure that youth work is the best it can be for young people.

We worked with

1149

professionals, delivering a total of

425

training hours

Specialist training includes:

- Knife Crime Awareness
- Mental Health First Aid
- L2 and L3 Safeguarding
- Self-Harm Awareness
- Suicide Prevention
- Psychological Safety
- Non-Violent Communication
- Exploitation and Gang Associated Harms
- Fundraising, Trust and Bid Writing
- Theory of Change
- Emergency First Aid At Work

24

youth workers trained

in a Level 2 or 3 award in Youth Work Principles.

72

organisations

across the county joined the Changemaker Network. This provides access to training, bespoke support, information sharing, advice on governance, job opportunities and DBS checks. We received and processed a total of 225 DBS applications in the 2024-2025 financial year.

Oxfordshire Youth hosted the annual Youth Work Conference in November 2024, bringing together 86 youth work practitioners from over 25 organisations.

Over 400 participants attended the annual Youth in Mind conference in July 2024, bringing together professionals working in Early Years, primary, secondary and further education, youth justice, CVS, NHS and local authority.

Over 50 professionals and leaders from 32 organisations came together for the quarterly Children and Young People's Forum, engaging with strategic cross-sector developments such as changes to statutory safeguarding oversight.

120 professionals have been trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid for free.

Oxfordshire County Council commissioned Oxfordshire Mind to coordinate the offer which is for adults working with children and young people anywhere in the county.

55 youth work practitioners and leaders practitioners and senior leaders took part in a research project to explore burnout and wellbeing in the sector.



RESEARCH

At Oxfordshire Youth, we endeavour to ensure that our work is led by the voices of the people we are working with: whether that is young people or professionals. We are committed to having research and needs analysis embedded in our work to shape our programmes, tailor bespoke support that meets the needs of the Youth Sector in Oxfordshire.

SECTOR SURVEY

Each year, we conduct an essential piece of data gathering to understand the landscape of the sector: both to understand the needs of young people and the practitioners supporting them. In February 2025, we heard from 35 organisations in Oxfordshire about the challenges facing their operations and the young people in their services. For young people, common themes emerged around mental health, safe spaces, school avoidance and community support. For practitioners and organisations, only around 16% of respondents indicated that current services in your area are meeting the needs of young people very or quite well. With grass roots organisations embedded in the community,

Around half of organisations wanted support for Specialist Youth Work Training (61%), Staff Wellbeing and Burnout Prevention (52%) Youth Work Qualification (48%) and Youth Engagement (48%). Organisations also expressed a need for support with emphasis on Funding and Resources, as well as Staff Training and Development, Recruitment and Retention, Collaboration and Policies and Compliance.

“There is a huge mental health crisis and not only do the YP need support but also their parents, carers and professionals.”

“As an organisation who has built a strong and trusting relationship with the community we would like to do more and in some instances are best placed to do so but need more long term funding.”

“Listening to young people directly about their needs is key to ensuring support is relevant and impactful.”

SECTOR SURVEY RESPONDENTS

DIGITAL INEQUALITY AND SKILLS

The Digital Natives project conducted a piece of research to explore both the needs of young people and the youth sector in Oxfordshire. It researched understandings of Digital Poverty, Digital Exclusion and the role youth work can play in addressing the needs of young people in this climate. With an element of this research targeting the Youth Work Sector, we surveyed 45 members of OY staff with 10 further respondents from 4 other youth work organisations. We conducted interviews and focus groups to understand both the challenges facing young people and the youth workers supporting them.

For the youth sector, there have been increasing digital demands, both for themselves and the young people they support. Youth workers ability to do youth work effectively, both in person and online, requires an element of digital literacy - both to record their work safely (online case management/CRM, GDPR) and support young people, whether managing appointments, applying for a job, writing a CV to access opportunities and dealing with challenges, considering whether content is appropriate or harmful, being critical information consumers. This research informed a pilot series of digital skills workshops, intended to upskill the Youth Sector, to inform our infrastructure and capacity building work across the Youth Sector in Oxfordshire.

“The digital skills training has helped me frame my engagement with our changemaker network on digital safety, safeguarding and policy development. I'm now mapping out ways to capture these learnings and resources to pass on to the network.”

YOUTH SECTOR DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR



YOUTH SECTOR SUPPORT

WELLBEING AND BURNOUT IN YOUTH WORK PRACTITIONERS

Across the sector there are concerns around the negative impact of increasing pressures on services and practitioners leading to a decrease in overall wellbeing and increase in feelings of burnout amongst practitioners. This could see more people leaving the profession as well as resulting in knock on impacts on young people.

We commissioned Research Oxford, to explore wellbeing and burnout among front-line youth work practitioners in Oxfordshire. It was found that youth work practitioners reported levels of emotional exhaustion akin to the average for social services, but were more likely to feel personal achievement. This may be linked to the passion that many reported as underpinning youth work.

This research heard from 55 individuals and identified key recommendations for how to support youth work practitioners and leaders. This has directly informed the design and delivery of the Youth Work Practitioner Wellbeing Programme.

“
Burnout is definitely very real within people who work with young people.
”
PRACTITIONER

“
The impact of burnout is massive on those young people because for them, it's another letdown. A worker who's not turned up when they said they would, a worker who's not provided when they said they would, it's a support that they've not got when they've been promised it.
”
SECTOR LEADER

YOUTH WORK PRACTITIONER WELLBEING PROGRAMME

100% RESPONDENTS...

...OF THE LEADERSHIP RETREAT SAID IT SUPPORTED THEIR WELLBEING, GAVE NEW PERSPECTIVES AND TOOLS TO IMPLEMENT AS A LEADER

100% RESPONDENTS SAID...

...THEY FELT SUPPORTED IN A PEER TO PEER NETWORK AS A RESULT OF TAKING PART IN OUR PROGRAMMES

99% RESPONDENTS SAID...

...THEY INCREASED THEIR SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE IN THEIR WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

66

Youth work practitioners and leaders took part in the Youth Work Practitioner Wellbeing Programme.

Taking part in wellbeing sessions, SLT mentoring, peer group mentoring, and a leadership retreat. Those who took part in the Wellbeing Programme this year reported a 13% reduction in emotional exhaustion and 25% reduction in depersonalisation.

“
I have genuinely loved every single session. I feel like I am going to be a better person / youth worker now!
”

WELLBEING PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT



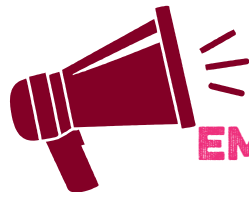
CALL TO ACTION: EVENTS

YOUTH IN MIND

On 25th June 2024, we hosted our sixth annual Youth in Mind conference, welcoming the wider sector and professionals to come together and share research, learning and practice.



Panel Speakers: Youth Work Conference
November 2024



SAFE SPACES: DIGITAL, EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL

406

delegates attended across the education, VCS, justice, and health sectors, local authority and more.

Youth in Mind 2024 helped...

99% respondents understand the distinct value of emotional, physical and digital safe spaces.

98% respondents to feel connected to a wider network of support for young people.

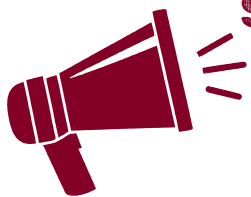
93% respondents learn useful tools to support with work with young people.

YOUTH WORK CONFERENCE

86

delegates from over 25 organisations attended the Youth Work Conference in November 2024.

The event focused on the importance of Systems Change in our work improving outcomes for young people in Oxfordshire.



SYSTEMS CHANGE

“ Thank you for organising yet another inspiring event with such a huge amount of awe-inducing people. I have enjoyed sitting in the energy that was vibrating with hope, strength, kindness, community and so much more. Forever grateful to be part of the changemakers network 🙏 ”

CHANGEMAKER

100% RESPONDENTS SAID...

...THE CONFERENCE HELPED THEM TO UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF SYSTEMS CHANGE IN THEIR WORK

...THE CONFERENCE GAVE THEM USEFUL TOOLS TO IMPLEMENT IN THEIR PRACTICE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

96% RESPONDENTS SAID...

...THEY IMPROVED THEIR SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE IN UNDERSTANDING SYSTEMS CHANGE IN THEIR WORK



YPSA

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION SERVICE

In contract with Response, and commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council, we support young people aged 18-25 who are at risk of homelessness in our Young People's Supported Accommodation Service (YPSA).

Since the project began in 2019, we have supported 380 young people. Our progression coaches use trauma informed youth work practices to support young people and others around them to feel safe, build meaningful connections, develop skills and confidence to engage in education, employment and training and ultimately to enable their transition to living independently. We support young people as they move into independent accommodation with continued outreach for up to a year.



**YPSA Future Leaders Celebration
2024**

In 2024 - 2025 we supported

151

Young people in the YPSA who received

5379

hours of support.

393

AQAs were achieved by over 70 young people in the YPSA.

46

Young people moved on from the service, an 81% successful move on rate. 70% of these went on to live independently, with family or friends, or went to university.

1120

Positive activities took place engaging 126 young people.

Of the 46 young people who joined the service in 2024/25, 41% were not in education, employment or training. 37% of these young people are now in education or employment.

Our partners, ASPIRE and SOFEA, have played an important role in supporting young people into employment and training or education. 60 young people were supported by our partners in training, CV writing and interview technique workshops.



YOUTH PROGRAMMES

EMPLOYABILITY AND LIFE SKILLS: FUTURE LEADERS

We partnered with Lucy Group to invite Young people to participate in employability and leadership workshops and residential and work experience at Lucy Electric.

100% PARTICIPANTS...

...SAID THEY FELT MORE MOTIVATED TO PLAN FOR THEIR FUTURE

...SAID THEY FELT MORE ABLE TO CREATE A CV

“Taking part in the programme, the residential and the work experience have really helped me. I’ve gained new friends, skills and so much more confidence, which has helped me become much more independent.”

YOUNG PERSON

18

young people took part in the Future Leaders programme across employability and CV workshops, a residential and work experience. 16 young people achieved 123 AQA award scheme certificates.

Young people told us that the programme made them feel more confident, enhanced their skills and knowledge, and gave them different opportunities.

THE ROLE OF YOUTH WORK: HOSPITAL NAVIGATORS

We partnered with Thames Valley Police, Violence Reduction Unit and the John Radcliffe Hospital to provide signposting and trauma informed practice to young individuals identified in the Emergency Department.

151

young people were referred into the programme and received tailored 1:1 support and signposting. A further 27 people over 25 were also referred to a hospital navigator.

The project evidences need in the county, with over 20% of referrals from OX3 or OX4, and an additional 5% experiencing homelessness.

“Maria was like a light in an abyss of darkness for me, she metaphorically held my hand as I worked my way out of the worst times of my life.”

YOUNG PERSON

“The Hospital Navigator Project probably saved my son's life.”

PARENT/GUARDIAN



DIGITAL NATIVES

In 2024, Oxfordshire Youth partnered with Intel® and Solutions Integrator Insight to launch the Digital Natives Project. This initiative sought to address digital poverty and expand digital readiness among young people facing economic disadvantage in OX4 in Oxfordshire. By investing in training and resources, this project created a model for how tech can empower young people and equip youth work practitioners with vital skills.

33

Oxfordshire Youth staff members took part in 8 Digital Skills training workshops.

24

Young people took part in the Digital Futures workshops and Young Leaders.



**RESEARCH
REPORT**



**DIGITAL SKILLS
TRAINING**



**DIGITAL SKILLS
WORKSHOPS**



**YOUNG
LEADERS**

100% RESPONDENTS...

...RATED THE CONTENT OF THE TRAINING SESSIONS AS GOOD OR VERY GOOD.

...INCREASED THEIR CONFIDENCE ACCESSING AND APPLYING DIGITAL SKILLS.

...FELT THE TRAINING GAVE THEM PRACTICAL SKILLS TO USE IN THEIR ROLE.

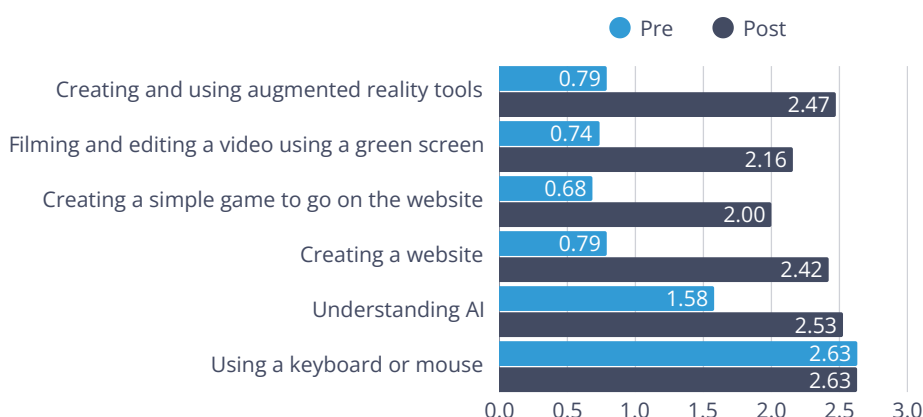
“This workshop has really helped me to understand tech more. I have never done stuff like this - it's skills for life because, you know, tech keeps on growing every day. I'm thinking of starting up my own website now!”

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT



Young people at the Digital Futures workshops February 2025

SELF-REPORTED SKILLS LEVELS PRE AND POST WORKSHOP SERIES





YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS PROJECT

A PROGRAMME TO EMPOWER, EDUCATE, AND PREVENT

The Young Women and Girls Project (YWAG) in Oxfordshire harnesses the power of youth work approaches and, trauma-informed practices to deliver positive outcomes in partnership with the criminal justice sector.

In 2024 - 2025, the programme expanded to incorporate Escape the Trap: a teenage relationship Abuse programme to **8** girls in Year 11.

15

young women and girls engaged and received a total of **185 1:1 support sessions.**

100% of girls who completed the programme reported reduced gang related activity and respondents said the programme had improved their access to safe and trusted adults

YOUTH VOICE

We spoke to young women and girls to understand the areas of need *in their words*. They wanted to learn more about:

- Consent
- Healthy relationships
- Conflict in relationships (signs of abuse / toxic relationships)
- Friendships and family relationships
- Sexting and online dating
- The effects of explicit content
- Body image / self-esteem

“

This programme has been excellent (and crucial) in educating our vulnerable young women in understanding and identifying teenage abuse

”

**DELIVERY PARTNER,
SECONDARY SCHOOL**

387

Professionals received Exploitation training across 6 workshops.

The training instils how to confidently identify concerns around exploitation and gang associated harms and both prevention and intervention options. As a collaborative training, designed alongside the Violence Prevention Partnership, it combines the powers and expertise of both statutory and youth work services.

100%

respondents said the session increased their skill and confidence in their work

“

Our partnership with OY has expanded the network and reach, raising awareness of exploitation and gang-related harms, and the support available. Professionals are given diverse yet complementary perspectives, enhancing their understanding and approach to the subject matter. Feedback has consistently highlighted the value of Oxfordshire Youth's support, underscoring its importance in our collective efforts to address these critical issues.

”

DELIVERY PARTNER, THAMES VALLEY POLICE



YOUTH VOICE IN 2025/2026

We believe young people should shape the services, systems and decisions that affect their lives. In 2025, we are committed to increasing our Youth Voice work to create meaningful opportunities for young people to lead, influence and co-design.

DIVERSIFYING APPRENTICESHIPS

As part of a long standing relationship, Oxfordshire Youth partnered with Blenheim and Pye to launch an innovative youth led research project. The diversifying apprenticeships programme sees 5 talented young people conduct youth led research into the ways that Blenheim and Pye can diversify it's reach across the county.

5

Young people are employed to conduct youth-led research.

We are passionate about young people leading on this research and being remunerated for their contributions. As the project develops in 2025, we hope to expand it's reach and demonstrate the value of youth voice in systems change work.

YOUTH VOICE CHAMPIONS

Oxfordshire Youth are committing to the co-design and delivery of a youth voice-led research project (for young people aged 8–25) to understand how young people want to engage and shape the decisions that affect them. This is in support of our key priority for the upcoming year of investing in a countywide youth participation model that expands youth-led decision-making.

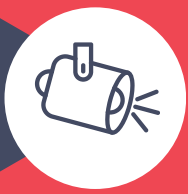
6

Young people will co-design a youth-voice participation analysis.

The youth voice champions will shape a creative research project to understand how young people in Oxfordshire want their voices to be heard, and how they want decision-makers to meet young peoples needs.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

We are committed to co-creating and embedding a Youth Participation Model across the Youth Sector, to ensure that we are collectively shifting power, consulting, co-designing and co-producing in meaningful ways across Oxfordshire. We are also partnering with the National Youth Agency and Oxfordshire County Council to understand the landscape of children's and youth voice forums and opportunities for engagement with local and national democracy.



SPOTLIGHT: HANNA

Hanna was made homeless after a childhood history of abuse came to light and her family relationships entirely broke down. She joined the YPSA in 2022 after struggling with addiction, childhood trauma and the complete breakdown of her family relationships. She was struggling with stress-induced psychosis, navigating sobriety and finding work.

After my childhood abuse was brought out into the open, my world completely changed. Every family relationship I had was gone. After initially being kicked out, I was able to find live-in work, and was really still trying to build something for myself. But when that became unsafe, I had no choice but to leave. I had nowhere to go and I was at this point when I could really have given up and given up on my sobriety.

I felt like I'd already had my last chance to try again and I honestly think the YPSA saved my life. That's how I make sense of it. I thought I would just try and give it just more shot, and they swooped in at just the right moment. When I first spoke to Sue, I completely broke down. But she promised me that she would help. She said that we would figure something out, and we did.

Then I had a home again, four walls and a roof - I was totally over the moon.

Still, it was really difficult for a while. Going from not having security to having security was hard. I couldn't shake the feeling that someone would call me up and say I'm not doing good enough, that I'm messing up and I'd have to leave. But my progression coach was patient with me and overtime, helped me feel safe. I went from not feeling safe enough to even shower in my own home, to actually trusting that it was my space, and trusting that I deserved it. It helped me move into a flat by myself and I couldn't be prouder. I have a home, in my name - I pay the bills, I pay the gas and the electric, like wow.

I feel like the YPSA, from start to finish, gave me a family.

All I'd ever been told from trying to get support was that you need a strong support network, but I just felt at a loss. What do you do when no one cares about you, you just don't have this network. But OY gave that to me. My coaches helped me be a better person. I don't know that I would be sober now if it wasn't for the YPSA.

They made me feel like I was worth something. I got back the parts of myself I'd stripped away with drugs.

I also don't think I would have the relationship I have with my family if it wasn't for Katie and Sue. And all they did was speak to me. That's all it took. They gave me the space to be me, and for the first time, someone actually believed in me, and made me feel like I was worth something and it let me get my life back.

I never thought I'd have a relationship with my family again, but now I see them every week and I can call them just to tell them about my day. It blows my mind that I get to do this. I'm in counselling, which I wouldn't have gotten if it wasn't for the help of my progression coach and I haven't experienced stress-induced psychosis or self-harmed for months.

I'm also working. I was trying to figure out how to get a job in the real world, after every feeling of safety being taken from me, and then OY helped me with that too, and I look forward to getting up and going to work and making friends there. It all feels genuinely meaningful, with meaningful people, and it's helping me towards my own career goals and makes me excited for whatever comes next.



HOSPITAL NAVIGATORS

THE ROLE OF YOUTH WORK

We partnered with Thames Valley Police, Violence Reduction Unit and the John Radcliffe Hospital to provide signposting and trauma informed practice to young individuals identified in the Emergency Department.

The programme offered young people a trusted adult to help them navigate the complexities of the hospital and additional services. It ensured that young people in a time of crisis had someone to support and advocate for them.

151

young people were referred into the programme and received tailored 1:1 support and signposting. A further 27 people over 25 were also referred to a hospital navigator.

The project evidences need in the county, with over 20% of referrals from OX3 or OX4, and an additional 5% experiencing homelessness.

“

[The coordinator] was like a light in an abyss of darkness for me, she metaphorically held my hand as I worked my way out of the worst times of my life.”

PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT

6

volunteers were recruited and trained to supporting young people in the hospital alongside the project coordinator.

“

The Hospital Navigator Project probably saved my son's life.”

PARENT/GUARDIAN

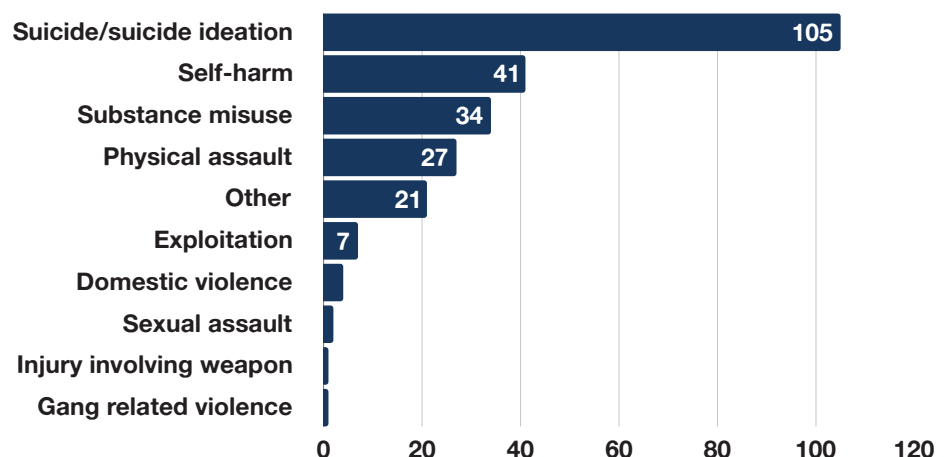
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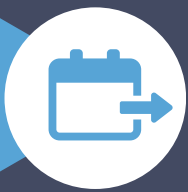
At a time of crisis in their lives and with emergency services stretched, there can be no better time for Youth Workers to provide much needed and valued support.

”

**HOSPITAL NAVIGATOR
COORDINATOR**

REASON FOR ADMISSION





WHAT'S NEXT?

BUSINESS GUARDIANS

In 2025, we launched the Business Guardians: an innovative new funding model which recruited 8 leading businesses across the county and committing to a minimum of 3 years of support to Oxfordshire Youth.

We have a valuable opportunity to build partnerships that will significantly enhance our ability to support the sector and young people across the county. As a collaborative partnership, the Business Guardians hopes to help dismantle what's holding young people back – and to create the solutions for real, lasting change.

YOUTH WORK ACCREDITATIONS

We remain dedicated to delivering high quality youth work within our organisation and supporting the wider sector in Oxfordshire.

In 2025, we are committing to ensuring that all of our front-facing staff are trained and qualified in Level 2 Youth Work. We want to ensure that our work at every level is underpinned by youth work pedagogy and practice.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY

In line with Oxfordshire Youth's mission, vision and values, we will be committing to a new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy with the help of 7PK Consultancy.

After consulting with the whole organisation, we will build a strategy which focuses on developing Senior Leaders and Managers as inclusive leaders and fostering a sense of belonging for young people. We will be focusing on a data-driven approach to improving inclusion, embedding inclusivity into policies and culture, and strengthening EDI in recruitment. Crucially, we will work to ensure this is embedded within the organisation and sustainably resourced as a long term initiative.

ROUND-UP 4 YOUTH

In 2025, we launched our Round-Up For Youth campaign: a simple but powerful way for companies to rally behind a cause that matters – helping young people not just survive, but thrive.

We want to build long-term, meaningful partnerships with local businesses and raise £300,000 over three years to support young people across the county. Whether it's rounding up at checkout or hosting in-store donation points, we want to make it easy to turn everyday business activity into continuous social impact.

The impact detailed in his report has been made possible through the generous support of trusts, foundations, statutory funders, corporates, Business Guardians and regular supporters. A special mention goes to the collection of the kind-hearted anonymous individual donors who supported us this year. With heartfelt thanks for your support.

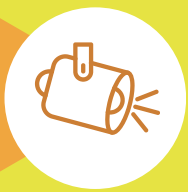
Andrews Property Group
ARC Oxford
Bartlett Taylor Charitable Trust
BGF Foundation
Blenheim Palace
BMW Mini Plant
Charities Trust
Cherwell District Council
Christopher Laing Foundation
Cleenol
Cooper Charitable Trust
Coventry Building Society
Dagleish Trust
David Lloyd
DLM Charitable Trust
Doris Field Charitable Trust
Ebbon Group
Edward and Diana Hornby Charitable Trust
Freeths
Hereford Community Foundation
Himat Tanna Charitable Trust
Hobson Charity
Jericho Coffee Traders
Jim Cousins Trust
Lucy Group
Marsh Charitable Trust

National Lottery
Oxford City Council
Oxford Health Charity
Oxfordshire County Council
Paul Hamlyn Foundation
PF Charitable Trust
Prudence Trust
Pye Charitable Settlement
Radley College
Robert & Margaret Moss Charitable Trust
Sloane Robinson Foundation
South Oxfordshire District Council
Stanton Ballard Charitable Trust
Swire Charitable Trust
Tesco
The Beeching Trust
The Carlie Tufnell Charitable Trust
The Lennox Hannay Charitable Trust
The Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire
The Middle Way Trust
The Sanghera Foundation
The Souter Charitable Trust
The Stockwell Cliffe Charitable Trust
The Stone Foundation
UK Youth
Wendy's

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SPOTLIGHT: CHARLEY

Charley joined the YPSA in April 2024 after a breakdown in relationships with their foster family, which resulted in them going missing and becoming involved with social services. They experienced a family history of abuse and addiction after being adopted at a young age, and was struggling with their mental health, education, and relationships when they joined the service.

When I moved into the YPSA, I was feeling very anxious and didn't have much confidence. I was scared to live by myself and was struggling without some of the support I'd been getting when I was younger. I was struggling to maintain healthy friendships and wouldn't leave the house most days. My wellbeing was shocking, I couldn't get out of bed in the mornings and would often skip college.

My progression coach really helped. I really didn't know what to expect when she signed me up for Future Leaders, but she really encouraged me to take part and helped me keep attending every week. At the beginning I was really anxious, but she helped keep me motivated and I was determined to keep attending to be able to go on the residential.

I think the CV workshops made a big difference. The way that Matt from Lucy Group laid everything out made it so much more manageable. He gave us really good tips and some different apps to use which make it a much less scary task. Now I know I'll be okay to rewrite it when I need to. The work experience was also really interesting, I didn't know if I would like it, but I enjoyed speaking to all the workers there and seeing the behind the scenes of the company. The best bit was putting the prototype together, someone was showing me how to do it and then let me just get on with it myself. We were working together, and it was so cool that the part I'd made myself would actually be used in their production.



The residential trip was really special. I was anxious not to know people who were going, and felt scared to have to do everything on my own but by the end of it I had made a connection with everyone. I was terrified of heights, so found the high ropes activity really scary but was so proud of myself for doing it.

The whole thing has really helped me improve my confidence. I used to really struggle talking to people, especially new people, and I would be stuck in my own head trying to figure out what to say and worried I'm repeating myself but now I can say more things to different people. I'm working at the moment and looking for a job closer to home.

Taking part in the programme, the residential and the work experience have really helped me. I've gained new friends, skills and so much more confidence, which has helped me become much more independent. I'm not relying on people so much any more and feeling much more optimistic about whatever comes next.