



**Young
Somerset**

IMPACT REPORT

APRIL 2024 - MARCH 2025

**“YOUTH WORK GIVES YOUNG
PEOPLE A VOICE AND THEY ARE
THE FUTURE.”**

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INTRODUCTION

As Chief Executive of Young Somerset, I'm incredibly proud to present our latest Impact Report – a powerful testament to the dedication of our team and the resilience of the young people we work alongside. Over the past year, we've continued to put young people first, ensuring that their voices shape the services they access and their aspirations guide our work.

This report reflects the wide-reaching impact we've made – from supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and communities, to offering targeted youth work and alternative education that empowers young people with skills for life and employment. Our Bold & Brave enterprise and youth-led initiatives have inspired confidence and opportunity in those who need it most.

What stands out most is the difference that genuine, trusted relationships make. Whether through 1:1 sessions, group work, or community events, our work remains rooted in the values of openness, respect and collaboration.

The journey ahead will continue to bring challenges, but also incredible opportunities. We remain committed to expanding our reach, deepening our impact, and standing up for young people across Somerset. Thank you for supporting us – together, we go further.

Nik Harwood
Chief Executive
You



As Chair of Young Somerset, it is a privilege to introduce this Impact Report, which captures the breadth and depth of our work over the past year. Behind every statistic, every story and every achievement is the unwavering commitment of our incredible team – a group of professionals who consistently go above and beyond to support young people across Somerset.

This year, the challenges facing young people have remained significant – from the ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis to rising mental health concerns. Yet, the dedication and creativity of our staff have ensured that our response has shown great compassion and made an impact. Whether delivering early intervention mental health support, building confidence through enterprise and employability, or providing safe spaces and trusted relationships through youth work, the Young Somerset team has responded with professionalism, resilience and care.

It is this consistent effort, often delivered in the background and without fanfare, that truly deserves recognition. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to express our deepest thanks to the staff and volunteers who make our mission real every day.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues on the Board who work tirelessly and respond positively no matter what is asked of them.

David Elstone
Chair of Trustees



YOUNG SOMERSET VALUES



Putting Young People First

Putting ourselves in the shoes of the young person; providing young people with choice and the opportunity and space to be themselves, listening to their views and shaping services and interactions around young people's needs. It is about keeping abreast with latest youth trends and professional developments and using this creatively to support young people in the Somerset context.

Inspiring

Believing in the power of young people and acting with energy, positivity, care, heart, ambition and a "can-do" attitude. It is about staff harnessing their inner confidence, adopting an adventurous spirit and being prepared to learn new things in order to support young people to achieve their very best outcomes.

Collaborating

Being inclusive, encouraging, cooperative, helpful and respectful; sharing ideas and valuing individual contributions. It is about Young Somerset staff working together as one team, supporting and being supported by each other, young people, community partners and other stakeholders; using our collective skills and experiences to deliver. It is about listening, professionally, and without judgement. It is about togetherness and common goals.

Going Further

We do more. We act with willing, resilience and resourcefulness. We take responsibility for our own actions and persevere to get the best outcomes for young people in Somerset. We embrace change, adapt and think innovatively. We make an impact.



WELCOME TO YOUNG SOMERSET

**We exist because putting young people first
will improve Somerset.**

Our Journey

Founded in 1997 as the Somerset Rural Youth Project, our organisation began with a clear mission: to support young people living in rural communities. Over time, we have grown and evolved to meet the wider needs of children, young people, and families across the entire county. In 2018, we rebranded as Young Somerset, marking a new chapter in our commitment to empowering young lives throughout Somerset—wherever they live, learn, or grow.

Our Mission

At Young Somerset, young people are at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to supporting their personal, social, economic, and educational development by providing tailored services that promote both mental and physical wellbeing.

Through accessible education, trusted relationships, and early intervention, we empower young people to understand their mental health and take informed steps toward lasting positive change.

As Somerset's leading voluntary and community sector youth work organisation, we work creatively and collaboratively with partners to deliver services that align with statutory provision while remaining flexible to local need. From targeted youth support to mental health services and alternative education, our offer is both comprehensive and responsive.

Our reach spans rural villages, urban centres, market towns, and coastal communities—each with unique challenges and strengths. We recognise and respect the individuality of every young person we support, ensuring our work is grounded in place-based insight and cultural understanding.

Young Somerset is proud to be a respected voice at local, regional, and national levels. We use our experience from Somerset to inform and shape wider policy discussions, always advocating for the voices and rights of young people.

By listening carefully and acting with purpose, we translate the national youth agenda into effective, evidence-based local practice. We are determined to go further—inspiring, co-creating, and delivering impactful outcomes for young people, their families, and their communities.



www.youngsomerset.org.uk

GOALS

To promote the health and wellbeing of children and young people in Somerset by the provision of information, advice and support, and to nurture their physical, intellectual and social skills such that they may grow to full maturity as individuals who make a valuable contribution to society.

OBJECTIVES

We aim to support **25% more children, young people and families by 2029**, whilst maintaining our integrity and remaining true to our values.



STRATEGIES

We will:

- Increase our income and diversify its sources to ensure resilience and financial stability;
- Extend our profile both locally and nationally;
- Expand our services to reach more children and young people;
- Strive to achieve the highest possible standards in everything we do;
- Continue to advocate for the rights of children and young people.

KEY NUMBERS AND FIGURES

At Young Somerset, we are proud to present this Impact Report as a testament to the breadth and depth of our work over the past year. From delivering targeted youth support and mental health interventions to offering alternative education and early years programmes, our dedicated teams have worked tirelessly to put young people first across Somerset. Through services such as the Community Wellbeing Service, Mental Health Support Teams, Bold & Brave Social Enterprise, and innovative Transition Programmes, we have responded to complex and evolving needs with compassion, creativity, and commitment.

This report showcases the tangible outcomes of our efforts and highlights the real difference we make in young people's lives. We invite you to explore these achievements, understand our ongoing opportunities, and join us in championing brighter futures for Somerset's young people.

80 Partnerships and Collaborations

143 Workshops held

7,402 Individual Contacts with Children and Young People - MHST

14,784 direct hours with young people - TYS

4,818 Individual Contacts with Children and Young People - CWS

2,807 referrals received for direct work across the whole organisation

4,928 Face-to-face sessions - TYS



DONATIONS

The Impact of Your Generosity

At Young Somerset, every donation makes a difference.

We are grateful to everyone who supports our services—your generosity enables us to continue putting young people first across Somerset. Donations empower us to deliver vital services, from enhancing mental health support through our Community Wellbeing and Mental Health Support Teams, to providing life-changing opportunities in our Alternative Education programmes. Contributions help fund opportunities for individual young people (**STAR**), youth-led initiatives, skills development workshops, and early years support such as our Pop-up Tots and transition programmes. Whether it's a one-off gift or regular support, each pound helps us build resilience, nurture confidence, and offer young people the guidance they need to thrive.

Donations Received

During the financial year ending 31 March 2025, Young Somerset received a total of **798 individual donations** receiving a total of **£43,540** in donations and legacies. These valuable contributions, provided by individual donors, community groups, and local supporters, offered essential unrestricted funding that enhanced our ability to innovate and respond flexibly to the evolving needs of young people.

While commissioned services form the majority of our income, these donations empowered us to maintain and enrich our early intervention work, youth engagement programmes, and support for families facing multiple challenges. We are deeply thankful to every supporter whose generosity helped us continue putting young people first across Somerset.

What Your Donation Could Do For Young People

- £10: Refreshments for one parent/carer and toddler group.
- £15: Cooking ingredients for Young People to be educated in and make healthy group meals.
- £100: 12 swimming lessons for a child to learn to swim.
- £100: Rent for a pop-up shop for a week to enable young people to access work experience and potential employment opportunities.
- £2,500: Provides one young person with access to a full Jigsaw programme.
- £2,500: Ten parenting workshops – giving parents a safe space to talk and share issues, anxieties and worries, and how to get further support.
- £4,800: Purchases and maintains equipment in our shop and café to ensure that we can continue to provide a specialist retail and hospitality training space.

You can donate via our website:

www.youngsomerset.org.uk



SOMERSET TRUST FOR ARTS & RECREATION (STAR)

Supporting Young Lives Through Opportunity

STAR exists to enhance and enrich the lives of children and young people (aged 0–25) by enabling access to sport, music, art, drama, and other meaningful experiences. For many families, STAR funding is a lifeline—making ordinary childhood opportunities possible for those who might otherwise go without. It's about inclusion, confidence, connection—and helping young people take part in the everyday things that make a big difference.

This year, STAR received over **80 applications** for a wide range of activities and essential resources. For many, these activities offer more than recreation—they build resilience, confidence, and a sense of belonging. These included:



Gym memberships
Dance classes
Boxing sessions
Art materials
Football memberships and kits
Swimming lessons
Cricket and judo clubs
Group activities and social clubs



Some young people were also signposted to the Umbrella group in Bridgwater, helping them feel part of a wider community and connected to their peers. Others were introduced to further opportunities through Bold & Brave apprenticeships and work experience at the Bold & Brave café, or received advice and support around engaging with education.

Swimming, in particular, has been a popular route—offering a fun, low-pressure way for young people to care for their physical and mental wellbeing. In some cases, it has opened doors to further achievement, with a number of young people going on to train as lifeguards.

“STAR helped me get into swimming lessons. Now I'm training to be a lifeguard!”

Despite the positive outcomes, fundraising continues to be a challenge. We are actively seeking new partnerships and sources of support to ensure STAR can continue to change lives, one experience at a time.

Looking ahead, STAR remains committed to removing barriers and providing meaningful opportunities for young people in need across Somerset.



SAFEGUARDING

At The Heart Of Our Practice

At Young Somerset, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Our commitment to creating safe, supportive environments for young people is embedded across the organisation.

We have a **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**, along with a named Trustee for Safeguarding. Safeguarding is further strengthened by **13 trained staff to DSL level**, who each play a vital role in upholding the wellbeing and protection of the children, young people, and families we support.

All safeguarding team members are up to date with Advanced Safeguarding training, delivered through the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership. In addition, the team regularly attends Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty training provided by the NHS Foundation Trust, ensuring alignment with wider professional standards.

All Young Somerset staff complete a robust induction process that includes comprehensive guidance on the organisation's procedures for reporting any concerns. As part of this induction, staff also undertake mandatory training in Child Protection (including Safeguarding and Early Help), Prevent, and Domestic Abuse. All training provided is CPD accredited, ensuring professional standards and ongoing development.

This is followed by annual safeguarding training, which covers our internal procedures and reporting systems, ensuring that safeguarding knowledge is refreshed and consistently applied across all teams. Role-specific training is provided throughout the year to ensure continued professional development.

We maintain a cycle of monthly safeguarding reviews, led by our internal team, to reflect on practice and share learning. In the past year, our in-house safeguarding provision was evaluated positively, and our Safeguarding Assessment has been formally submitted to the ICB. We also participated in a Safeguarding Audit conducted by the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

RESPONDING WITH CONFIDENCE AND CARE

Over the last 12 months, staff across Young Somerset identified and responded to **458** safeguarding concerns. These included a wide range of issues, reflecting the complex and challenging situations many young people face:

Parenting capacity, Domestic abuse, Harmful sexual behaviour, Drug misuse, Neglect, Grooming, Sexting and e-safety, Peer-on-peer abuse, Child sexual exploitation, Homelessness, Revenge porn. Weapons and violence

Our approach is built on training, regular supervision, and strong line management—giving staff the confidence to recognise and act on concerns swiftly and appropriately.



SAFEGUARDING

At The Heart Of Our Practice

PARTNERSHIP, PROTOCOLS AND TRUST

We follow the Somerset Early Help Protocol and adhere to Government guidance on information sharing and multi-agency working. Wherever possible, we refer to external agencies with the full knowledge and consent of the young person and their family.

Even in complex Child Protection cases, we have not made any referrals without parental awareness. This transparent, non-judgemental approach has been appreciated by families—even in difficult circumstances.

Our work is often delivered within schools, and our teams stay well-informed and responsive to the statutory guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024). We have built strong professional relationships with safeguarding staff and mental health leads across Somerset's schools and colleges.

We also follow Safer Recruitment practices, ensuring that every member of our team is suitable and equipped to work with children and young people.

SAFEGUARDING IN THE SYSTEM

As Young Somerset continues to grow, our role in system-wide safeguarding has expanded. We are now key stakeholders in multi-agency groups, including the High Intensity Users Group—a collaborative effort to reduce the number of young people repeatedly attending A&E for mental health reasons. Our involvement in these groups ensures that the voices and needs of young people are represented and understood at a strategic level.

Young Somerset also work collaboratively with MIND – supporting MIND colleagues with the year-round provision of support to residents of Somerset by way of MINDLINE.

“The continued support provided to Mindline by Young Somerset has been invaluable over the last 12 months. The Young Somerset call handlers who support with taking calls have been a vital part of the Mindline team, supporting our callers and helping us to meet the demands of our service. We have also worked collaboratively to ensure a high-level of support for young people, seamlessly handing cases from one service to another for a swift and appropriate response.”

Amanda Mason - Mindline Project Lead



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAM

Our implementation of the Mental Health Support Team (MHST), delivered in partnership with Somerset Foundation Trust (CAMHS) and Somerset Council, is firmly aligned with the Government's 2017 Green Paper, Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health.

MHST now operates in 34% of primary and secondary schools in Somerset—surpassing the national target of 25% coverage by 2024—demonstrating our proactive commitment to scaling early mental health support for children and young people (CYP).

With a multi-disciplinary team including Education Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPs), Children's Wellbeing Practitioners (CWPs), Advanced Practitioners (APs), and Whole School Approach Practitioners (WSAPs), the MHST model promotes a holistic, whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing. This comprehensive support extends to CYP aged 5–16, school staff, and parents/carers, focusing on early intervention, direct therapeutic support, and capacity-building across educational settings.

KEY DELIVERY AND OUTCOMES

- **7,402** individual contacts with CYP
- **554** CYP assessed, resulting in **3,665** intervention sessions
- **57** audit support meetings conducted with schools
- **450+** consultation meetings held annually with school staff
- **18,917** individuals (parents, staff, CYP) accessed mental health and wellbeing information
- **93%** of CYP gave positive feedback on their experience
- Wave 11 expansion is enabling MHST to reach **30** more schools,

"I would like to thank you for making myself feel at ease and speaking to me. As I said in the meeting, I was a little shocked that [CYP] spoke as much as he did which definitely put my mind at ease and I felt [CYP] was very comfortable talking to you. [CYP] was able to speak freely and felt at ease throughout!"

– Parent feedback after assessment (Mendip)

"Really great, I learned a lot about anxiety and how to help myself with my anxiety."

– CYP feedback following intervention



DEVELOPMENTS IN 2024/2025

- **15** new trainee Education Mental Health Practitioners recruited
- **2** Children's Wellbeing Practitioners recruited
- **4** Team Leaders appointed across Somerset to strengthen leadership and support
- **1** EMHP commenced Advanced Practitioner training at Exeter University
- **1** Team Leader is completing a Level 5 Operations/Departmental Manager Apprenticeship
- **2** qualified practitioners trained in Decider Skills, this intervention aims to improve accessibility and engagement

OPERATIONAL MODEL REFINEMENT

To ensure equitable and consistent delivery across the county, significant improvements have been made to the operational model:

- Referral-to-assessment waiting times have been **reduced from 217 days (July 2024) to 49 days (March 2025)**.
- A self-referral pilot launched in Mendip for Year 10 students, with **180** pupils accessing the offer; this is being expanded to other year groups and extended to a secondary school in Sedgemoor.

LOOKING AHEAD

The MHST continues to evolve in response to local need, evidence-based practice, and strategic developments. With Wave 11 now in motion and continued investment in practitioner development, Young Somerset's MHST is building an enduring, scalable model of mental health support that puts children, families, and school communities at the centre.



COMMUNITY WELLBEING SERVICE

OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The Community Wellbeing Service supports children and young people across Somerset who are experiencing mild to moderate mental health difficulties, including low mood, anxiety, phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), panic, social anxiety, and separation anxiety.

Our approach is relational, flexible, and child-centred—we work with children, young people, and their families in settings where they feel most comfortable: schools, local community spaces, health centres, and online. Support is tailored to individual needs and delivered in a range of formats, including one-to-one sessions, small groups (6–10), and larger whole-class or year-group sessions. Our focus is on equipping children and young people with tools to understand their emotions, build confidence and resilience, and strengthen their wellbeing for the long term.

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

In 2024/2025, we made it a strategic priority to expand support to schools not designated as part of the Mental Health Support Teams (MHST), ensuring equity of access to mental health support across the county.

We began by offering initial consultations with schools to explore existing support systems for pupils, staff, and families. From there, we co-designed bespoke wellbeing offers that address identified gaps or emerging needs.

This includes:

- Helping schools, families, and professionals understand how to request support for individual pupils
- Providing termly follow-up meetings to review progress and adapt the offer as needed
- Building sustained, collaborative relationships with education settings across all phases

“Working with Young Somerset this year has been such a privilege. It has enabled so many of our pupils to access the appropriate support when they need it. From Foundation Stage to Year 6, Young Somerset have supported staff to ensure the right intervention is used to support individuals and groups.

They offer a really broad range of interventions and work flexibly to meet individual needs within already full timetables. The team truly understand the challenges schools face and adapt to accommodate them. Having a member of the Young Somerset team in school each week means that staff can brainstorm and problem-solve collaboratively and effectively when thinking about next steps.”

**Ali Gray, Inclusion Leader
Oaklands Primary School, Yeovil**



EXAMPLES OF SCHOOL-BASED DELIVERY

In a first school, we are delivering a group programme for eight Year 3 children focused on understanding and managing anxiety. This includes emotional literacy, coping tools, and self-regulation strategies. We are also working with a whole Year 4 class on similar themes and delivering parent workshops on Anxiety, Low Mood and Building Resilience. At a middle school, we've attended parent evenings to promote the service and engaged pupils through assemblies on wellbeing for Years 7 and 8. A targeted group of Year 8 pupils identified as vulnerable during their transition to Senior School are participating in a bespoke 6-session programme focused on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) tools, split into pre-transition and post-transition phases, to support emotional adjustment and resilience.

IMPROVING ACCESS AND EFFICIENCY

We have also reviewed and improved our assessment appointment process for individual support requests:

- Waiting times have significantly reduced, with assessments now taking place within 4 weeks
- Families feel heard and supported earlier
- Where our service isn't the right fit, we are able to signpost swiftly and appropriately, improving access to the right support at the right time

SERVICE DELIVERY HIGHLIGHTS

4,418 attended consultations in 2024/25

861 assessments completed

668 individual children and young people supported

Continued focus on early intervention, responsive care, and school-embedded delivery



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND CLINICAL LEADERSHIP

We continue to invest in the development of a highly skilled and resilient workforce:

- Four trainee Children's Wellbeing Practitioners (CWPs) submitted and passed their coursework in March 2025
- Three new trainees began in January 2025 and are now working within the service
- One CWP successfully qualified as a clinical supervisor
- Two trainee Senior Practitioners completed their first year and are now qualified Clinical Supervisors and commenced their second year enabling the extension of our clinical work
- One CWP commenced advanced practitioner training at Exeter university

This growing team is equipped to support a broader and more complex range of presentations, including:

- Adapting Low-Intensity CBT (LICBT) for neurodiverse young people
- Supporting younger children with OCD
- Incorporating clinical approaches to tics and emerging presentations



EARLY YEARS

Laying Strong Foundations for Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Early Years Team is committed to delivering timely, accessible support for the **mental health and wellbeing of children aged 0–5 and their families**. At the heart of our work is a belief in the power of early intervention—helping children thrive by giving families the tools, guidance, and confidence they need during these formative years.

We offer a blended model of clinical and non-clinical support, accessible to families and Early Years settings across Somerset. This includes:

- 1:1 therapeutic interventions e.g. Video Interaction Guidance & Incredible Years Home Coaching
- Parent group support, including evidence-based programmes and one-off parent workshops
- Small groups focused on key themes like Friendship, Social Skills and Managing Big Emotions



By supporting both the child and their wider support network, we aim to address the emotional and social needs of young children in a holistic, responsive way.

Our work is grounded in the understanding that early experiences shape long-term outcomes. By helping parents and carers nurture positive mental health from the earliest years, we are laying the foundations for children's future learning, relationships, and emotional resilience.

Whether through a structured home coaching programme, a conversation at a workshop, or a playful group session in a nursery setting, the Early Years Team continues to bring vital support where it matters most—early, locally, and with compassion.

PARENTING WORKSHOPS: A KEY FIRST STEP

Parenting workshops have been a standout success this year:

30% increase in parent/carer attendance

140% increase in workshops delivered to Early Years settings

These sessions have become a vital part of our graduated response—often acting as a first step for families who later go on to access more targeted interventions.

By building relationships, sharing practical strategies, and offering peer connection, these workshops help parents feel more confident, less isolated, and better equipped to support their child's development and emotional wellbeing.



CASE STUDY

Krystal, a parent of two children aged 4 and 5, struggled with challenging behaviours. She first accessed support in March 2024 through an Incredible Years programme offered at her child's school. After a successful referral in October 2024, Krystal received 1:1 intervention for her 4 year-old son.

She shared the following feedback:

"We are now able to parent much more confidently and calmly. We have discovered that although we have a positive and calm family, (child) is now much more emotionally regulated...He is also now very good at verbally talking through what is bothering him...The people at Young Somerset are incredibly passionate, empathetic, and quite frankly brilliant"



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WELLBEING SUPPORT

How I Shine: Empowering Children and Families

This year, "How I Shine" continued to grow—reaching more children, families, and communities across Somerset. Building on the success of our Key Stage 1 programme, we successfully launched a Key Stage 2 pilot in a Bridgwater school. This important step allowed us to bring the same strength-based, relational approach to older children, equipping them with tools to better understand their emotions and support one another.

Our Parent Workshop programme continued to expand its reach—connecting with businesses, schools, and community spaces to empower families with practical, supportive skills. The popularity of the "Tuning into Kids" sessions has surged, with schools across the region requesting repeat delivery—clear evidence of the programme's resonance and effectiveness.



***Tuning Into Kids and
Tuning Into Teens
delivered 66 sessions
across 11 schools.***



***Total number of parents, children and young people
worked with: 318 Parents, 911 CYP***

OUR HOLISTIC APPROACH

Connecting services across mental health, wellbeing, and family support—was brought to life through a compelling real-life story:

A child referred to Low-Intensity CBT through the Children's Wellbeing Service had a parent who later attended one of our Young Somerset parent workshops. Through that experience, the family built greater understanding and connection, and the child went on to successfully engage in a non-clinical support group. This is exactly what we aim to achieve—joined-up, accessible support that makes a difference to the whole family.

Most powerfully, we saw the impact in the words and actions of the young people themselves:

"I used what you taught me this week. There was a little boy, and I used some of the skills—we spoke about barrier skills last week. I moved him away from everyone and asked, 'Are you okay?' He said, 'I'm not okay.' I remembered you saying not everyone will want to talk, so I told him that was okay, and I was there if he changed his mind."

This moment speaks to everything "How I Shine" is about—empathy, confidence, emotional literacy, and giving children tools to support themselves and each other. As we continue to scale the programme, these everyday stories of kindness and growth remind us of the power of early intervention and relational support.



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PARENTING OFFER

PARENT AND CARER WORKSHOPS

103 parent/carers have attended a total of **13** workshops with **17** more workshops booked in over the coming months, we continue to engage with schools, community groups and businesses to promote our offer.

This represents a **240%** increase in delivery of these workshops.

"Really insightful. Great, open conversations"

"Brilliant workshop, very informative"

"Found it very useful, lots of good tips"

Young Somerset offers free, non-clinical workshops for parents and carers. These sessions are intended to help parents and carers feel more confident in supporting their children's emotional health and wellbeing.

The workshops focus on Anxiety and Low Mood, Building Resilience, and Self-Injury. Each workshop is 1½ to 2 hours long and is facilitated by members of Young Somerset's Mental Health and Wellbeing Team. The sessions are adult-only, allowing for a safe and respectful space where parents and carers can share their experiences and offer peer support. The workshops are suitable for parents of both primary and secondary-age children.

All workshops can be delivered during the day or evening. They are designed to be informal and welcoming, with tea, coffee, and biscuits provided. Participants are encouraged to share their experiences, knowledge of local support, and what they have found helpful or unhelpful.

As part of a graduated response, participants have been signposted to other services within Young Somerset or to more appropriate services in the local area.

Workshops are offered at our premises in Taunton and Bridgwater. Over the last quarter, we have developed a workshop specifically aimed at dads, as evidence shows they are historically underrepresented. Following a very successful workshop at Eurilait (one of our corporate sponsors) we have also begun to approach local businesses and corporate partners to offer workshops for their staff. We are working in collaboration with Frome Medical Centre, have engaged with the parents of the interns at Bold and Brave, and are setting up a new workshop for parents and carers of young people with diabetes.

"It made me realise that resilience is not about being strong but about knowing when you need help"



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PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION

WHY PARTICIPATION MATTERS

Participation is more than a process—it's a powerful tool that builds confidence, grows skills, and strengthens community. It helps young people feel heard, supported, and valued. It encourages leadership, collaboration, and responsibility, preparing them for active roles in their communities and beyond.

Young people shared what participation has meant to them:

"I enjoyed being part of the planning. It was nice to see how our ideas were part of everything."

"I'm feeling more confident and I am talking to more people, which I usually wouldn't do."

STRENGTHENING YOUTH VOICE

A robust framework has been developed to ensure young people's voices influence the organisation at every level.

LI-CBT Waiting List Participation Group: In collaboration with MHST and CWS teams, a new framework was developed to engage young people on the waiting list for LI-CBT services—offering connection, voice, and a sense of involvement even while awaiting therapeutic support.

School-based Participation Groups: Workshops in primary and secondary schools on safeguarding and community safety have both informed our practice and strengthened relationships with education settings.

CREATING INCLUSIVE PLATFORMS

Marketing Focus Groups: In partnership with the National Youth Agency, a review of participation communications helped reshape marketing materials and messages to better connect with young people's needs and language

Local Networks: Representing Young Somerset in key forums—including the Somerset Equalities Partnership and Somerset LGBTQ+ Network—has helped champion inclusivity and accessibility across all service areas.



COLLABORATING ACROSS COMMUNITIES

Joint projects with local organisations, schools, and Somerset Council have helped inform wider strategies such as the Children and Young People's Plan. Regular presence at the Umbrella Group and Violence Reduction Hubs has provided direct access to youth voice, ensuring services reflect the reality of young people's experiences.

Engagement at Fresher's Fairs and careers events included conducting a survey on employability—completed by **170** young people—which directly shaped Young Somerset's UK Youth Building Connections project.

"Every child and young person who has had any contact with any part of Young Somerset should have an opportunity to share their lived experience and feedback."

CELEBRATING YOUTH WORK

For National Youth Work Week 2024, Young Somerset partnered with Seed Creative, Into Film, and Somerset Business Association to run 14 free workshops over 5 days in Angel Place, Bridgwater. The programme combined youth work, mental wellbeing, and the arts—bringing together young people, professionals, and partners to celebrate the theme:

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Young Somerset's commitment to authentic youth voice has been recognised through its place on the Youth Voice Practitioner Panel, hosted by YMCA George Williams College. This national platform highlighted excellence in practice and reinforced the organisation's role in shaping sector-wide learning.

"A right to youth work for all – delivering positive futures for young people."

"The support has been really good - I've become a better person and more social"



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BOLD & BRAVE SHOP

14 Riverside Place, St. James Street, Taunton, TA1 1JH

The shop is unique in its offering as it provides a platform for young people to sell their handmade goods. Whilst also working with local entrepreneurs we have continued to increased our product offering this last year, working with over **50** young people.

We are proud to say that some of our young sellers have gone on to work within our cafe/shop.



"I find it easier to speak to others since working in the shop"

"Making my cards is relaxing and I felt excited when I was able to sell them in the shop"

We are proud to offer work experience, volunteering opportunities and a Supported Internship for young people to get exposure in the work place and build confidence in a customer setting.

The Bold and Brave shop in Taunton stands out as a unique and vibrant social enterprise, dedicated to empowering the next generation of young creatives and entrepreneurs. At its core, the shop provides a dynamic platform for young people to design, create, and sell their own handmade products. This initiative not only gives them a voice but also equips them with practical enterprise skills that build confidence, resilience, and ambition.

Over the past year, we have significantly broadened our product range, collaborating with more than 50 young people as well as a growing number of local entrepreneurs. This rich partnership model ensures the shop is constantly evolving, offering customers an eclectic mix of high-quality, locally-made goods that reflect the creativity and energy of Somerset's youth.

What truly sets Bold and Brave apart is its commitment to progression. Many of our young sellers have gone on to take up roles within the shop and Bold and Brave café—gaining valuable work experience in retail, customer service, and hospitality. These experiences are often a stepping stone to further employment or training, equipping young people with the tools they need to thrive.

Whether browsing handmade crafts or enjoying a coffee in our welcoming café space at Taunton Library, every purchase at Bold and Brave helps support a young person's journey toward independence and success

"Bold and Brave has given me a platform to reach more customers and be more creative"

"I have enjoyed talking to new people"



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BOLD & BRAVE CAFE

Since launching in 2023, the Bold and Brave Café has demonstrated strong growth and continued to develop as a cornerstone of Young Somerset's commitment to youth empowerment. Based in Taunton Library, the café became a thriving environment where young people were supported to gain real-world experience in a supportive, inclusive setting.

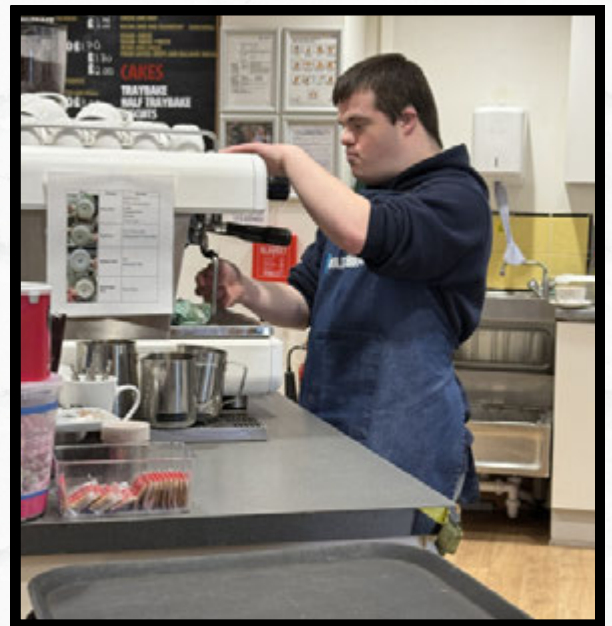
Over the course of the financial year, the café offered numerous work experience placements to young people. Each placement represented a unique opportunity for a young person to develop confidence, build skills, and gain valuable insights into working life. From customer service and food preparation to stock management and marketing support, young people played a vital role in the daily operations of the café.

We were proud to support ten interns through our Supported Internship programme during the year. These interns were immersed in a range of roles across hospitality, retail, and digital services, allowing them to explore their interests while working towards accredited outcomes and future employment. In addition to day-to-day operations, the Bold and Brave team began scoping opportunities to expand into new locations across Somerset. These future sites will enable us to increase our impact, offering more young people the chance to access meaningful work experience within their local communities. Through Bold and Brave Café, Young Somerset continued to put young people first—equipping them with the tools, experiences and support needed to shape a brighter, more independent future.

In February 2024 a young person who started on work experience went on to graduate their apprenticeship with Distinction.

"I have met so many new people and my confidence in talking to people has grown"

"Bold and Brave staff support me when I feel stressed in the cafe and are really encouraging"



We have **10** interns on our Supported Internship programme who are provided with the opportunity to work in hospitality, retail and digital

"Bold and Brave Café has helped me to grow my skills with hot drinks and food"

Bold and Brave is looking to expand into new locations across the county. This will provide more young people with work experience opportunities.



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CELEBRATING OUR FIRST SUPPORTED INTERNS AT BOLD AND BRAVE

Our interns at Bold and Brave in Taunton made a real impact, gaining hands-on experience across Hospitality, Business, Digital, and Retail by working four days a week in the shop and café.

Supported by a dedicated Job Coaches, they built confidence, practical skills, and real-world insight.

Alongside this, one day a week was spent with Somerset Skills and Learning, where they focused on employability skills and had the opportunity to work towards qualifications in key areas such as Maths and English, Food Hygiene, Customer Service, Manual Handling, and Digital Skills.

This holistic approach working in real customer facing businesses helps prepare them for future employment and empower them to reach their full potential.

**I would never believed that I could have spoken
in front of a group of people until now.**

Emmie

**I never thought I would be comfortable serving
& speaking to customers.**

Ethan

**"This year has been a real eye opener for me.
Being a part of the Interns development is a
feeling unmatched."**

Shanon

**"I love coming to work everyday with a group of
truly inspirational young people."**

Michala

The interns have maintained
91% attendance throughout
the year

60% of the interns have
engaged in placements
outside of Bold and Brave



YOUTH SERVICES

Pathways to Confidence, Connection, and Opportunity

Across our Youth Services, Alternative Education, and Youth Enterprise programmes, every interaction with young people is strengths-focused and outcomes-driven. We centre our work on the following impact areas:

Increasing confidence
Reducing social isolation
Supporting new skill development
Promoting physical wellbeing
Building positive relationships
Developing aspirations for the future

Youth Work That Puts Young People First

Our Targeted Youth Support (TYS) service is rooted in the youth work methodology—creating open, trusting relationships that are led by the young people themselves. We do things with young people, not for or to them. Many of the young people we work with face complex barriers including mental health challenges, additional learning needs, or significant social isolation. For these young people, mainstream education or traditional services may not be accessible. Our services aim to create a pathway to adulthood, tailored to their individual journey.

UMBRELLA

Umbrella offers young people experiencing emotional distress or low mental health respite, positive activities, and mentoring in a supportive, peer-led environment. Grounded in youth work, the service encourages relationship-building, peer support, and informed decision-making for the future.

Sessions are delivered in youth-friendly, local spaces. With a focus on outcomes, the programme tracks changes in education attendance, achieving a **30%** increase among participating young people.

JIGSAW: YOUTH WORKERS IN CLINICAL SERVICES

Our Jigsaw service provides specialist 1:1 mentoring for young people aged 11–18 who have experienced significant self-harm or difficulty managing long-term health needs (such as diabetes).

Working in partnership with CAMHS Liaison, Paediatrics, and Diabetes Teams at Musgrove Park Hospital and Yeovil District Hospital, we've supported 60 young people in the past year.

The service has helped reduce readmission rates to just 10%, with CAMHS Liaison admissions dropping by 50% since the service began.



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YOUNG RANGERS: BUILDING SKILLS AND STEWARDSHIP

The Young Rangers programme offers young people aged 12–16 the opportunity to engage with nature through hands-on conservation and land-based learning in the Quantocks. Participants learn practical skills such as drystone walling, hedge laying, fencing, tree planting, first aid, map reading, and wildlife surveying—all while developing teamwork, confidence, and a sense of environmental responsibility. This year, Young Rangers worked toward Level 1 and 2 accredited modules in land-based skills, with older members progressing toward formal apprenticeships in countryside management. Beyond qualifications, the programme fosters a deep connection to the environment and a sense of achievement that supports personal growth and future employability.



What have you learnt about nature and conservation?

“The skills I have learnt have included hedge laying, map reading, conservation skills like removing invasive species; IDing trees and plants. It has improved my confidence and helped me make friends. I love everything at Young Rangers- all of it is fun “

CASE STUDY

“My young rangers journey started in January 2024. My safeguarding lead at school referred me as I had started secondary school and was finding it hard to make friends. I have loads of friends now and it's only 8 months later. Young rangers has changed me – I have lots of friends now and I am much more open. I would be doing nothing without young rangers, it has really helped me. If young rangers keeps going I would love to do something environmental for my GCSEs. I would also like an apprenticeship with Young Somerset. I would definitely recommend Young Rangers to other people, as it has really helped me.”



Over the course of the project, Young Somerset have delivered **2245** hours of outdoors and practical conservation work with young people in Somerset.



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ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Our Alternative Education offer provides 1:1 and small group support to young people who are disengaged from or struggling within mainstream education. Sessions are built around practical, hands-on experiences and meaningful relationships.

Activities include:

- Motor mechanics
- Art and creative media
- Digital skills
- Outdoor learning
- Retail and hospitality
- 1:1 mentoring and social communication skills



We offer accredited qualifications in Employability and Functional Skills, and we focus on community-based and work-based learning that builds confidence and capability. Support packages are typically commissioned by the Local Authority or schools, and usually run across the full academic year.

In the past year, our team planned and delivered 518 sessions, achieving 85% attendance—a significant outcome for young people with previous patterns of disengagement.

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME (HAF)

During half-term and Easter breaks, we delivered sessions for young people eligible for free school meals. Using facilities at Thistle Park, we ran creative and practical sessions such as Arts and Crafts and Campfire Cookery—bringing together **70** young people for learning, connection, and fun, all while preparing and sharing meals together.

YOUTH HUBS: LISTENING TO YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY

Commissioned by the Violence Reduction Partnership, our Youth Workers delivered weekly drop-in hubs in McDonald's Taunton and Coffee #1 Bridgwater, located in identified areas of youth vulnerability.

Over the year, we gathered insight from **1,264 young people**, helping us understand their lived experience and how safe they feel in their communities. These insights inform wider safeguarding strategies and future youth engagement plans.





Young Somerset

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who has made this work possible — through funding, partnerships, donations and community fundraising. Every contribution, big or small, has helped us support young people across Somerset.

We're especially grateful to our staff, trustees, families, friends, and local groups who have given their time, energy and resources to help us do more. Looking ahead, we're focused on continuing to grow our reach and improve the quality of support we offer. With your continued support, we can keep making a real difference.

Young people are at the heart of everything we do — and we're not done yet.

Nik Harwood
Chief Executive



<https://www.youngsomerset.org.uk>

