

Bristol's voluntary and community sector youth work strategy

2021 - 2024



"Over the last year and a half we have seen youth work being more vital than ever. It is a life line for many young people and fills in gaps that many do not even realise are there. It's essential in making sure that no young person is left behind, young people both inside and outside the school system. This strategy is so important because it's going to bring together all of the amazing work going on in Bristol. We can't wait to see the final results."

Alice Towle and John Wayman, Bristol's Youth Mayors

OUR AIM

Our aim, by working together, is to ensure high quality youth provision is available across the city for all young people.

"Youth work is a complex series of professional principles, practices and methods which we often describe as the science of enabling young people to believe in themselves and build positive futures". (National Youth Agency, 10 Year Strategy 2020)

Youth work impacts positively on young people's lives, contributing to **health** and **wellbeing**, **personal safety**, **employment** and **training**, future aspirations and much more. Young people spend **80-85%** of their time outside of school, and yet youth work is not a statutory service. Youth work is a profession in its own right but is often the poor relation of services when compared to education, social care and health.

Fantastic youth work takes place across Bristol; delivered by small grassroots charities, larger regional and national organisations, and everything in between. The provision is broad, including open access opportunities through to highly targeted specialist provision. As a city



working together across sectors, **Bristol values its young people** and invests in services to support them to **develop and flourish**. Bristol has a rich and diverse youth work sector which brings in more than £7.2m of income into the city with **30%** of this coming from the Local Authority's current Targeted Youth Services investment.



This strategy has been produced by voluntary and community sector youth providers who want to **ensure a strong and sustainable youth sector** in the coming years. This partnership builds on the strengths **individual organisations**, developing **shared goals** and recognising the **different approaches needed** across the city.



The **strategic priorities** have been identified by hearing from young people, an audit of **18 organisations** working with young people, and wider community consultations with local grassroots, faith based, sports, young carers', environmental, entrepreneurial and mental health services both directly and through an online survey.



This initial picture gave us an understanding of:

- **What young people want** from their youth services
- The **skills and training of the workforce** delivering youth work in the city at present, their level of experience and the youth work and other qualifications that they hold
- The **reach** into our communities and how many young people we currently work with across Bristol as a collective
- The **geographical spread of these services** across the city
- The **type of youth work delivery being delivered** e.g. youth clubs in buildings open to all young people in a community, 1-1 or small group targeted provision
- Our reach to **communities of need** or **specialist groups**
- An understanding of **strengths and gaps** within the youth sector



WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE TOLD US

Young people have told us what they want from their youth services
"Having someone who cares about our wellbeing and believes in us".

To be welcome

To have trusted and honest relationships with adults

For others to find out who we are and what we're passionate about

To have support and opportunities to pursue our interests and goals

Not to be isolated, have ways to connect and places to go

To have opportunities for fun and recreation

Guidance to navigate our way and for you to advocate for us when needed

Equal access to employment opportunities

For our families and communities to be safe and supported

Confidential space to discuss how we are feeling, to talk honestly with no filter

To be listened to without judgement

Meet us where we are – both in terms of physical locations and also emotionally

You to remember that everyone of us is unique

You to catch us before we fall

Our community consultations showed us that organisations **highly value practitioners** being connected to the city and having a knowledge of the recent **histories** of the areas they are working in. This enables the **joining up** of youth work with wider community work and connects young people to their local communities.



For young people, community groups told us there should be more:

Safe spaces for young people within all communities in Bristol



More positive activities for young people to participate in

There needs to be more culturally appropriate service provision that takes account of minority ethnic needs

Mentoring



"Detached workers in the streets have helped to make groups of young people feel safer"

For organisations, community groups told us there should be more:

Training and continuous professional development opportunities for the youth and support workers

Support around mental health issues we know young people will face, with a focus on navigating the systematic hardships and issues

Support and connectivity for alternative education within the youth infrastructure

Ongoing and improved collaboration between youth work providers and all organisations involved in the young person's life e.g. School, CAMHS, Health, Social Care

Medium to long term funding to ensure sustainability

AUDIT OF CURRENT YOUTH WORK PROVISION

To help inform our vision/strategy document we carried out an **audit of youth work organisations** delivering in the city to give us a picture of current delivery in Bristol.



We have then looked to benchmark this data and measure this against some **national recommendations about youth work practice** by the National Youth Agency (NYA) from their '10 Year Vision for Youth Work 2020-2030' document (released in Nov 2020) and their 'Guidance for Local Authorities on Providing Youth Services' document (produced in Oct 2020).

HOW MANY YOUNG PEOPLE DO OUR CURRENT YOUTH SERVICES REACH?



National Youth Agency guidance sets a challenge to local authorities that **youth services should have a reach of 80% of the young people in the city** having contact with youth services at any time, of whom, **35% should interact on a regular basis**, with **10% supported by targeted youth specialists at any time**.

Bristol has an approximate youth population of young people aged **8-19 years old of 61,831** (13% of the overall population of Bristol) and our initial audit indicates that the current delivery of those organisations who responded to the audit shows we reach approx. 17,300 of this population = **28%** of the 8-19 year old population reached. Within this reach **34% are 8-12 year olds** and **66% are 13-19 year olds**. We have not looked into figures for how often they engage or how many are engaged by targeted youth specialists at this stage.

DELIVERY BREAKDOWN OF YOUTH WORK TYPE IN BRISTOL

Youth work has traditionally been based on the delivery of youth clubs which operate in local communities, easily accessible by young people **close to where they live**. These youth centres then become the hub from which young people access other more **specialist support, targeted groups** or **interest-based programmes** such as sports, arts or youth social action/ volunteering projects.



Over the austerity years many youth clubs have been **forced to close** or funding has been cut to these services, as targeted work has been prioritised, meaning both the number of community youth clubs and the amount of time they are open has **reduced**, giving young people **less access to youth workers**.



Currently those organisations audited breakdown their delivery as follows:

30% of delivery is 'open access' youth club provision.

21% is 1-1 support work of identified individuals.

20% is considered targeted.

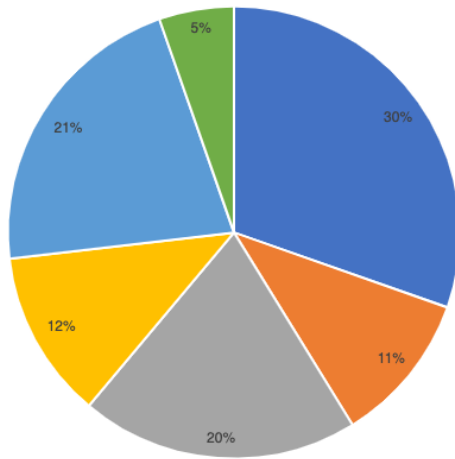
11% is detached or street-based work.

12% is work with small groups but not considered targeted provision.

5% is other e.g. mobile provision.

"They make me feel relaxed and responsible"

Youth Work Delivery Type



■ Open Access ■ Detached ■ Targeted ■ Small group ■ 1 to 1 ■ Other

STAFF WORKFORCE IN THE YOUTH WORK SECTOR IN BRISTOL

The organisations audited currently categorise the breakdown of their workforce as follows:

41 Senior Youth Workers

106 Youth Workers

41 Youth Support Workers

3 Apprentices

This figure is not the number of **full-time** equivalent staff and does not take into consideration factors like how many **hours each team members works** and we know some staff work for a number of youth work organisations so there may be some duplication.



In their '10 Year Vision for Youth Work 2020-30' the NYA set a vision for there to be a **minimum** requirement for at least **two full-time equivalent professional**, JNC **qualified youth workers** and a team of at least **four youth support workers** alongside trained volunteers, located within in each secondary school catchment area.

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Bristol currently has 17 secondary schools so based on the NYA vision this would equate to at least:

34 full-time equivalent JNC degree level qualified youth workers.

68 youth support workers

Plus trained volunteers (our audit did not ask about volunteers or qualifications that they hold)

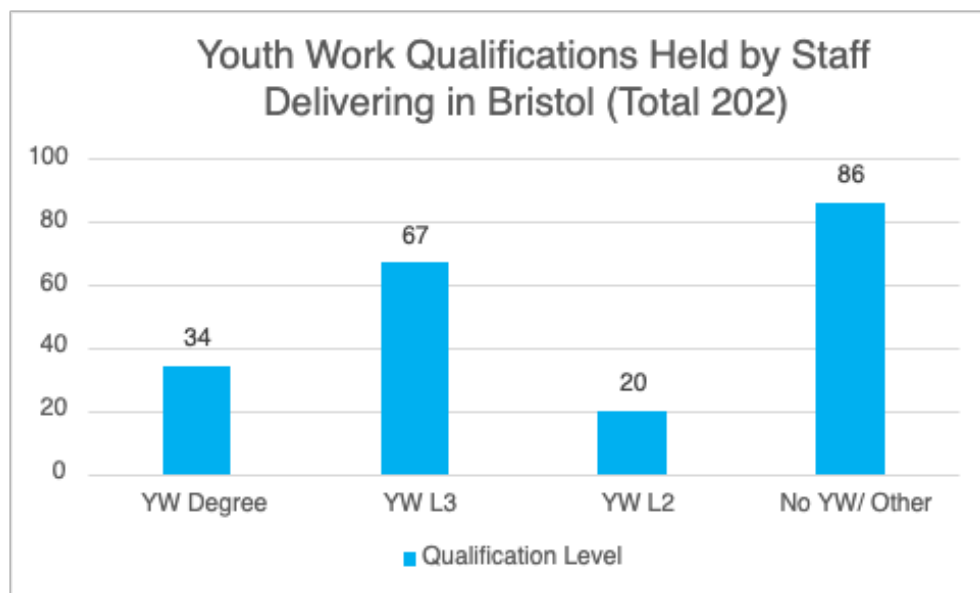
Our audit suggests we are close to these numbers in terms of how many staff we have in total, but this is not the number of **full-time equivalents**, and we know a lot of youth workers do part-time hours. However, it is a good baseline and with **good training** and **continuous professional development opportunities** we believe we can develop our workforce over time.

"Having these sessions has helped improve my confidence so much, I now feel able to do things I wasn't able to do before and am a lot better at managing stress"





In terms of qualifications held by the current workforce the audit reveals the following:



"I really appreciated others opening up about the racism they have experienced as it makes me feel less alone in what I have been through".

We now need to do more to understand:

How many staff are currently in training/ working towards Youth Work qualifications.

The profile of our JNC (Youth Work degree) level qualified staff e.g. Are a lot close to retirement?

What level of experience do these staff have?

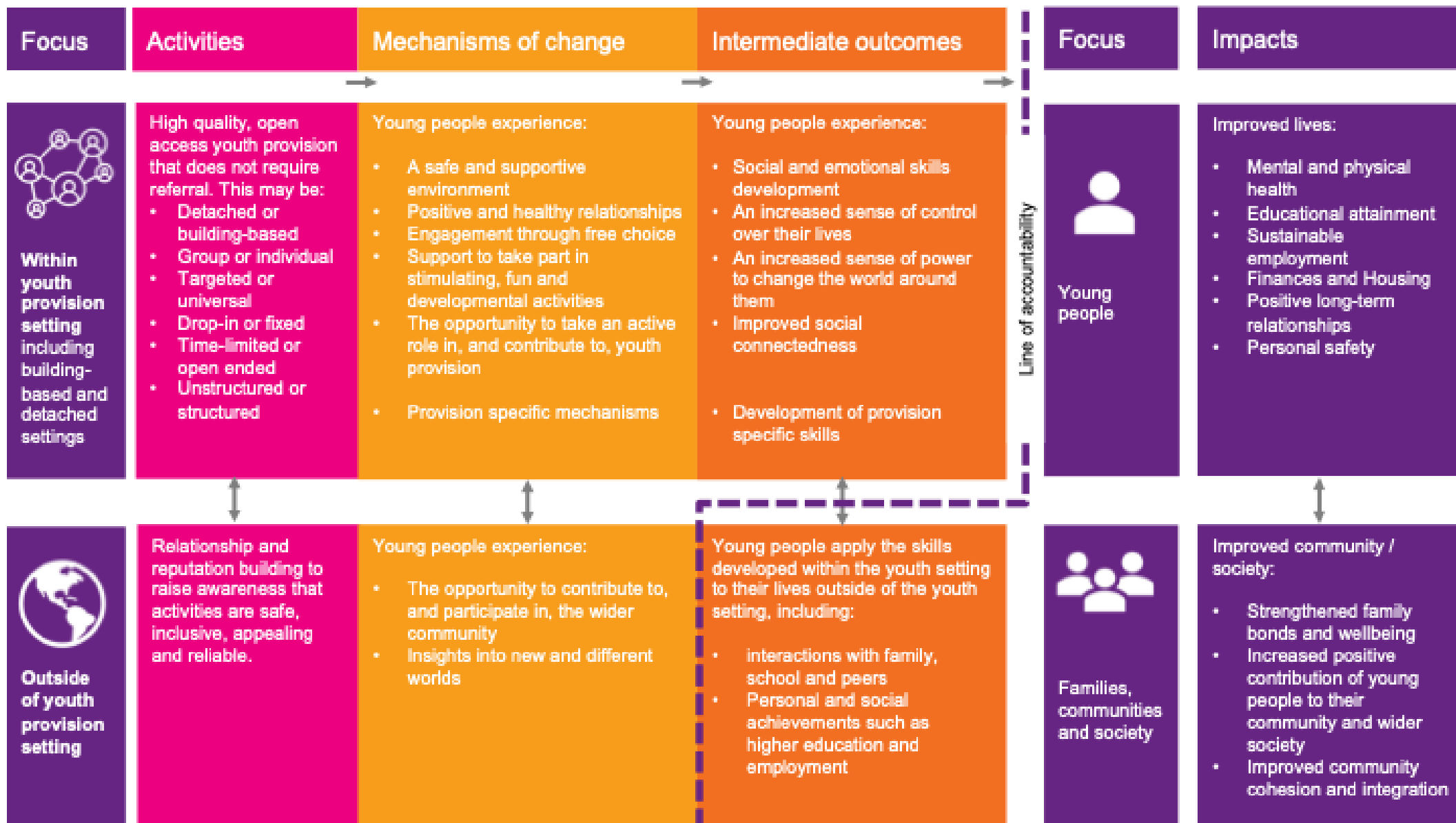
How many youth work graduates are entering the profession to ensure we have a pipeline for future?

The sector has been committed to creating better pathways for someone starting out as an unqualified worker/ volunteer within our youth settings to becoming a qualified and experienced youth worker. We do not have the data to show how many part or fully qualified youth workers have come through this route.

Across the organisations audited we currently only employ three apprentices and we felt this was an area we should improve upon to develop a way into working within youth work for young people locally and also to enable us to 'grow our own' staff for the future.

The Bristol youth sector has agreed to work to the Centre for Youth Impact's **theory of change**. This is a nationally recognised theory of change developed with input from the country's youth sector including Bristol. **It was updated in May 2021.**



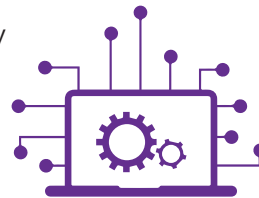


BRISTOL CONTEXT

Bristol is a young, diverse and growing city. The city has a **younger age profile** than England and Wales as a whole with almost **1 in 5** people **aged under 16**. Diversity in Bristol is reflected in the **45 religions** and **187 countries of birth** represented, and **91 main languages** spoken.



Bristol is one of the **fastest-growing cities** in the UK. The city has a reputation for the **high-tech industry**, **innovation**, **creativity**, and **entrepreneurship**. It is the economic powerhouse of the West of England region and has consistently reported higher than average **economic growth** over the last 15 years.



However, not all of its citizens share in this success. Systemic inequalities in education, employment and health continue to exist, for example **60%** of the city's minority ethnic populations live in **areas of economic disadvantage**. The city is also marked as the **7th worst of 348 districts** in England & Wales for black and minority ethnic communities to live and thrive, with **equality gaps failing** to improve since 2001. The Bristol Joint Strategic Needs Assessment provides a detailed analysis of challenges and opportunities in the city.



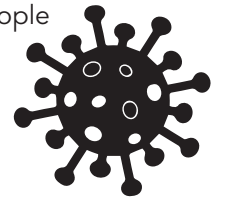
www.bristol.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/joint-strategic-needs-assessment

Over the last few years, the city's **awareness** and **interest** in inclusive **economic growth** and **social justice** have been noticeable with the introduction of structures such as the **One City Office** and the **One City Plan**. The launch of the Belonging Strategy focusing on the four key areas of **belonging from the beginning**, **belonging in families**, **belonging in education** and **belonging in the community** is also a significant development in the city's approach to **children**, **young people** and **families**, with important synergies for the youth sector.

"They are always there for me when I feel down."



Child poverty remains a significant issue in the city, with the COVID pandemic set to further exacerbate and **affect the life chances** of young people from low income households for more than a generation. A significant impact on **health disparities** between communities, the psychological and postcode divide amongst young people, **structural barriers** of transport connectivity across wards remain as challenges which need to be addressed.



The youth sector in the city has much to **celebrate**, and has continued to offer young people **valuable** and **much-needed** services throughout austerity and the pandemic. Continued **investment** and **fundraising** has ensured Bristol's youth sector has fared better than many other parts of the country over the last decade. Challenges remain, and the youth sector remains **committed to respond to challenges** but needs collaboration incentives, financial investment and capacity building support to continue to make the **significant impact needed**.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The priorities identified over the next three years:

Sufficient provision | Evidence the impact of youth work | Staff training and development | Influence and campaign re longer term funding
 Opportunities to network, share information, policy and best practice | Develop terms of reference for continuing and improving collaborative working

PRIORITY	ACTIONS IN YEAR ONE
<p>SUFFICIENT PROVISION</p> <p>Ensure suitable mix of open access, detached, outreach, online, universal, targeted, and Covid-recovery work across the city.</p> <p>Promote and ensure sufficient citywide youth work provision, particularly in areas of deprivation, to help mitigate the exacerbated inequality in a post-COVID world.</p> <p>Ensure sufficient and appropriate buildings/physical space for youth work and youth friendly places.</p>	<p>Identify a base-level of open-access youth services, supported by detached, targeted and online youth services, mapped against the National Youth Agency 10 Year Strategy 2020 and the Bristol audit of youth sector provision 2021.</p> <p>Capture the gaps and develop timed action plan to address, resulting in:</p> <p>A consistent youth club open access offer that is available and accessible to young people within key geographic communities within an agreed minimum distance and open as often as possible, and including specialist provision for communities of interest</p> <p>A consistent detached youth work offer across the city with a focus on areas of greatest need (not one that fluctuates based on funding) able to be both proactive and responsive, and has access to specialist support when needed e.g. drugs/ alcohol, sexual health, mental wellbeing</p> <p>A balance of universal and targeted services so that young people can access 1-1/ targeted offers when they need them but also have the safety net of open access to stop things from escalating if they cannot get into more specialist support immediately or quickly.</p> <p>A focused, more nuanced and empathic youth work offer that takes into consideration the cultural sensitivities, the disproportionate socioeconomic impact of COVID and the psychosocial needs (post George Floyd) of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds.</p> <p>Build further support at key transition points, eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary to secondary school • Secondary to college or further education support - especially for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities where transition support into young adult services is often poor/ non-existent • Support when an education placement breaks down • Supporting young people to access appropriate Education, Employment & Training post 16 <p>Buildings and spaces</p> <p>Build on the work of the Bristol audit of youth sector provision 2021. Map physical spaces and buildings available for youth work to place.</p> <p>Identify successful online youth work developed through the pandemic to continue, and provide a blended offer to support transitioning back to face-face work.</p>

PRIORITY	ACTIONS IN YEAR ONE
<p>EVIDENCE THE IMPACT OF YOUTH WORK</p> <p>Showcase the value and impact of the work of the youth sector.</p> <p>Create a long-term city initiative that celebrates youth work and its impact.</p>	<p>Enable youth organisations to demonstrate the contribution that youth work makes to the lives of young people in the city by reporting on the impact of their work to strategic partners and funders.</p> <p>Promote use of the National Youth Agency Quality Mark and associated youth work curriculum and Hear By Right standard.</p> <p>Champion the tools developed by the Centre for Youth Impact through the YIF to help evaluate youth work provision and embed them within organisations delivering in Bristol to help build the national evidence base for the youth work sector.</p> <p>Share national best practice in evaluating youth work across the organisations delivering youth work in Bristol.</p> <p>Identify, plan and deliver celebratory events in local areas and across the city.</p>
<p>STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Ensure youth sector workforce of qualified and trained staff, with opportunities for development and progression.</p> <p>Provide greater access to training and development for youth workers.</p>	<p>Identify a base-level of well trained, supported staff with continuous professional development, accredited training structures and strong practice-based learning approaches across all organisations working with children and young people. Mapped against the National Youth Agency 10 Year Strategy 2020 and the Bristol audit of youth sector provision 2021.</p> <p>Create youth work qualification opportunities working with the city's FE and HE organisations and relevant youth sector providers, to enrich and make accessible youth work qualification opportunities.</p> <p>Create pathways for local young people and residents to go into youth work as a career, by developing routes to qualifications, apprenticeships and training.</p> <p>Create shared training and professional development opportunities such as safeguarding, mental health first aid, mental wellbeing, equalities and inclusion, cross-cultural communication and intersectionality to upskill staff, delivered by the sector where possible. Training on engaging with young people in online spaces is needed.</p> <p>Increase the number of youth work apprentices within our organisations to help 'grow our own' staff of the future, and offer routes into the youth work sector for local young people.</p>



PRIORITY	ACTIONS IN YEAR ONE
<p>INFLUENCE AND CAMPAIGN FOR LONGER TERM FUNDING</p> <p>Sharing the evidence that the youth sector delivers outcomes for health, social care, community safety, education, to make the case that youth sector funding needs to come from all of these areas.</p> <p>Campaign for grant funding and commissioning processes that support collaborative working and long term initiatives to address systemic issues (3+ years)</p>	<p>Use Local Authority funding as a catalyst for more collaboration and long term systemic change, resulting in a stronger more sustainable sector and a more secure offer for young people to:</p> <p>Establish a proactive youth sector partnership, responding to emerging themes, shaping where resources may come from.</p> <p>Create and agree a framework for organisations with similar goals collaborate and share resources rather than compete due to funding processes.</p> <p>Build an approach to supporting youth sector organisations to make successful applications, simplified procurement processes, enabling the youth sector to spend more time fundraising for additional resource into the city.</p> <p>Better retention of staff through more secure funding.</p> <p>Equity and proportionality in the distribution of time and resources, across the different communities/wards, in line with the COVID recovery needs by ensuring smaller organisations can access resource fairly.</p> <p>Promote the importance and interconnectedness of youth work to key services for young people in the city and which recognises the role of key workers role as a friendly guide to help young people to navigate the existing support services in a complex post-lockdown world.</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES TO NETWORK, SHARE INFORMATION, POLICY AND PRACTICE WITHIN SECTOR AND CROSS-SECTOR</p> <p>Networking opportunities where people can share their knowledge, skills, good practice and understand the unique contributions each organisation makes, resourced to enable people to access the opportunities.</p>	<p>Identify and strengthen existing networking opportunities, build capacity of children and young people's network for staff at all levels and identify the resources required to do this effectively.</p> <p>Develop action learning sets and reflective practice opportunities.</p> <p>Clarify the key groups making decisions affecting young people and ensure representation on key groups making decisions affecting young people in the city. Map any gaps and identify ways to fill them.</p>

PRIORITY	ACTIONS IN YEAR ONE
<p>TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THOSE WORKING IN THE SECTOR TO CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER</p> <p>Develop the collaborative approach further by creating a citywide youth work alliance for continuing to work together and with key youth work stakeholders.</p>	<p>Develop terms of reference to continue working together, and to ensure we are working to shared strategic aims and collaboratively for young people. Identify potential structures that may be beneficial. Create a Memorandum of Understanding for organisations to sign up to.</p> <p>Use the principles of collaboration already developed to create a set of partnership behaviours to inform how the youth sector can work together.</p>



"Having someone to talk to and providing different activities to try, has boosted my spirits"