

Impact & Learning Report



2022-2023

 **YOUTH ACCESS**

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Executive Summary

Youth Access is the national membership network that champions and supports organisations delivering support for young people.

Along with our community of **123 'Youth Information, Advice and Counselling Service' (YIACS) members**, we advocate for young people's right to access high-quality local services which offer a range of support to help them tackle the diverse challenges they face as they move into adulthood. We also support young people to campaign for services and systems that meet their needs and fulfil their rights.

46,000+ young people were supported by 11% of our members through their grassroots Youth Information, Advice and Counselling Services (in 2021-22).

This is our first-ever Impact and Learning Report, guiding you through our work in the last twelve months.

This report aims to provide an overview of our work and impact, helping us to be more accountable and reflect on our learning as an organisation.



Delivery highlights

FOR OUR MEMBERS

We supported members with a vast online offering, including a Webinar series, a CEO Network and quarterly Evaluation Workshops. **(Page 17 + 18)**

WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

We piloted a different approach to working with young people and with our member, YPAS, supported the delivery of peer-to-peer social action workshops. **(Page 9)**

A NEW WEBSITE

We launched a new website with improved functionality, and new branding to better reflect the Youth Access community.

Our Service Directory (an essential tool for young people to find appropriate help and support) receives thousands of monthly views. We redeveloped this tool to improve access for young people. **(Page 10)**

OUR CONFERENCE

We delivered an online conference to coincide with the consultation period for the Government's proposed 10-year mental health plan, bringing together young people and members to learn, collaborate and receive training. **(Page 12)**

Our strategy

2022-2027

Youth Information, Advice and Counselling services with sufficient capacity can be accessed by young people from all local authority areas

**Increase
Access**

Drive Equity

Youth Information, Advice and Counselling services engage with and access more young people from worst-served groups

Youth Information, Advice and Counselling services are designed and run effectively according to evidence, good practice and young people's voice

**Improve
Experience**

Our values

& vision

1

Collaborative

We are a powerful collective
advocating for change

2

BOLD

We are progressive in our
thinking and courageous in our
challenge of the system

3

Responsive

We adapt to meet the changing needs
of our members and young people

Our Vision

Our vision is that all young
people can access free support
on their journey into adulthood
from community-based advice
and counselling services that
respect their rights and meet
their individual needs.

Increase Access

Youth Information, Advice and
Counselling services with sufficient
capacity can be accessed by young
people from all local authority areas

Our Reach



123

amazing members across the UK

37,857

visits to our service directory

46,407

young people supported by 11% of our members*

202

staff members signed up to attend our events

Working with young people

This year, we have focused on developing a new approach to working with young people building on our previous work on the Our Minds Our Future programme and Rights Advocate Hub. Our aim is to involve more young people in social action by collaborating with our members.

We piloted this approach with YPAS, a YIACS in Liverpool, to test the most effective ways to support our members in delivering meaningful youth engagement.

The pilot has been well received, with young people taking the lead in developing and delivering peer-to-peer workshops on campaigning and youth voice.

**It was very interesting,
educational and
engaging!**

- Feedback from a young person attending

In addition to the pilot, we have engaged in consultations with our



membership and the young people they support.

This process has helped us deepen our understanding of the support young people and our members need, what works well, and the value of youth social action.

Together, the consultations and the pilot have laid the foundations for our model of youth participation.

Rebrand and new website

We have been advocating for youth advice and counselling services for decades - and it's safe to say that our branding and website were ready for a refresh! Our new site aims to showcase our members and their incredible work for young people.



What we did

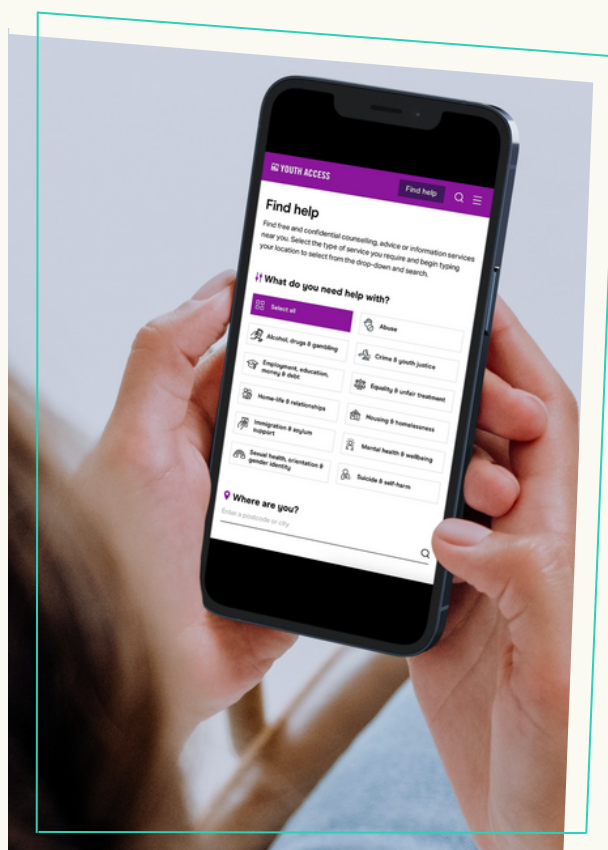
We revitalised our website to feature a revamped Service Directory where young people can easily find services in their local area. We also simplified the search functions to minimise distress when searching for support. Additionally, we aligned our colour schemes and fonts with digital accessibility guidelines, ensuring a more inclusive user experience. Furthermore, we developed a brand-new online community Forum space and created an exclusive Members Area with valuable resources.

What happened

The rebranding efforts and website improvements have made it easier for young people to find help, resulting in a

70% increase in traffic to the service directory

and a more engaging and valuable space for our members, demonstrated by a remarkable 162% increase in website traffic on launch day alone.



Fund the Hubs

In 2021 young people developed the Our Minds Our Future manifesto, outlining their vision for the mental health system. One of their main asks was a 'whole life approach' to mental health that extends beyond the counsellor's office or clinic to offer individualised support with the economic, social and cultural issues that affect wellbeing.



The Fund the Hubs campaign aims to make this a reality by calling for a network of early access hubs for young people struggling with their mental health - exactly the kind of support our members provide.

Back in 2021, Youth Access members, the young people they support and over 12,000 members of the public raised their voices and called for the Government to 'fund the hubs'.

Young people attended meetings with Dr Alex George and civil servants from the Department of Health and Social Care as part of the campaign.

THE CAMPAIGN PARTNERSHIP INCLUDES



Building on this incredible momentum, a Fund the Hubs Day of Action in July 2022 saw Youth Access members and the young people they support writing to their MPs and making noise on social media, arm-in-arm with our campaign partners. This was designed to shape the Government's planned mental health strategy, which will now be included within a Major Conditions Strategy, due to be published in 2023/24.

Community Conference

What we did

We organised a community conference in May 2022 to coincide with the consultation period for the Government's proposed 10-year Mental Health Plan. The consultation presented a valuable opportunity to unite members and young people and together reiterate the necessity of the Our Minds Our Future programme and the crucial role of YIACS.



Over the course of two weeks, we offered seven online sessions, including 'Our Minds Our Future,' 'Young People's input into the Government's Plan,' and 'Fund the Hubs,' among others.

What people said

One conference attendee expressed their appreciation, stating:

(I) really valued this session (and it was) so important to feel connected with others and being a part of something greater whereby our voices can activate positive change.

The conference made a substantial impact by empowering attendees to bring about meaningful change. Results from the evaluation indicated that both members and young people reported an increase in their knowledge of the session topic, with ratings rising from an average of 5.9 to 7.9 on a scale of 1 to 10.

Before



After

Drive Equity

Youth Information, Advice and
Counselling services engage with
and access more young people from
worst-served groups

Equity landscaping



We recognise that structural and systemic inequalities mean that some young people are disproportionately affected by the social determinants of mental health. What's more, services often fail to be accessible to or inclusive of specific groups of young people.

While our members already reach a broader cohort of young people compared to those who typically access mainstream or statutory services, we acknowledge that further efforts are necessary to ensure that all young people have access to services that cater to their needs.

To address this issue, we commissioned a research project to understand which groups of young people in the UK are most underserved. This comprehensive equity landscaping study involved literature reviews, consultations with our members and the collation of evidence to produce a final report.

By taking an intersectional approach, we aim to capture the overlapping dimensions of disadvantage and identify areas for improvement. The findings of this research will guide our work, enabling us to prioritise key areas of focus and develop phase two of our initiative.

Community of Practice

Developing racially responsive practice

This year, we held our second round of the Community of Practice programme (CoP) following the success of our 2021 programme ([read the full report here](#)).

The sessions, facilitated by Ezimma Chigbo, an anti-racism expert, were designed to educate members through engaging and thought-provoking sessions. The CoP equipped them with the necessary tools and resources to incorporate racially aware and responsive practices into their work.

Young Devon's experience



Ros Arscott participated on behalf of Young Devon and in a follow-up interview, shared with us the progress made following the CoP.

One significant example is Young Devon's review of their matching practices, where they now prioritise heritage as a key consideration when matching their workforce with young people.

This step is just one example of how Young Devon is making their service more racially responsive. There is, of course, still much work to be done in this area and Young Devon remains dedicated to the ongoing journey of improvement. Ros is currently working on sharing her reflections with the broader organisation following praise from the senior leadership team.

Improve Experience

Youth Information, Advice and
Counselling services are designed
and run effectively according to
evidence, good practice and young
people's voice

Webinars

Having spaces where we can come together to connect and learn is invaluable. That's why, this year, we have focused on creating these spaces, primarily through a series of webinars.

What we did

Our webinar series explored an array of relevant topics whilst allowing attendees to share their experiences and knowledge. Topics covered our new strategy, youth participation and the cost of living crisis.

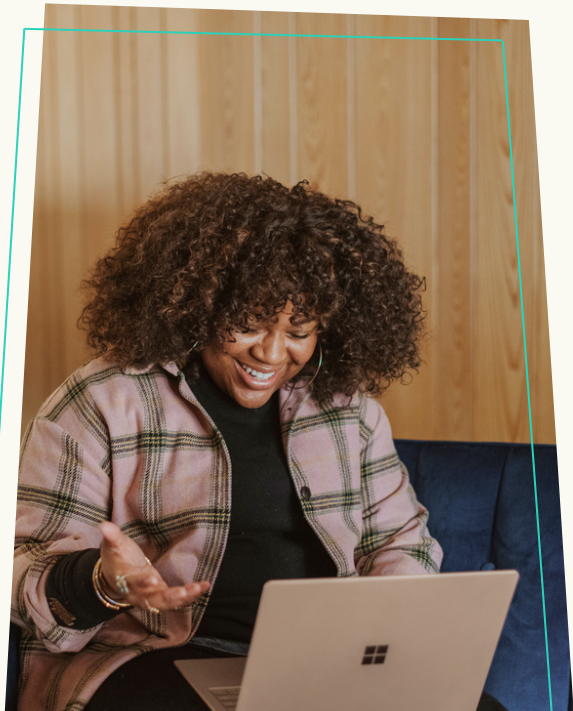
The cost of living crisis, in particular, has been a consistent concern for us all. So, we brought funders, key partners and members together to discuss the impact on staff teams, services, and young people. This collaborative session proved useful and informative for many of our members.

Staff from a range of backgrounds and organisations joined the sessions, providing rich peer-to-peer learning and varied insights.

What people said

A member joining us for the first time at an event said:

I've found this really interesting, this is my first event with you and I'd definitely like to be more involved.



100% believed the sessions were useful

88% felt more confident as a result of attending the webinars

Evaluation Workshop

What we did

We aim to support our members to both understand and use their data more effectively. Data is a powerful tool to help refine services, understand impact and campaign for change.

In January, we piloted our first workshop and focused on the Theory of Change. Following a great turnout we will hold quarterly sessions to help members in this area.

What people said

Members demonstrated increased confidence in using their data. One member said:

Discussing ideas with other organisations has given me ideas for data collection and inspired me with a new service development.

Member's knowledge also increased as a result on a scale of 1-10 from:

3.5 → 6.2

CEO Network

What we did

In 2022 we launched a CEO network for our members. The meeting is an opportunity for leaders of YIACS to get together, network with their peers, discuss challenges and solutions, and support each other.

Member CEOs agreed that the aims should be to have a space to discuss issues, make connections, and feed into Youth Access' work.

What people said

Of the three aims members defined, 100% agreed that the sessions met the agreed aims. One member said:

Very positive experience and useful to share/gather ideas with other organisations of a similar profile.

Young person

Spotlight

STEPHEN ASH

Stephen Ash joined the Our Minds Our Future programme (OMOF) in 2020 after accessing the Adferiad recovery support in Wales due to poor mental health.

The support Stephen received was superb. Inspired by his experiences, Stephen sought to advocate for young people and their right to free, high-quality support through OMOF.

Consequently, Stephen has accomplished so much. Notably, he has delivered compelling speeches on stage, exerted influence on national policy, actively participated as a member of an advisory group for the Senedd, and collaborated with the health board in Wales.

On a more personal level, Stephen describes his confidence as having 'skyrocketed' from isolating himself to confidently participating in public speaking and aiding positive change for young people in Wales. He summarised his time working with OMOF as 'it's gotten me to want to change things as well and help me grow as a person'.



What we learned

In the first year of our new strategy, we have sought to continue our history of reflecting, learning, and evolving. Here's what we learnt...

Our members are eager to be part of a strong **collective voice**

YIACS are facing **increasing levels of demand** for their services and so our approach to engaging members must be mindful of this

It takes a lot of time and **energy to develop a new website!**

By working with and through our members to engage young people, they can **effectively shape every element of our work** from recruitment to evaluation

Our members appreciate opportunities for **support with their impact measurement**

Our Community of Practice on developing racially responsive practice was well-received, but the focus should be **more practical to complement the theory**

Our members love to meet up and highly value us convening **spaces for them to come together**

[**JOIN THE COMMUNITY**](#)



42ND STREET

Sheffield Futures



cdi



Clued-up



Signpost



YMCA

Our members

NO LIMITS

VISYON



YES Supporting Young People

Y i s

The Market Place relate



RASASC



byhp

Mind Havant and East Hants

YPAS



Youthline

GIPSIL

JUST DROP-IN HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE FIND THEIR FEET

youth legal & resource centre



No5

Yellow Door

Bedfordshire OpenDoor counselling for young people

timetotalk WEST BERKSHIRE

TALK TO US



OFF THE RECORD



map Off The Record Twickenham

SHINE the

zone



Berwick Youth Project



POSITIVE FUTURES

What? The What? Centre Ltd



YOUNG DEVON

Streetwise



YOUTH WORKS

Made possible by...

 Paul Hamlyn Foundation



 COMMUNITY FUND



 THE Blagrove TRUST
Supporting young people

PRUDENCE TRUST

& the public for their generous donations

thank you!

*According to 2021/22 figures.

All data collected from Members and young people in line with GDPR regulations.

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