

Annual Summary and Highlights



**April 2021 to
March 2022**

www.youngsolutions.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 1128461

Keeping young people
safe and involved

YOUNG SOLUTIONS

Introduction

Young Solutions can reflect on another successful year of service to its members and the wider youth community in Worcestershire and beyond.

The 2021 – 2022 financial year started with some Covid-19 restrictions still in place, and we were unsure how our support would develop but were ready to adapt to any future restrictions. This year has actually proved to be very successful for Young Solutions, with an increase in our turnover and a small surplus for the year (for the second year running), but more importantly funding for post-Covid projects allowed us to grow and deliver a range of support.

This summary and highlights report gives information about our main activities during the year, as well as showing that this was a time of renewal and re-launch for the charity and the sector at large. We welcomed more first-time members, distributed funding directly to communities to help meet the needs of their young people, provided consultancy and guidance to or on behalf of statutory partners, carried out a record number of DBS checks and re-launch training for youth work qualifications - all on top of our usual support and delivery!

We couldn't have delivered such a positive year without the hard work and commitment of all the staff; and the trustees, our new Chair (and my myself) would like to thank them all for their support during this time.

Pete Sugg, Chief Officer

What we do

Young Solutions are the 'go to' charity for support for organisations who work with young people in Worcestershire and beyond. Our services falls into five key priorities:

1. **Provide Support** - we provide advice, guidance and support to youth sector organisations and charities
2. **Promote Safeguarding** - we promote safeguarding through providing guidance, policies, training and DBS checks for staff and volunteers
3. **Promote Participation** - our Seek and Reach project enables unemployed young people to develop confidence and skills to access employment or training
4. **Provide a Voice and Representation** - our strategic partnerships and networks provide representation, advocacy and commissioning for the youth sector
5. **Enable Training** - we deliver, facilitate and signpost appropriate training for those working with young people in either a paid or voluntary capacity

Young Solutions provide key training programmes for the VCS, ensuring high quality youth work so that services are consistently delivered across the county.

They also have a continued ability to 'always find a way' and help to deliver ongoing positive outcomes.

Managers, Worcester City Council

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2021 - 2022



£418k
Income



77%
Organisations
renewed membership



315
DBS checks
carried out



100%
Satisfaction
with our e-learning
courses



24,000
Young People
attend our member
organisations



18
Tryangle Awards
given to deserving
young people & adult
volunteers

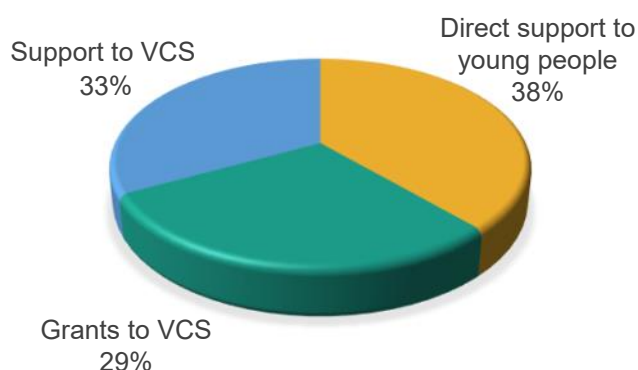


5900
Families received help
through Ready Steady
Worcestershire

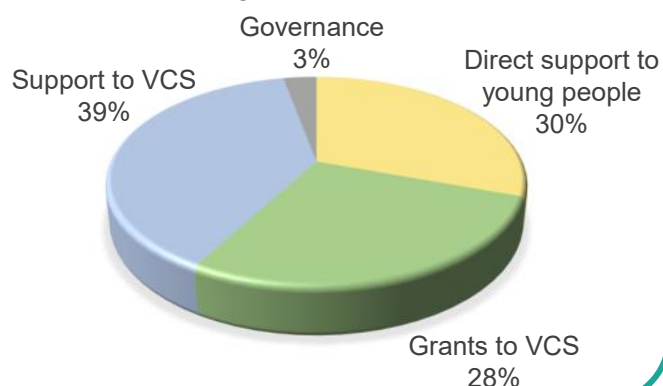
- We achieved our highest ever turnover - resulting in a surplus
- Continued to operate and provide a quality service to our members and the wider voluntary and community sector (VCS) post the Covid-19 pandemic
- Retained a high level of membership, despite Covid-19 affecting many groups' ability to remain open, and welcomed 13 new members
- Successfully completed the sixth year of the current Positive Activities Infrastructure contract (12 years in total across three contracts)
- Established a strong working relationship with Public Health and other partners
- Worked with 87 hard-to-reach young people on our Seek and Reach Project, with 63% gaining skills
- Set up new Youth Work Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications. In addition 92% rated our new e-learning courses as "very useful"
- Widely acknowledged as occupying a central role in the promotion and support for the voluntary youth sector in the county

2021 – 2022 Accounts

Income



Expenditure



WELCOME TO SIMON HILL, OUR NEW CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

Our 2021 AGM was a momentous occasion as Michael Hunter formally stepped down after diligently serving Young Solutions as Chair for 22 years. Simon Hill took up the reins after being a trustee for the past six years.

Simon's background is in youth work and he has more than 20 years' experience of full time work with young people in Bournemouth, Durham and (over the last seven years) in Worcestershire. Simon trained with the YMCA George Williams College and has worked in projects covering schools, detached and open youth group sessions, as well as faith-based work in churches.

Simon's current role is Youth Officer for the Diocese of Worcester, supporting churches across the county of Worcestershire and the borough of Dudley. Many of the churches are involved in outreach projects in their communities, serving families through school's work, holiday clubs and regular youth and children's work linked to the worshipping life of the congregation. This is often achieved through partnering with other voluntary sector organisations, keeping Simon active with frontline organisations.



Simon Hill



**Meeting Pete Sugg,
Chief Officer**



**Saying thank you to
Michael Hunter**

I share the vision of Young Solutions for working with young people to ensure their safety, wellbeing and flourishing in our wonderful county.

My hope is that together we can 'be there' for our young people, working collaboratively to offer new opportunities that help them reach their potential.

I look forward to meeting you all and working with you in the coming years.

Simon Hill

KEY PRIORITY 1 — PROVIDE SUPPORT

Young Solutions Membership

Young Solutions is the voluntary youth infrastructure organisation for Worcestershire and as such exists to serve its members. Our aim is to be **fast, friendly, focused and flexible**. In a year still recovering from lockdown, it was reassuring that **77%** of our previous membership were able to re-join Young Solutions as members, an increase on the previous year. Also **13** new organisations joined us for the first time.

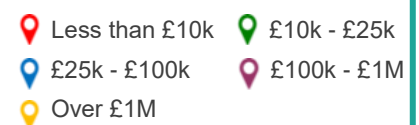
31% of our members had an income under £25,000, and **one in five** were led by volunteers. Our members employ nearly **1400** staff between them and have over **8200** volunteers supporting them. They work with over **24,000** young people in Worcestershire and the surrounding areas.

Our members received a variety of services as applicable to their needs, including telephone, email or face to face support, policy advice, discounted training and DBS checks for staff and volunteers.

We also kept the sector up to date with the latest news, information and training courses through our weekly **e-bulletin and monthly newsletter**, and sent out **45** of these communications through the year. The information covered a diverse range of topics such as:

PLAY DAY 2021 Relationships And Sex Education Day
National Youth Agency Cpd Training
GET SAFE PARTNERSHIP SKATE@SIXWAYS GREAT BIG LUNCH BREAK
Children's Commissioner's Big Ask' Survey
Free Worcestershire Summer Clubs
Worcestershire Children First - Early Help Booklet
Autism West Midlands - Autism And Anxiety Online Training
ACTION FOR CHILDREN BOYCOTT YOUR BED
Unite: Raising Awareness Of Violence Against Women & Girls - Part Of White Ribbon Campaign
POOL HYGIENE AND SAFETY FOR KIDS NHS ENGLAND YOUTH FORUM Uk Safer Internet Centre
Mental Health Awareness Week
Place2be Step Out For Mental Health
Youth Futures - The Youth Employment Evidence And Gap Map
Volunteers' Week
Meeto App

Members by income



Young Solutions have been very supportive of Worcestershire Parent & Carers' Community over many years. Their newsletters are a great source of information which we pass to our members when relevant to their caring needs, and they share our newsletter with their members.

Also we get our DBS checks through Young Solutions— such a valuable resource for us as a charity. We know that Pete, Jo and Cat are always there for support if we need them. Thank you to all at Young Solutions!"

Coordinator, WPCC (Young Solutions Member)

KEY PRIORITY 1 — PROVIDE SUPPORT (continued)

Positive Activities Infrastructure Contract

As well as supporting the general youth sector in Worcestershire, we are also commissioned by the County Council, Public Health, to support the Positive Activities providers. We are pleased to have successfully completed the sixth year of our current contract, and have maintained our support for Positive Activities for 12 years over three successive contracts.

The recommissioning process for Positive Activities Youth Offer is due to take place in March 2023, and Young Solutions, in partnership with Youth Focus West Midlands, is already playing a key role in assisting Public Health, Worcestershire County Council and Worcestershire Children First to shape the new provision for post April 2023.

Holiday Activity & Food (HAF) Programme

Continuing from the success in 2020 – 2021, Young Solutions were commissioned to deliver a Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme for Easter 2021 by Ready Steady Worcestershire (RSW). RSW is a cross-county partnership formed to coordinate and join-up food, activity and support provided to children and families during school holiday periods. On behalf of Young Solutions, **23** providers delivered play and food activities to over **5900** targeted Free School Meal and Just About Managing (JAM) children and families.

Young Solutions were also pleased to support the October Holiday Play Activities through our District Council partners and Worcester Community Trust, funded by Community First via the Covid Impact Grant.

KEY PRIORITY 2 — PROMOTE SAFEGUARDING

Keeping children and young people safe is a central part of Young Solutions mission, and safeguarding permeates all of our work.

With many organisations having either suspended activities or moved online during the previous financial year, this priority began by focusing on sharing the government's rules and advice regarding safe working. During the Covid restrictions, we continued to deliver our newsletter fortnightly, alongside our usual weekly e-bulletin, allowing us to keep the sector up to date in a timely manner.

Our Disclosure and Barring Checking Service (DBS) for staff and volunteers was very busy this year, and we carried out a record number 315 DBS checks for 33 organisations. This was a huge **225%** increase on the number carried out during 2020 – 2021 and reassuringly shows the sector starting to re-emerge after the pandemic.

Young Solutions provide West Mercia Police cadet units with a quality service to ensure all our cadet leaders are DBS checked. The checks form part of various measures put in place to keep our children safe.

Citizens in Policing Programme Coordinator - Operational Volunteers, West Mercia Police

KEY PRIORITY 3 — PROMOTE PARTICIPATION

Seek and Reach

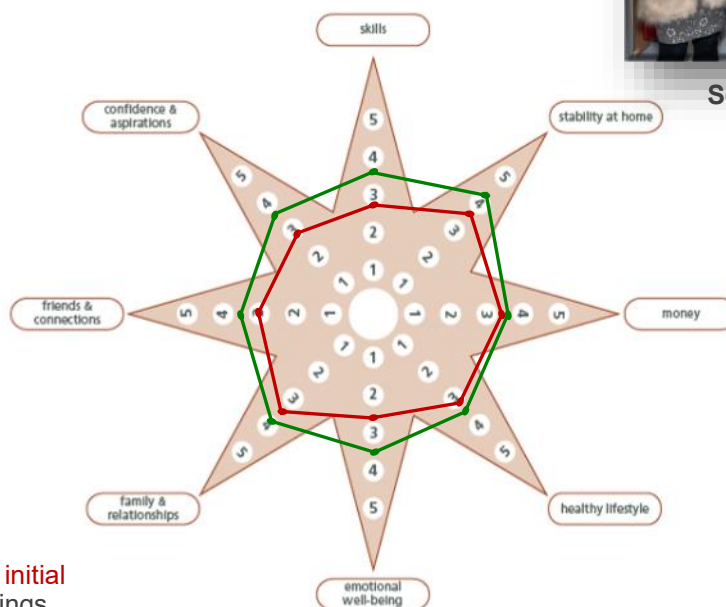
Young Solutions has focused over recent years on the need to support young people aged 18 to 24 who are vulnerable, furthest from the labour market and disengaged. Our dedicated and experienced Seek and Reach Key Workers provide mentoring, focus and encouragement to help the young people overcome challenges.

During the year we worked with 87 young people – 38% female and 62% male. All of the young people had a number of additional needs or circumstances which had prevented them from achieving so far (64% classed themselves as having a disability). We were really pleased that during this time period:

- **67%** gained confidence & aspirations
- **63%** gained skills
- **65%** gained emotional well-being
- **27%** progressed into education or employment.



Seek and Reach Team



Outcomes Star
showing averaged **initial**
and **follow up** readings

D was an achievement for me from where he started. His background was very difficult and challenging at times and required us to work with the Youth Offending Team and West Mercia Police. D was often quiet and nervous. He continued to work with me, despite obstacles along the way, and I was so proud when he secured a place at a training course, which he is continuing to attend.

A suffered from depression and had dropped out of sixth form. He lacked motivation to begin with and the direction in which he wanted to go, but with support, guidance and fun along the way he has progressed to an apprenticeship with an engineering company.

Feedback from Seek & Reach Key Workers

KEY PRIORITY 3 — PROMOTE PARTICIPATION (CONTINUED)

Tryangle Awards

Our inspirational annual awards recognise the unsung young heroes in Worcestershire. Exceptional young people are nominated by their youth workers, teachers, neighbours and friends from the community, and receive a Certificate of Recognition for their achievements. The most outstanding are celebrated at our Awards Evening, where they receive our unique Tryangle trophy.



This year's Awards Evening was brilliantly hosted by Presenter Julian Wharam from Worcester's Youth Comm Radio.



Bravery



Personal Achievement in Sport



Personal Development



Personal Achievement in Arts or Music



Citizenship and Environment



Good Friends and Carers



Adult Volunteers

Many thanks to our Tryangle Awards sponsors and supporters:



The Margaret Westwood Memorial Charity

KEY PRIORITY 3 — PROMOTE PARTICIPATION (CONTINUED)

Horizon Community Project

The Stanley Road area of Worcester is a vibrant community with a large and strong Asian community. However the community is subject to racism and discrimination and there was an emerging mistrust of statutory organisations. Young people in particular felt that they were marginalised and offered less and poorer support than other areas.

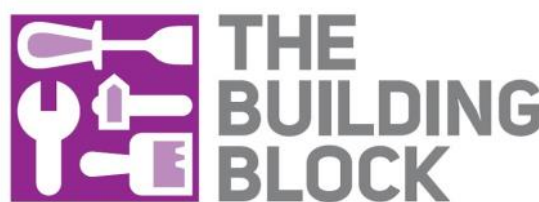
Young Solutions worked with the local community to set up the 'Horizon' project in 2020. We have continued to support this collaborative project, which is driven by local needs and local partners including Worcester Community Trust, West Mercia Police and funding from Worcestershire Community Foundation.

Specific young people's activities have been set up in response to identified needs, including:

- Thursday night youth activities – attended by on average 20 young men each week
- Education project - Year 10 Learning Support Programme for 16 students - 100% of students reported that they found the programme helpful and would recommend the programme to other students.
- Training and employment opportunities - delivered through Worcester Community Trust's 'The Building Block' facility to give local young people additional opportunities to break down the barriers that their community have found during 2020.

The project and its achievements were the focus of the keynote speech at our AGM, delivered by Inspector David Troth from West Mercia Police. He reported that there had been a 79% reduction in anti-social behaviour in the area following the instigation of the project.

During the past year we were pleased to hand the project over to the community, led by the newly formed Perryfields Community Association, though we remain involved in a supportive and advisory capacity.



I really enjoyed these sessions and they have done me so much benefit. This also made me more active in Science and Maths lessons. Thank you!

The programme helped me a lot by going over what we did in Year 8 and over lockdown which will help me with my exam. Due to Covid I was struggling with some subjects but we went through them and manage to understand.

I've learnt loads of new things. These sessions were great.

Students on the Horizon education project

KEY PRIORITY 4 — PROVIDE A VOICE AND REPRESENTATION

Mapping

Our COMF funding also enabled us partner with Youth Focus West Midlands to carry out a mapping of services available to young people in the county, to identify successes as well as gaps in provision, to explore training and support needs and the potential for ongoing collaborative networks. The findings from this work will be available in the summer of 2022.

Network Meetings

Young Solutions ensures the voice of the voluntary youth sector is heard across Worcestershire and provides representation for the sector on the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board. Young Solutions also attend the regional Youth Network, the County Council's NEET strategic group, the Get Safe strategic group for Worcestershire and Worcestershire Voices – the county's voluntary and community sector strategic group – amongst other groups.

Within the sector, Young Solutions also hosts the Positive Activities provider forums. The mapping exercise linked into the development of a District Youth Service Provider Network in each of the six districts, to help connect providers and integrate youth provision, and this work is ongoing. We are excited by the potential for new opportunities, partnership working and joined up thinking that could come from these networks.

Royal Visit to Worcester

In May, Young Solutions were pleased to meet HRH Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex at the Royal Porcelain Works in Worcester. The visit was arranged by Worcestershire Community Foundation to enable the Prince to meet some Worcestershire charities and community groups who had gone the extra mile and done extraordinary work during the pandemic. Representatives of around 20 groups enjoyed the visit and had their achievements recognised.



We invited Young Solutions to meet the Prince in recognition of their assistance to Worcestershire Community Foundation, especially in supporting work with hard to reach minority groups.

Trustee, Worcestershire Community Foundation

KEY PRIORITY 5 — ENABLE TRAINING

Training

With the Covid restrictions lifting, Young Solutions started offering face to face trainings again.

We were grateful to receive a grant for training through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) which allowed us to focus on courses which maintain the professionalism, knowledge and qualifications of the sector. There has been a severe reduction in delivery of youth work courses over recent years so we were pleased to be able to offer Level 2 Award in Youth Work Principles and Level 3 Certificate in Youth Work Practice. Our practical and thought-provoking courses were very well received, with 14 people achieving certificates so far and further trainings booked in the next financial year.



E-Learning

In addition, Young Solutions were finally able to launch our online training programme, which had been in development for a while. We now offer five courses, which are continuous professional development (CPD) registered, meaning they are ideal as an introduction for new staff or volunteers, or as a refresher. Courses are available in:

- Basics of Good Youth Work
- Safeguarding Adolescence
- Introduction to Young People's Mental Health
- Dealing with Challenging Behaviours
- Basic Drug and Alcohol Awareness



Nine organisations accessed the courses during the year for their staff and volunteers, and the feedback has been excellent. **92%** of attendees rated the courses as “very useful”, and additional comments included “Very useful course with relevant and in- detail information and useful external links.”, “Really helpful course” and “It was very well written and helpful”.

It was great to have a recognized youth work qualification delivered locally and accessible to local people. This is going to make a big difference to my youth work practise.

Participate on Youth Work Level 2 course



To find out more about us and the work we do, contact us ...

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***See our website for our Annual Accounts and Report
for 2021 - 2022***

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