

# SHROPSHIRE Youth Work Position Statement 2024

## Where we've come from

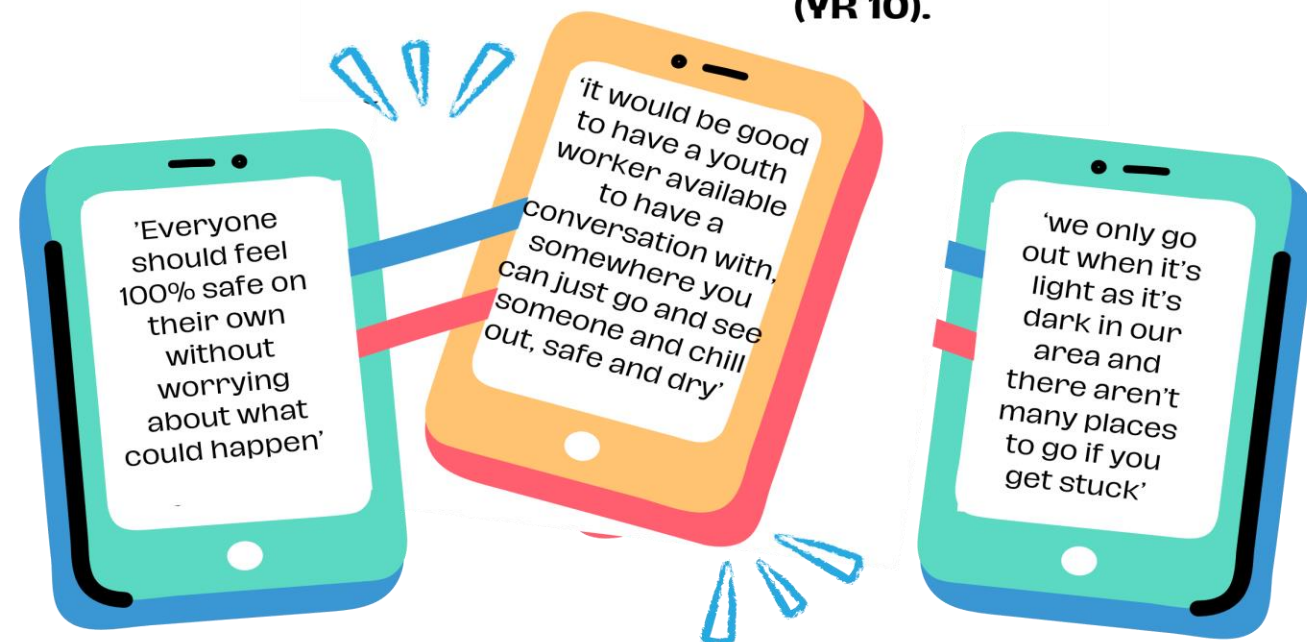
We want to improve services for Young People by listening and working together with them to find out what works and what doesn't in their local area. As one Young Person said:

**'Young people want to be heard and continue to be heard.....to have their say on if things work or not' (YR 11)**

## Where we are at now

Young people live in ever changing communities; they play a big part in how their community feels to live in, for themselves and for other local people. One Young person stated they, **'Strongly feel a campaign to show young people in a positive light is important' (YR11)**.

Young people agree that it could be beneficial to show how aspects such as **'play, should be ageless and feel that working with both younger and older members of the community to show this could help everyone to understand each other better' (YR 10).**



Young people today experience a very different world to past generations. The economy, society and technology have changed, leading to a whole host of additional opportunities being available to them and with this comes a different set of challenges for young people. Young people also have more pressures and the availability of new media technologies have revolutionised the way they interact with the world. Young people face challenging times, especially around key transition stages such as, changing schools and preparing for and moving into adulthood.

If Shropshire were 100 young people, shows us the vast difference between what data collections are telling us in comparison to what young people are saying. This speaks volumes and emphasises the importance of listening to

young people, not making assumptions and that their participation is integral to how a youth offer is developed.

## "IF SHROPSHIRE WERE 100 YOUNG PEOPLE..."

14 Are from low income households	5 Are from a minority ethnic group	1 Are victims of Exploitation	74 Are in education or work based training
6 Are part of the LGBTQI+ community	51 Have achieved Math and English GCSEs in 2023	7 Are excluded from school	11 Are receiving SEN support
8 Live in single parent households	2 Are receiving home education	25 Have school attendance below 90%	2 Are young carers
		3 Have an EHCP	4 Are living in Domestic Abuse Households

30% of young people have told us they are not aware of any support services available to them locally.

51% of young people said that there are things they would like to improve about where they live.

Areas not being well lit, concerns about bullying, drug/alcohol use, and antisocial behaviour were the top areas for concern among young people about going out in their communities.

40% of young people have told us they like their location precisely because it is rural, citing the quiet or the beauty of where they live as positives.

going

Young people are telling us that they feel disenfranchised from their communities

and have lost their sense of place and belonging. This strategy aims to ensure that more young people have a say in the things that matter to them, helping to shape the service they need and taking ownership of leadership and decision making. By working together with Local youth sector partners we can build an offer designed by young people and for young people, with coproduced local youth offer plans which lead to a responsive youth offer. A youth offer that adapts and changes to the views, values and beliefs of Shropshire's young people. We would like to thank the youth support team and Local youth sector partners who have engaged and enabled over 2021 young people to participate in the development of this youth position statement. It's

aim is to be the platform for which they can lead through meaningful participation and be **'the catalyst for positive change and a true representation of youth voice in their community'** (YR 10)

In September 2023 The Department for Culture, Media and Sport published new guidance for Local Authorities to meet the statutory duty S507B. Local authorities must determine what activities and associated facilities should be available to young people in their area. In doing so, local authorities should aim to improve the local youth offer and be mindful of the needs of young people facing particular barriers to accessing sufficient provision, such as disadvantaged young people and vulnerable young people (DfCMS, 6:2023).

1873 young people took the opportunity to participate in a recent survey to find out how young people want us to help make their community a better place for them. The results and subsequent focus groups with a further 148 young people have helped produce this strategy and will guide us in the development of a responsive local youth offer.

The survey and focus groups have provided valuable insights into the needs and opinions of young people in the county and shows that whilst 57% of Young People feel that there are enough opportunities in their area, 43% do not (Cited from Young People's survey September 2023). In the recent outcome from 'Make your mark', young people have told us that the most important topics were Health and Wellbeing, Crime and Safety, Youth Work and Young People's Services.



transport options such as buses and trains but, they don't use them as they are unreliable. Many young people use bikes to get around.

57% of young people have told us there are enough opportunities for them in their area however, 43% of young people have told us there are not enough.

79% of young people have told us that they felt they would not use a support service or “didn’t know” if they would use a support service if it were available to them in their area.

63% of young people either agreed with the statement that they feel unsafe in their community or said that they “sometimes” agreed.

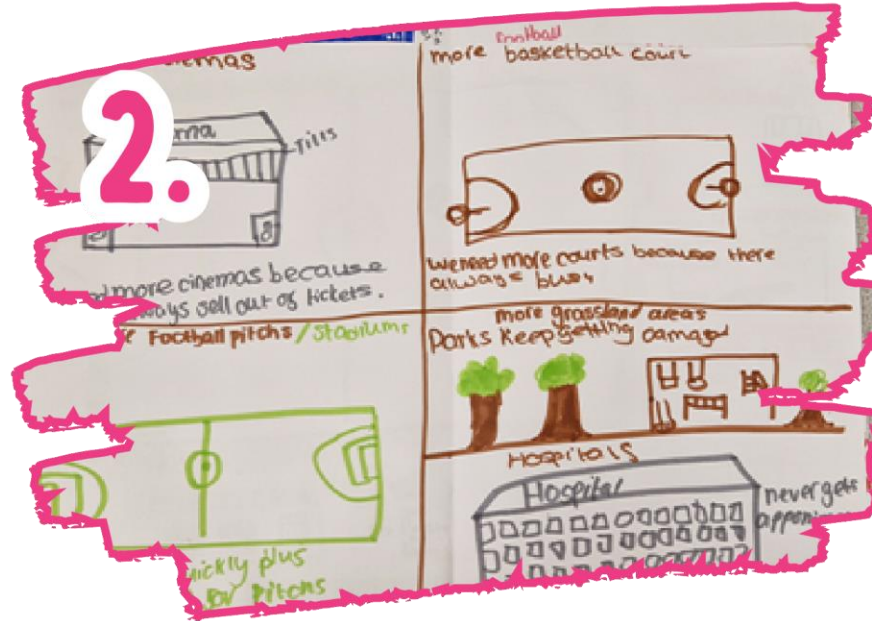


# WHAT MATTERS TO YOUNG PEOPLE:



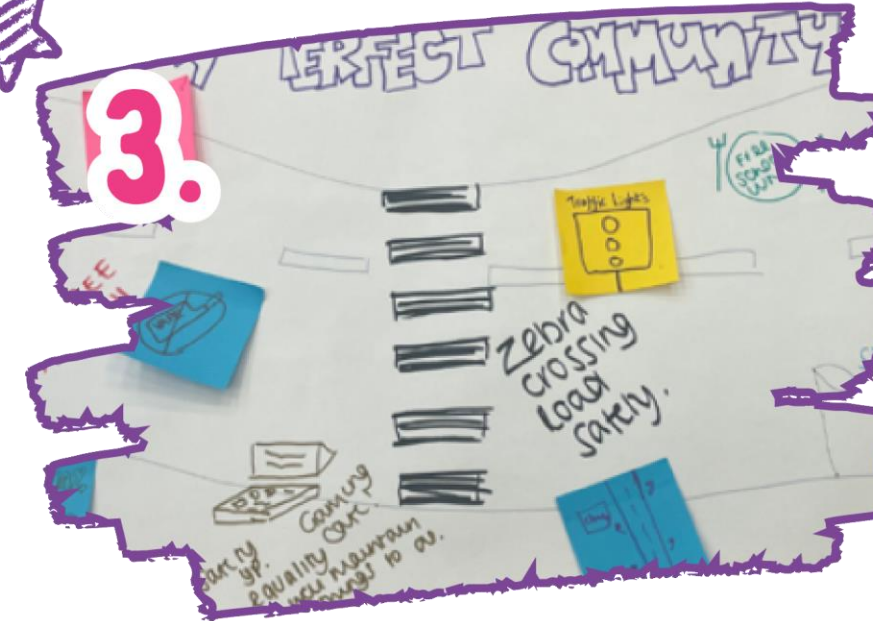
## **Safety in community: 'We want to feel safe in our communities'**

This included aspects of traffic safety, having access to safe spaces that are well lit and consider prohibiting the use of alcohol in the areas they like to be in, feeling safer on public transport, having more police presence with better understanding of young people and being able to have responses to how their concerns have been dealt with.



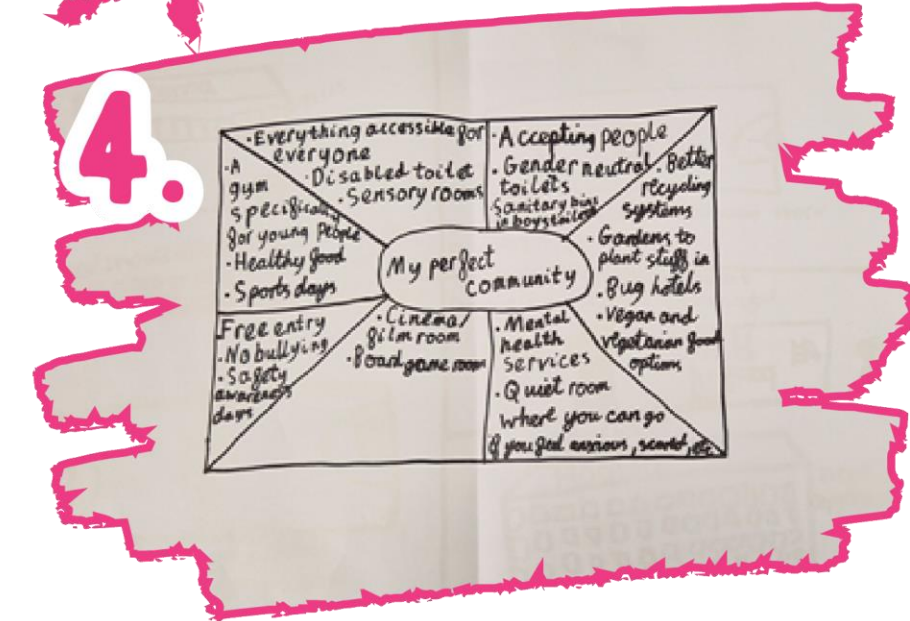
## **Health and well-being support: 'We need people we can trust to talk to us about our emotional well-being'**

This includes having the right trusted people at the right time to talk through how they are feeling, better training for other professionals to enable conversations, development of spaces to enable young people to get out into the community, having free or discounted accessible opportunities to engage with exercise or just being outside.



## **Empowering Young People: 'We want to be involved, included and empowered to make decisions and plans for our future'**

To shape their own ideas and initiatives, be part of decision making and planning about what matters the most to them, create opportunities for young people to be involved because their opinions are important and they don't often feel heard, to empower them to take ownership of their youth offer because it's an offer for them and enable young people's voices to work with adults views to ensure priorities are achievable and realistic.



## **Being part of shaping their communities: 'We want to be part of shaping our communities to make them better for everyone living in it'**

This includes working on local plans, projects and initiatives that develops social value within their communities that are reflective of what young people need to live their best lives. Develop restorative relationships with the whole community and work collaboratively with local partners to understand how young people play a vital part in enhancing their own communities.



## THE HOW...

**Engagement:** We are committed to work with young people and local youth sector partners to develop a meaningful and responsive youth offer in Shropshire by leveraging resources, expertise, and networks, and maintaining transparency in our shared goals and objectives for the strategy.

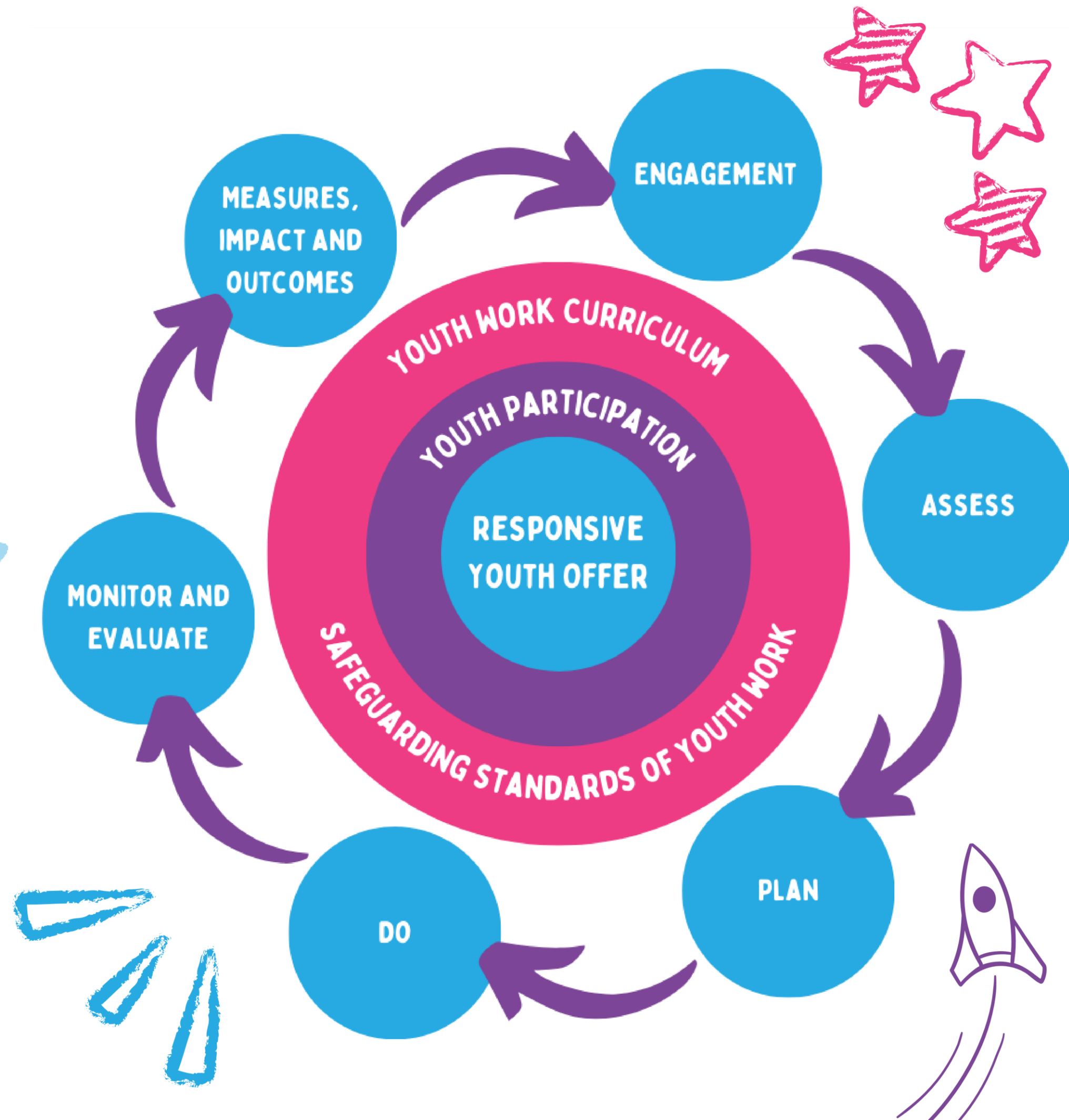
**Assess:** We will work with young people and local youth partners to complete a youth needs assessment, including mapping our current local youth provision. This will show us what the needs of young people are, what we have, what gaps we have and how we will work together to build a collective offer which meets need.

**Plan:** We will work with young people to coproduce a local youth offer plan to meet their needs and work in partnership with other stakeholders and local youth partners to implement this effectively.

**Do:** We will work with other stakeholders and local youth partners to secure a responsive youth offer that is reflective of young people's needs. We will consider the long term sustainability and adaptability including strategies for securing ongoing funding, resource, addressing emerging needs and responding to changing circumstances over time.

**Monitor and evaluate:** We will use a range of methods to regularly monitor and assess the effectiveness of the youth offer, primarily through direct feedback from young people to ensure voices are listened to and heard, and develop ways of working to enable the partnership to monitor and evaluate provision to ensure it meets the needs of young people.

**Measures, Impact and Outcomes:** We will determine measures to indicate positive outcomes and the impact the Youth Offer on the lives of young people. This will help us to reflect on what is working well and, where needs change, it will allow us to be responsive to adapt approaches and further developments to meet the needs of young people.



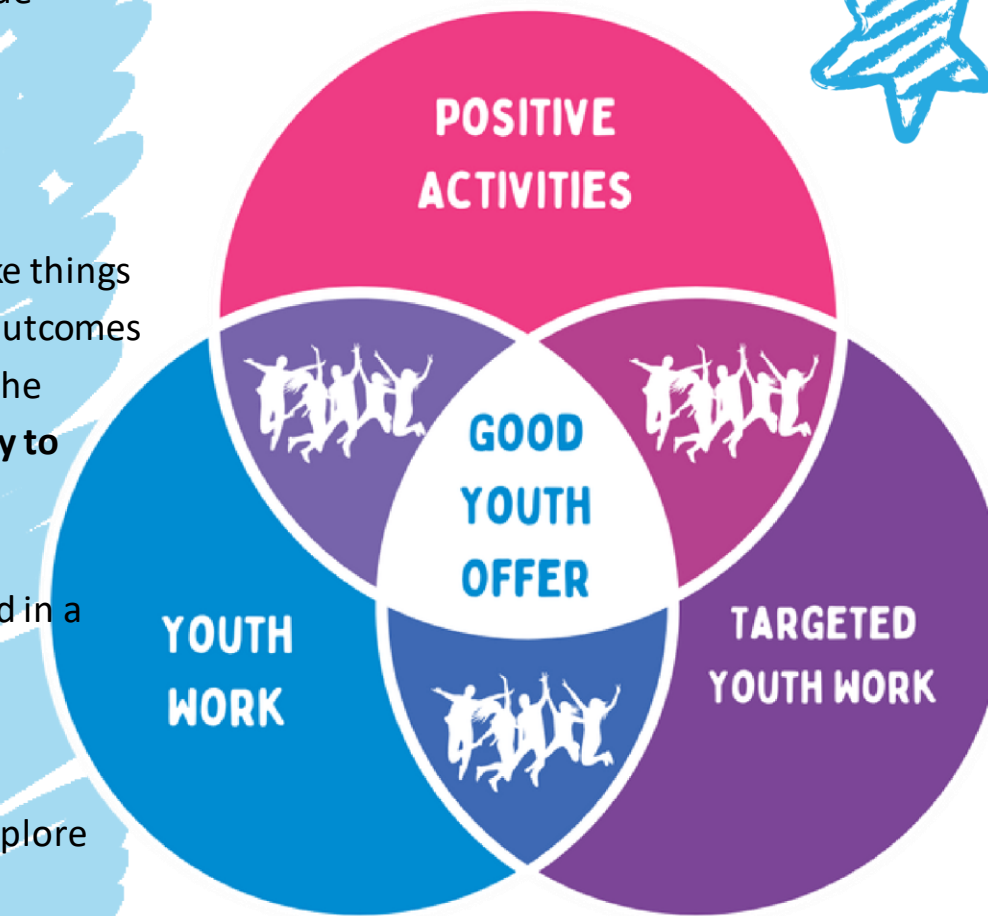
# What does a good Youth Offer Look Like?

**Positive Youth Activities:** Opportunities for positive youth activities are an essential part of a good youth offer and can be delivered in a variety of ways. These may include youth clubs, sports and leisure, young voice and engagement, LGBTQ+, SEND, Arts and culture and informal social activities taking place in a range of spaces and places. Positive youth activities are an inclusive offer, accessible to all and should be developed and enhanced by the young people who access them. Access to positive youth activities that are fun will support young people to develop a sense of belonging and build confidence to create opportunities for the future.

**Universal Targeted Youth Work:** Specialist support services are there for when things in life get tough and you need a more focused plan to get the help you need to make things a little easier. Specialist support for a young person with a disability or additional learning need can help to maximise their development, social, educational and health outcomes and support them in their transition into adulthood. Young people reach out to people they trust and are consistent with them, reaching out for extra help can often be the hardest step and it is important to recognise the time and place for a more specialist approach. **‘Open access provision that includes youth work should act as a gateway to specialist, targeted support for young people without stigma. This supports place-based, youth work in community settings’** (NYA Guidance, 2022).

**Youth Work:** Youth work is the golden thread which should be woven throughout any connection with a young person. It is a unique educational process that can be used in a range of environments to support young people. It is the facilitation of personal, social, emotional, and educational development which encourages creativity to explore values, beliefs and ideas. Youth work places the young person at the centre, starting with their map of the world inclusive of their feelings, perspectives and what really matters to them, influencing their place in the world by developing voices and empowerment.

Youth work is a partnership which a young person chooses to be involved with, it supports the development of lifelong skills and harnesses their passion to create and explore opportunities.



## What we will do Next...

**Over the next two years we will focus on developing Partnerships, the development of the workforce, participation and quality assurance.**

We will develop youth partnerships to agree shared principles that reflect inclusivity, diversity and collaboration. The partnership will represent a cross sector of the local youth partners and will be the driving force to developing a youth offer that centres around young people and empowers them to have ownership of decision making and planning.

We will focus on workforce development and planning, to build on the strengths of existing youth work practice which in turn will enhance the open access youth offer and streamline pathways to more targeted youth work without stigma for young people, when they need this the most.

We will place participation at the core of the youth offer, inclusive of young people and empower them to drive their own initiatives for social change for the communities they live in and ensure there continues to be a consistent quality of youth work that is accessible to young people.