



flourish

Norfolk's Partnership Youth Strategy

2022 – 2027

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Introduction

Norfolk's Partnership Youth Strategy has been coproduced by the youth sector including Norfolk County Council Children's Services and with young people from across the county. It sets out our shared vision for Norfolk's young people and our priorities for action over the period 2022-27. The strategy has been informed by our assessment of young people's needs, their views about what is important to them and some of the key policy drivers for the youth sector.

This strategy's strength comes from taking a collective and collaborative approach across the youth sector to meeting young people's needs, as part of our shared commitment to ensuring that all young people in Norfolk can Flourish.

Coming out of a pandemic, with all the impact this has had on young people and the services and organisations that work with them, never has it been so important to have a shared vision and partnership approach towards supporting young people.

This youth strategy will:

- support our partnership commitment to prevention and early help
- help us understand the needs of young people through building a picture of what it is like to be a young person in Norfolk
- support the youth sector to work together so that we can better meet the needs of young people
- enable us to develop a shared understanding and framework across the youth sector for working with all young people aged 11-19 and up to 25 for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or other additional needs
- build on the commitment to collaborate and work together across the wider youth sector through sharing resources, ideas and approaches
- encourage continued excellent partnership working
- enable Norfolk's young people to Flourish

Our youth strategy is an important part of the wider partnership prevention and early help focus that is being led by the Prevention and Early Help Board, which in turn reports into the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance.

Developing our prevention and early help offer is one of four priorities for the Strategic Alliance, reflected in the Flourishing in Norfolk Children and Young People Partnership Strategy. This youth strategy sets out how we will help to deliver this priority by responding together as a youth sector to the needs and aspirations of young people in Norfolk, so that all young people have access to the opportunities they need to achieve their potential, and to Flourish.

Based on areas of children and young people's lives that they have told us are important to them, Flourish is the overarching system ambition for all children and young people in Norfolk.

The Flourish ambition has been developed and endorsed by members of the Strategic Alliance and young people and forms the basis of the Flourishing in Norfolk strategy as well as underpinning the work of partner organisations – ultimately making a difference for children and young people.





We want Norfolk to be a county where every child and young person can **flourish**:

family and friends

Children and young people are safe, connected and supported through positive relationships and networks

learning

Children and young people are achieving their full potential and developing skills which prepare them for life

oppportunity

Children and young people develop as well-rounded individuals through access to a wide range of opportunities which nurture their interests and talents

understood

Children and young people feel listened to, understood and part of decision-making processes

resilience

Children and young people have the confidence and skills to make their own decisions and take on life's challenges

individual

Children and young people are respected as individuals, confident in their own identity and appreciate and value their own and others' uniqueness

safe and secure

Children and young people are supported to understand risk and make safe decisions by the actions that adults and children and young people themselves take to keep them safe and secure

healthy

Children and young people have the support, knowledge and opportunity to lead their happiest and healthiest lives



Young People's Introduction

We as young people want this strategy to tackle the big issues young people face in Norfolk. In the countywide survey, young people highlighted mental health, discrimination, bullying, and climate change and we believe these are the right priorities, along with improving opportunities and education for young people.

We want all young people to have the opportunities to educate and develop themselves. We also want professionals that work with young people to have the training and skills to support them with any issue or problem they come up against, whilst encouraging them to succeed.

The primary aim of the Youth Strategy is to outline what organisations need to do to support the needs of young people. The strategy outlines what young people should expect from the youth sector and what changes need to happen to reduce pressures on young people and improve their prospects.

As young people we should be given opportunities to have our voice heard in order to make positive change. The thread through all of the priorities is improving the mental health and emotional wellbeing of young people. We want trained staff that are able to support at the right time and in a place that is safe and welcoming to talk. The circumstances that young people live in around poverty and inequality have an impact and also need addressing.

We need to have effective conversations around the causes of discrimination and bullying with more education and awareness. There should be better systems to report and address discrimination so we can feel safe and included in anything we want to do. We want marginalised groups to have the opportunities to be involved in all decision making to ensure their views are understood.

The pressure on young people to take action and show leadership on climate change and the environment needs to be reduced. Instead, we should put the spotlight on corporations and government to tackle the issue, we need Norfolk to be a leader on this issue by taking green approaches and initiatives that are sustainable in the long term.

Young people have been hugely affected by the Covid pandemic. It has worsened young people's mental health and our prospects for the future. As a result, a lot of young people have missed out on life chances and skills they haven't been able to develop. There needs to be a greater understanding of what young people have gone through and to enable young people to catch up and reach their potential.

We want young people to feel safe and valued in their communities. Young people need to have the opportunities to reach their potential with things to do, places to go and someone to talk to. We want young people to get help and support earlier when they need it. We want young people to lead happy, fulfilling, exciting and interesting lives full of opportunities and potential.

This introduction was written and coproduced by 57 young people from Norfolk's Youth Advisory Boards (YABs)



Our vision

Norfolk's strong and vibrant youth sector will be acting together to collaborate and work alongside young people to understand and respond effectively to their needs.

The voices of young people will be at the heart of everything we do together to bring about positive change. The youth sector and young people will work closely together to shape communities and to create opportunities that enable young people to Flourish.



Theory of Change

Activity and Resources

- Youth Advisory Boards
- Targeted youth support
- Workforce development plan
- Youth sector network
- Norfolk Flourish Award
- Youth led campaigns
- Priority workstreams
- The youth sector

Mechanisms of Change

- Flourish outcomes framework
- Co-production with young people
- Skilled and understanding workforce
- Young people's participation
- Partnership working
- Collaboration
- Youth work values and approaches

Outcomes

- Services and decisions are led by the involvement of young people
- Young people have improved emotional wellbeing
- Young people have the life skills and capabilities needed for adult life
- The youth sector has excellent levels of partnership working and collaboration
- The youth sector has a high quality workforce who are qualified in youth work
- Young people report a decrease in incidents of issues of discrimination and bullying
- Young people are trained and upskilled to tackle campaign issues on a strategic and political level

Priorities

1. To ensure young people's voices are heard and acted upon, through participation and coproduction opportunities
2. To improve and develop young people's emotional wellbeing and life skills
3. To create opportunities for further youth sector collaboration and workforce development
4. To support and enable young people to tackle the issues that matter to them. This includes Discrimination, Bullying and the Climate Crisis

Aim

All young people in Norfolk can **flourish**



Context and drivers for our partnership youth strategy

What do we mean by 'youth'?

In the context of this strategy, 'youth' means every young person in Norfolk aged between 11-19 and those aged up to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or other additional needs that require further support.

Young people's demographics and population in Norfolk in based on the 2021 census

There are around **85,478** young people aged 11-19, accounting for around 9.4% of the total population.

Breckland has **12,802** young people in this age range – 14.97% of 11-19 y.o.

Broadland has **12,009** young people in this age range – 14.05% of 11-19 y.o.

Great Yarmouth has **9,544** young people in this age range – 11.16% of 11-19 y.o.

North Norfolk has **8,155** young people in this age range – 9.54% of 11-19 y.o.

Norwich has **16,015** young people in this age range – 18.73% of 11-19 y.o.

South Norfolk has **13,270** young people in this age range – 15.52% of 11-19 y.o.

West Norfolk has **13,724** young people in this age range – 16.05% of 11-19 y.o.

- The rate of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs in Norfolk schools is 3.27% which is about 3,796 children.
- 12,400 children and young people in Norfolk speak a language other than English as their primary language (7%).
- There are an estimated 5,712 young people performing unpaid care in Norfolk.

As part of our wider prevention and early help provision, this strategy is focused on how, as a youth sector, we can support all young people within their community.

We recognise that some young people will need additional support or be more vulnerable due to circumstances and challenges in their life. This strategy sits alongside a range of other more targeted strategies and services for young people.

Who is the 'youth sector'?

The 'youth sector' is anyone working with young people in Norfolk using youth work principles and values, which include -

- Promoting informal education
- Young people choosing to take part
- Utilising young people's view of the world
- Treating young people with respect
- Seeking to develop young people's skills and attitudes
- Helping young people develop stronger relationships and collective identities
- Respecting and valuing differences
- Promoting the voice of young people

Good youth work develops the ability of young people to think for themselves and to act for others. Youth work services focus directly on the needs and interests of the 'whole' young person. Their primary purpose is to support and develop each young person towards a better future of their own choosing. Though youth work may contribute to wider social goals, its focus is on enabling individuals to achieve their own goals.

We have a strong and diverse youth sector, including voluntary and community youth organisations working closely with the local authority, that offers a range of opportunities to young people through delivery that is based on these principles and values. The sector provides a local youth offer that is focused on prevention and early help.

What are the policy requirements towards young people within their community?

There are a range of policy requirements which set out professionals' responsibilities towards young people in their community. Our partnership approach to prevention and early help and our 'Flourishing in Norfolk' Strategy provide the local policy context for this partnership youth strategy.

In addition, Norfolk County Council, with partners, has a number of statutory duties towards young people. These include:

Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Services and Activities to Improve Young People's Wellbeing, issued in 2012 by the Secretary of State for Education under Section 507B of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This places a duty on the county council to secure access for all young people to the positive, preventative and early help they need to improve their well-being. This includes youth work and other services and activities that:

- Connect young people with their communities;
- Offer young people opportunities in safe environments to take part in a wide range of sports, arts, music and other activities;

- Support the personal and social development of young people through which they build the capabilities they need for learning, work, and the transition to adulthood;
- Improve young people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being;
- Help those young people at risk of dropping out of learning or not achieving their full potential;
- Raise young people's aspirations, build their resilience, and inform their decisions.

The Children Act (2004) which sets out the collective responsibilities we have in regard to prevention and early help through the placing of duties on police, health and local authorities to work together with other partners to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area, including young people.

Our response to these duties and responsibilities

In Norfolk, since 2011, our response to these duties and responsibilities has been delivered through our Youth Advisory Boards (YABs). YABs are directly commissioned by Norfolk County Council and bring together young people, the local authority, elected councillors of Norfolk County Council and other professionals working with young people such as the police, health, education and the voluntary sector.

The YABs are youth led by local young people aged 11-19 and up to 25 with SEND, with a wealth of lived experience of a range of issues and life circumstances. All seven YABs are chaired by young people and led by a diverse cohort, aiming to represent the wider population of young people.

YABs provide a proven mechanism to:

- Support communities to respond positively to their young people and recognise the positive contribution that young people make to the community.
- Enable young people to feel positive about the communities in which they live and feel that their positive contributions are being recognised and valued by others.
- Build the capacity within each community to respond to and meet the needs of young people through providing a range of activities and opportunities.
- Help young people to remain engaged and have aspirations for themselves and their communities through developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to make a successful transition to adulthood.

During 2021-2022 YABs achieved the following

- Norfolk's Youth Advisory Boards (YABs) trained and developed **243 young commissioners** in the last 12 months.
- 20% of young commissioners are from an **ethnic minority background**.

- 20% of young commissioners have a **recorded learning disability**.
- YABs reached over **23,000 young people** through surveys, online events, consultation activities and social media interactions.
- **YABs commissioned an additional 39 projects across Norfolk** tackling issues young people identified around anti-social behaviour, mental health, covid support, physical health and bullying.
- **1,383 young people** reported attending projects that the YABs commissioned.
- YABS have led on over **15 youth led campaigns**. These include topics such as disability access, covid response, climate and the environment, raising awareness of sexual violence, LGBT+ support, anti-racism and Black History Month, and transgender awareness.

The Youth Investment Fund 2022-2025

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has launched the Youth Investment Fund (YIF) as part of the National Youth Guarantee which includes a £560m investment in youth services. This includes YIF, National Citizen Service (NCS), Duke of Edinburgh Award, non-military uniformed groups and the #iwillfund.

The YIF is funding £368m nationally, divided into regional areas. with the vast majority (£288m) ringfenced as capital funding to enable youth centres to be newly built or refurbished. Approximately £12.7 million has been indicatively allocated to Norfolk as a county.

We are taking a multi-organisational approach as a youth sector in Norfolk, working together to collaborate and seek coordinated opportunities to enable young people in Norfolk to benefit from this funding. Working together, we can realise the opportunities to create new youth friendly spaces. These spaces will have multiple purposes and benefits which are led and designed by young people. Children's Services will coordinate an approach where we are working together or at the very least aware of what each other are applying for from the YIF, with the strategic goal of bringing in additional funding to Norfolk to provide excellent youth facilities for young people.



Developing a Partnership Youth Strategy

Establishing a youth strategy partnership group and engaging with the wider youth sector

In order to secure the impacts and outcomes we all want to see for young people, it was essential that the youth strategy was developed by the youth sector in partnership with Norfolk County Council, and by young people themselves.

To facilitate this, we worked with youth sector leaders to convene a small youth strategy partnership group, led and supported by Children's Services' Strategic Lead for Youth and Participation, and feeding into the Prevention and Early Help Board. This group, made up of representatives from a range of Norfolk's youth sector organisations, has taken responsibility to oversee the development of this strategy and will continue to oversee its delivery over the coming years.

In order to really make a difference for young people, the youth partnership group has worked to engage with a wider, diverse range of youth sector organisations from the very outset. This ongoing youth sector engagement has been essential to secure buy-in and agree a shared vision for the strategy.

We held five open engagement events for anyone who was interested to attend over a five month period and also undertook face-to-face visits to different youth groups and organisations, to enable them to give their unique perspectives and views. This approach has proved extremely valuable and significantly helped to shape our strategy, offering insights into how the youth sector is currently working with young people, and what needs to happen going forward in the context of following on from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Through this sector-wide engagement, we have heard from a wide variety of organisations working with young people across the county and are moving forward with a consensus-based approach on what our shared priorities are and how we need to address them collectively. The power of this approach means we have a strategy that is inclusive and that everyone can co-own.

Involving young people in developing our partnership

Norfolk's young people have been involved in the development of the youth strategy from the very start. Young people coproduced and designed the youth questionnaire that was used to frame the needs assessment (see section below). This included young people with SEND, who helped ensure that the questionnaire was accessible, therefore making it better for all young people.

Coproduction has been at the heart of the development of the youth strategy, with a five-month period of collaboration between young people and the youth sector to enable this to happen. We set up a young people's steering group

made up of 57 young people, working with this group on key pieces of work. This includes the needs assessment and developing the key priorities of the strategy, based on the results of the assessment and their own lived experience. They also wrote our young people's introduction to the strategy.

The group was inclusive of under-represented groups such as young people with SEND, ethnic minority groups, LGBTQ+ young people, young carers, and a balanced mix of gender representation.

The young people's steering group have produced an easy read and young person friendly version of the strategy to promote to young people across Norfolk, which will be sent to young people who completed the questionnaire, ensuring they can see where their voices have help shape the strategy.

Assessing young people's needs

To inform our partnership youth strategy and ensure it is relevant and meaningful to Norfolk's young people, a key objective was to understand the needs of young people through their perspectives and those of professionals dedicated to providing services which support them.

We initiated a needs assessment exercise to help us understand 'what is it like to be a young person in Norfolk in 2022?' Our needs assessment document contains demographics of Norfolk's youth population, along with an analysis of young people's needs based on a mixture of local data and feedback from questionnaires with young people and professionals.

As well as informing this strategy, we will use the needs assessment as a useful tool for professionals and commissioners to shape services in the most meaningful and impactful way, as part of seeking to maximise the support we can offer young people and build more resilient communities.

- In completing the needs assessment work, 24 young people took part in a series of workshops to help coproduce the youth questionnaire.
- 342 children and young people responded the questionnaire. This was followed by 16 focus groups to explore key themes and ascertain commonalities and differences experienced by groups of underrepresented young people. In total 126 young people participated in these focus groups.
- 75 individual professionals across 56 services or organisations, including schools, voluntary sector, police and local authorities responded to the questionnaire.
- The needs assessment has also taken into account the views of the 11,636 young people aged 11-18 who took part in the UK Youth Parliament 'Mark Your Mark' survey in 2022 in Norfolk.

What young people have told us

Mental health is the biggest concern facing young people

- Specialist mental health services are over relied on by professionals and young people in improving mental health. Prevention needs to be embedded in everyday practice.
- Change is needed to reach young people earlier, not just at the point when poor mental health is identified, to change the demand curve and open capacity for those who need it.
- Young people and professionals want to do more to support others with poor mental health but need more support and training to help, advise and support.

Discrimination is the second biggest concern

- Discrimination because of race, gender, disability or sexuality was identified as the second biggest issue concerning young people in the questionnaire.
- Young people felt that this was primarily focused on sexuality discrimination; however also included some references to disability and gender inequalities.
- Young people identified that discriminatory behaviour felt normalised and accepted. When young people highlighted it, that they didn't feel it was being taken seriously enough.

Bullying is the third biggest concern

- Bullying was identified as the third biggest issue impacting on young people in the questionnaire and a further contributor to poor mental health.
- Young people indicated that more could be done to effectively manage this within school environments and, with the upsurge of social media, the problem has become worse.
- Young people raised that there is a long-lasting impact of bullying which can be seen as minimised or forgotten about.

Future life choices & skills came next in fourth place

- Young people felt ill-equipped to transition from childhood to adulthood and that this created increased tension and exacerbated poor mental health.
- In terms of life skills & choices, young people wanted to know more about issues such as
 - Financial aspects: budgeting, taxes, payslips
 - Living independently: applying for mortgages, tenancies, cooking
 - Jobs and careers: applying for jobs, industry insights and interviewing

The environment & climate change was identified as an issue

- Young people are aware of consequences, with many using examples such as littering and the use of motorised vehicles being key contributors. Young people were also able to recognise their role in climate change.
- Not all young people have the same opportunities to enjoy nature.
- There is not always access to good quality green spaces close to home, to reap the benefits to health, wellbeing and quality of life.

Young Carers were identified as a group needing additional support

- Young carers don't want to be treated differently by professionals and the wider community, instead they want greater understanding shown.
- Young carers are particularly concerned about future life choices such as progressing to further education or work.
- They are particularly affected by financial and transport restrictions which means many rarely have opportunities to take part in universal activities.

What adults working with young people have told us

- Professionals overall felt the top three barriers to young people's success included poor mental health, lack of services and low self-esteem/confidence.
- They highlighted long waiting lists and difficulty in accessing services, in particular mental health support.
- In terms of their own challenges as professionals, these were centred around capacity to deliver and the length of funding arrangements rather than the amount of money.
- Recruiting and retaining suitably skilled staff and volunteers is a challenge.
- There was a consensus from professionals that young people needed prevention and early help services, notably youth work provision.



How we are responding – our Partnership Youth Strategy Priorities

Reflecting what we have heard from young people and those working with them, and taking on board local and national policies relating to young people, this youth strategy will enable the youth sector, including Children's Services, to focus on four key priorities over the next five years:

1. To ensure young people's voices are heard and acted upon, through participation and coproduction opportunities
2. To improve and develop young people's emotional wellbeing and life skills
3. To create opportunities for further youth sector collaboration and focus on workforce development
4. To support and enable young people to tackle the issues that matter to them. This includes discrimination, bullying and the climate crisis

The youth strategy partnership group, alongside the young people's steering group will oversee the delivery of a youth strategy action plan in response to each of these priorities. What we want to achieve against each priority and some of the key actions we will undertake are highlighted in the following section of this strategy.

Priority 1 – To ensure young people's voices are heard and acted upon, through participation and coproduction opportunities

“Young people are not the future, we are the now. Our voice is central to making Norfolk a better place.”

A key strength of Norfolk's youth sector is its commitment to the participation and voice of young people. This is evident with the diverse participation network and an embedded shared approach across statutory and voluntary sector partners to acting upon the voices of young people. Children and young people's voices are also a strong theme running through the Flourish outcomes framework and 'Flourishing in Norfolk' Strategy.

It was clear from young people's feedback that this is the approach we need to continue with, ensuring their voice is central to everything we do that involves or affects them. We know that there are so many advantages to young people's participation, including services becoming better, more accessible, and young person centred.

Young people's participation can take many forms, ranging from school councils to youth forums, targeted youth participation groups for young people with particular life experiences, and our Youth Advisory Boards which have operated for over 10 years as a successful partnership approach with young people, putting them at the heart of decision making within the YAB and their local communities. As a youth sector we will endeavour to utilise all of these opportunities and to continually improve what we do.

Outcomes

- Young people have an improved sense of self efficacy and wellbeing by being involved in decisions that impact on their lives
- Services and decisions are increasingly led by the involvement of young people through coproduction, participation, and consultation
- Services are more inclusive and accessible due to young people's influence
- Individuals are more in control of their own lives and things that affect them personally
- A greater number of young people are involved in volunteering, decision making and community organising

Action and Activity

Youth Advisory Boards (YABs) – Our continued approach to young people's participation and voice is through Youth Advisory Boards (YABs) to enable the opportunity for young people be trained, developed, and supported to be change makers across Norfolk.

Participation Network - As well as the YABs we must continue to invest and prioritise other groups that have invaluable insight and perspectives. These groups are wide spanning and incorporate often unrepresented voices that need to be at the heart of shaping Norfolk. We will continue to invest in a network that brings all of these groups together, with both young people and professionals that support them.

Annual Youth Voice Conference - An annual Youth Voice conference led, designed and coordinated by young people will take place in February 2023 and annually in the years following during the lifespan of the youth strategy. This will be an opportunity to show case the great work of young people and also enable young people to be understood by those in positions of power and influence.

Shared Youth Sector Approach – All organisations signed up to the Youth Strategy will put participation and coproduction at the heart of what they do, taking a “You said, we did approach.”

Strategic Alliance stakeholder engagement and insight – The multi-agency Stakeholder Engagement and Insight subgroup of the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance is working to improve how we listen to and use the views of families, children and young people across the system, in particular to inform decision-making at a strategic level. Key pieces of work underway include the development of an ‘insight library’ where partners can access

the results of engagement activity that has taken place, and the creation of a children and young people's panel, open to all children and young people across Norfolk, where we can ask them for their views on a range of subjects that are important to them.

Priority 2 – To develop young people's emotional wellbeing and life skills

“I think it's hard for kids nowadays as I think we have less understanding and little teaching of what is going to come in life and the challenges we might face.”

Feedback from young people has strongly indicated that emotional wellbeing and mental health is a significant issue for young people in Norfolk. This is backed up by the number of young people needing support within statutory mental health services. Although we acknowledge the need to address young people's mental health, professionals' feedback acknowledges that the term 'mental health' is attributed to a lot of young people's needs that aren't necessarily directly linked to a mental health issue, such as the natural stress and challenges of adolescent development.

In this strategy we are focusing more on young people's emotional wellbeing, in line with our wider prevention and early help approach. This is supported by feedback from young people, who said they don't get help early enough, to prevent their needs becoming a mental health issue. Young people have said they would prefer help earlier from a youth worker or mentor and somewhere to go, something to do and someone to talk to.

Young people felt that schools place too much emphasis on academic study and not enough on practical future life skills and choices. This is an area the youth sector can lead on, as youth work's core ethos is about emphasising informal education and preparing young people for adult life. Life skills is an area we can support schools and colleges with, as well as meeting this need in settings outside of formal education.

Developing young people's emotional wellbeing and life skills will also significantly contribute to other priorities within the strategy. If young people's resilience is higher, than they can deal with issues like bullying, discrimination and climate anxiety better, whilst we continue to tackle these issues strategically to support young people.

Outcomes

- Young people have improved emotional wellbeing
- Young people have the life skills and capabilities to ensure they can flourish as they progress into adult life
- There is a decrease in need for young people to access acute mental health and other statutory services
- More young people get support to develop self-help strategies which prevents declining mental health.

- Young people have happy, fun, safe, enjoyable and fulfilled lives.
- Young people feel safe and know how to be safe.

Action and Activity

Flourish Outcomes Framework - As a youth sector we will embed Flourish, working towards the shared ambition and outcomes framework throughout how we work to support young people's emotional wellbeing and life skills.

Individual support – Organisations across the youth sector must ensure young people have individual support at the right time to prevent needs escalating to the point that acute services are needed. For example, looking at options to offer more targeted youth support as part of our wider prevention and early help activity. YABs are also prioritising mental health, emotional wellbeing and life skills work in their campaigning and commissioning activity.

Family Hubs – Youth support will be an important part of Norfolk's emerging Family Hubs approach which will seek to provide easy to navigate access to support for 0-19s and those up to 25 with SEND, as an integral part of Norfolk's prevention and early help offer.

Norfolk Flourish Award – To reward and recognise the achievements of young people The Norfolk Youth Award will be relaunched as the 'Norfolk Flourish Award'. This will enable young people to gain accreditation for their volunteering, social action, participation and contributions, recognising where they are developing their individual skills and capabilities. The relaunch of the award will be coproduced and designed with young people to ensure it is an award young people will be excited and enthused by.

Priority 3 – To create opportunities for further youth sector collaboration and workforce development

“In the youth sector there is far more that unites us than divides us. We have strong partnership working in Norfolk but we can go further and Flourish gives us all a great opportunity to do this.”

We have a vibrant and high-quality youth sector in Norfolk. There are already good mechanisms in place for partnership working, such as the Voluntary Sector Forum and the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance (CYPSA). Professionals reflected this in the questionnaire and face-to-face engagement sessions, but also felt that more could be done following Covid-19 to connect organisations in the youth sector.

A local partnership approach that continues to work effectively is the Youth Advisory Boards (YABs) that work at a district level to enable collaboration. The YABs include elected councillors, local councils, police, health, voluntary sector organisations, education and, fundamentally, young people. We will continue this approach within the wider youth sector as a framework to enable partnership working on a localised level to meet the needs of young people in each district.

The most prevalent issue raised by youth sector organisations and professionals was acute challenges with recruiting, retaining, and developing high quality staff. The ongoing thread that has been identified is that there is a lack of opportunities for new people joining the youth sector and the pathways for them to develop in youth work and other roles. We want to make the youth sector an appealing and motivating sector to be a part of, and therefore need to have a collective strategy around how we get more people interested in a career in youth work.

Outcomes

- The youth sector has excellent levels of partnership working and collaboration
- We have a shared understanding of local priorities and needs of young people through partnership working and sharing resources
- The youth sector has an increase in the number of people entering and joining the sector
- The youth sector has become an attractive, energetic, and exciting place to work for new cohorts of people entering the profession
- The youth sector has have a high-quality workforce who are qualified in youth work

Action and Activity

Face to Face youth sector events – By the universal request of professionals who have engaged with the coproduction of the youth strategy, we will establish quarterly face to face networking events and youth strategy workstream meetings. These will showcase the progress of the strategy and highlight shared priorities we want to work together on, as well as gaining a greater understanding of what each organisation does.

Localised Partnerships – We will continue to invest in our partnership approach, including YABs, with board members from a variety of sectors and backgrounds. The partnership will work at a local level to facilitate network meetings and board meetings to increase collaboration and localised coproduction. YABs will directly link young people with partners who will enable them to solve local issues and meet young people’s needs, including police, health, voluntary sector, education, elected members and other professionals.

Workforce Development plan for the youth sector – The partnership will coproduce a shared workforce development strategy and plan to address the issues around recruitment, retention and development of staff in the youth sector. This group will work closely with organisations like Momentum Norfolk to ensure that training, development and investment in staff is prioritised and coordinated.

Priority 4 – To support and enable young people to tackle the issues that matter to them. This includes discrimination, bullying and the climate crisis

Discrimination

“Lots of people are saying racist things or homophobic and transphobic things and then when we tell a teacher they don’t do much”

As part of the needs assessment, young people identified specific issues they have experienced growing up in Norfolk. These issues are connected to social justice and require addressing on a strategic level with a system-wide approach to tackling them.

Young people identified discrimination as being prevalent, in particular on grounds of race, gender, disability and sexuality. This has historically been raised by young people across Norfolk through the annual YAB consultations that reach a large number of young people in Norfolk. This is an issue that young people suggested the youth strategy should address through a countywide campaign utilising key resources like the YABs to address this and raise awareness of how much of an issue it is.

Bullying

“bullying is classed as repetitive behaviour, by the time a teacher is made aware, it’s probably too late, the damage has been done”

Bullying was the third biggest issue raised by young people and is consistently raised as a concern within YAB consultations, being in the top three issues for all YABs over the last five years. YABs have taken a lead in this area and is something they will continue to campaign on through the ‘Norfolk Against Bullying’ Initiative. This has been hugely successful over the past three years with an annual Norfolk schools conference attended by hundreds of teachers, young people and other professionals. The youth strategy and wider youth sector can add value in this area to ensure the campaign has a wider reach and impact through key strategic stakeholders we have involved.

Climate crisis

“Saving the environment is our future and I don’t want to have to be afraid of how my future is going to turn out.”

The climate crisis is a global societal issue and one that young people feel passionate about due to the impact it will have on their lives in the future. It is not something we can solve on our own in Norfolk, however there are steps we can take to educate young people and do our bit to make Norfolk a clean and green place for young people to grow up in.

YABs have initiated a Norfolk climate conference every year that brings together young people across the county to campaign on this issue and lobby local politicians to help create more sustainable ways for us to operate as a county. The climate campaigning will continue and, through the youth strategy, we can put our support behind this to support young people to campaign, as well as raise the issue with elected councillors and through having a young person as an elected member champion for the environment.

Outcomes

- Young people report a decrease in incidents of issues of discrimination and bullying
- Young people feel empowered to challenge discrimination
- Young people feel empowered to challenge bullying
- Young people actively lead work around climate change
- Current campaigns led by YABs have an increased reach to a greater number of young people in Norfolk
- Young people are trained and upskilled to tackle these issues at a strategic and political level

Action and Activity

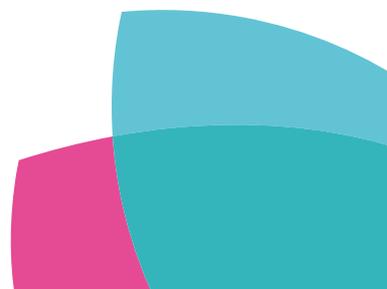
Discrimination campaign – The Norfolk YABs will lead a campaign in schools, their local communities and other spaces, bringing in other participation groups within Norfolk.

‘Norfolk Against Bullying’ campaign and conference - The Norfolk YABs will build upon the existing piece of work and lead a campaign in schools, their local communities and other spaces called Norfolk Against Bullying. There will also be a Norfolk wide conference to support this.

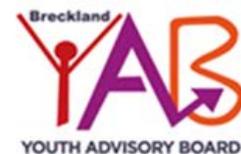
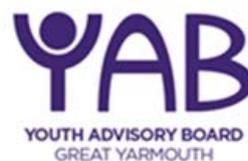
Climate change campaign and conference – The YABs are currently hosting localised climate conferences in Norfolk to address the issue. These will continue and also sit alongside Norfolk wide campaigning, collaborating with groups already addressing the climate change issue.

Working with key stakeholders – The youth sector will work alongside young people to open doors to key stakeholders and strategic leaders who can make a difference to these issues. This might be elected councillors who can change the decisions centrally to make Norfolk a greener place and headteachers and academy trusts who can address discrimination and bullying in schools. This way we can make systemic changes in organisations and institutions through young people’s participation and coproduction.

Building young people’s voice emotional resilience and life skills - Supporting and enabling young people to tackle the issues that matter to them will also contribute to our focus on ensuring that young people’s voices are heard and acted upon, and our focus on developing young people’s emotional wellbeing and life skills. If we can build young people’s opportunities in participation and coproduction as well as building their emotional resilience and life skills, they will be in a much better position to change these issues that they have identified. This will include campaigning skills, public speaking, how to put their case across and absorb potential individual and collective setbacks as they happen.



Youth sector organisations involved in coproducing the Partnership Youth Strategy





flourish