

th THE YOUTH ASSOCIATION

making young lives better



annual report 2011

routes to good youth work in a changing landscape

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Chair's Statement

It isn't complicated: Good youth work transforms lives and communities

We are in this business because we know that good youth work builds the skills, confidence and resilience of young people who, in turn, make many more positive contributions to all our communities. This report provides ample evidence of both effects.

But what is perhaps less visible are the powerful changes young people are making to The Youth Association itself, working in equal partnership with the board and staff team to define and assess the quality of our work and set priorities for the future.

The world we adults have created is not a very happy place to be at the moment, dominated as it is by economic difficulties and political turmoil. Our young people provide a much better basis on which to plan for the future. They are the best kind of critical friends; optimistic, hopeful and ambitious, for themselves and for the Association.

We hope reading this report makes you feel the same.

Maggie Jones, Chair of Trustees

Maggie Jones with members of our Young People's Steering Group



Young People's Steering Group Report

Our commitment is to work alongside the board of trustees and youth workers to improve The Youth Association's work and to make sure it is effective. We think that youth work is important because it improves young people's lives in many ways. It helps by giving us more information about important social and life skills (such as sex and relationships) and as young people we often feel more comfortable and secure talking to a youth worker in a confidential environment.

TYA helps young people get to where they want to be and the youth workers do a great job in supporting and leading us in the right direction. Our steering group takes an active role in improving things for the next generation of members of The Youth Association.

our history



Albion Street Youth Club during the Second World War

The Youth Association's history stretches right back to the early years of youth work and our long story of survival is made up of thousands of successes, failures, experiments and innovations, told by generations of young people and youth workers. In all that time, the important things we believe about good youth work have never changed; we call that being 'progressive but rooted'.

We are lucky that we have been able to keep copies of all our past annual reports and minutes going right back to our founding in 1904. They make interesting reading for anyone interested in the history of youth work and society's changing attitudes to work with young people. Some attitudes and ideas have long since changed, but it's surprising how many discussions and debates are still current today.

Good youth work creates positive changes in the lives of all young people. It is a constructive process that aims to give young people chances to lead happier and more fulfilling lives. It can be of benefit to all and should not be confined solely to tackling disadvantage; although it will always recognise the disadvantaged starting points society imposes on some young people.

Good youth work will speak up for young people and always remind adult society that they are most often the victims of society's problems and not the cause of them.

Good youth work challenges discrimination and promotes inclusion because it values and celebrates the uniqueness of individuals, championing both cohesion and difference.

Good youth work is always relevant because it is centred on the needs of young people and encourages them to express those needs. Young people set the agenda for good youth workers.

Good youth work must be voluntary and its power to grow mutual respect between young people and adults comes from the right to walk away from the youth work process. It must be a positive choice.

Good youth work enables young people to understand and own their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and how to form and maintain good relationships that are built on self-respect and respect for the rights and responsibilities of others.

Good youth work is primarily a group process of social education, enjoyed in the most informal and accessible ways. It can help support families and young people's growth and transition to independent adulthood.

Good youth work is a powerful force for positive social change and good youth workers, alongside the young people they support, are its best and most credible advocates.

our principles

Our mission is to champion good youth work; by delivering it, experimenting with it, promoting it and supporting others who share our beliefs about it.

We think that good youth work is a way of understanding young people and the world they live in and approaching things from their point of view. We also think that good youth work is built on a wide set of skills and tools; we see these as the 'craft' of being a good youth worker.

We believe that the combined approach and craft of good youth work is something to be defended, supported and developed. A positive future for good youth work is something to campaign for.

“Good youth work is every young person's right. We've been protecting that right for over a century and so long as young people want and need good youth work, we won't stop delivering it”
Andy Clow, Chief Executive



The Youth Association members in Bradford in the 1960s



Young people climbing Mount Snowdon, Summer 2011

at a glance

1904
Founded in Leeds to promote youth work with girls in the city

1945
Already working across the West Riding, boys were allowed into the Association for the first time

1948
Highfield House, a residential centre on Ilkley Moor was donated to the Association

1966
We became a registered charity

1969
We launched our first project delivered by Association staff; The 2-3-6 Project in Leeds

1974
As a new county was born, we changed our name to West Yorkshire Youth Association

2001
We bought our head office on South Parade in Wakefield

2009
In line with the expansion of our work to new areas, we changed our name to The Youth Association

our future

For The Youth Association (TYA), like a lot of youth work organisations, the last eighteen months have been some of the toughest any of us can remember. We are in no doubt that the financial strain on our sector is set to tighten for the next few years. As hard as it is to imagine (given the scale of the challenges we have already had to face in the last year and a half) we know that the cuts in government spending and the reduction in grants and contracts from local authorities will continue to bite deeper and deeper, year on year, until at least 2018. In the face of such hardship and obstacles, it would be entirely understandable if many of us felt like throwing in the towel. But we are not thinking like that. On the contrary, we are more convinced than ever that young people need us to fight with every fibre to fly the flag of good youth work. So that's just what we plan to do.

Keeping the good youth work fire burning in the coming years won't just require us to be committed. We are also going to have to be imaginative and take some real risks. The major challenge we are going to face is finding ways to finance and resource good generic youth work, when the priorities of the Government will be firmly fixed on formal education, training and youth employment. The value of public funds finding their way into youth work is likely to reduce dramatically, meaning that we will have to secure new and 'non-traditional' donors, supporters, contractors and customers in the coming years.

The Youth Association has already made a strong start in this direction. We considered 2011 to be our transition year; the time when we experimented with new services and ways to make our existing services more commercially viable. The fruits of that work are ready to be taken to market in 2012, and we are quietly confident that we have paved the way to a more sustainable future for the association. Our supporters and young people can rest assured that these developments have been created with the strongest regard to both our mission and our principles. We stand by our belief that compromising our values for short-term financial gain is the road to ruin and as such our plans are solidly founded on our youth work mission. We hope that our friends and members will be delighted by the way we have blended good youth work practice with an enterprising approach to business, building a realistic future that is both more diverse and reliable.

We need to do more to build a stronger two-way relationship with our Associates, and help them to deliver the best youth work they can, giving them the chance to work more closely with us on joint projects and fund raising initiatives. From February 2012 onwards we will be encouraging a lot more Associate involvement and discussion, through the launch of a regular magazine and e-zine, and a scheduled programme of training and events. We feel that to preserve good youth work at a time like this we will need to offer each other all the encouragement, support, service-sharing and partnership-building that we can muster. We will make sure that all of the 1200-strong army of our Associates know just how much we value their work and support. The Youth Association will add value to their work and they will strengthen ours.

TYA and me

"My favourite thing with The Youth Association is my self confidence in meeting and talking to new people. I used to just go on with people I already know instead of trying new things.

I've learnt just to be a single person and lead for yourself, not just follow on other people and what they do."

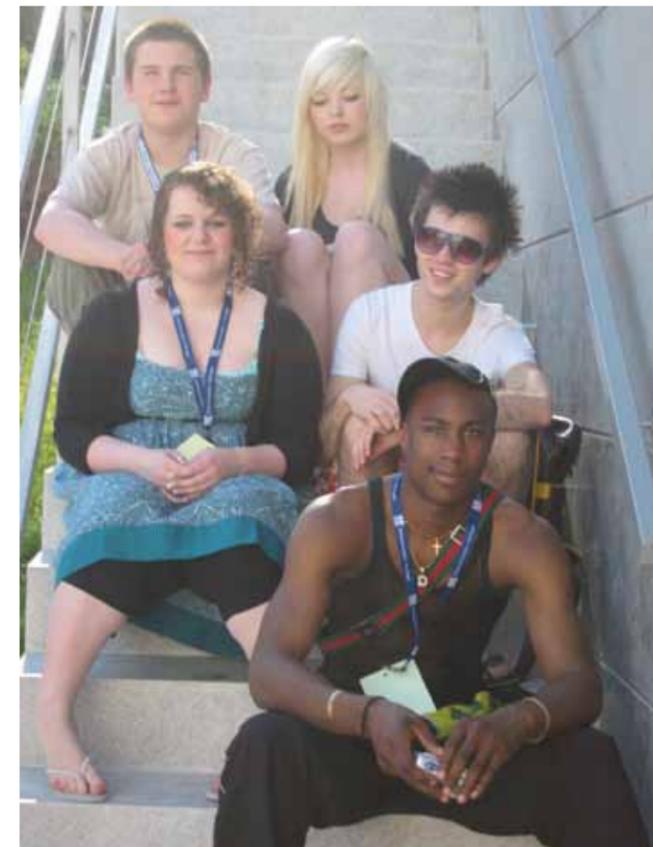
Danny



A novel use for graffiti workshop board!

In recent years we have invested a great deal of time and effort in the empowerment of young people to take their rightful place in the management and strategic direction of The Youth Association. Throughout the last year, we have worked with our young advisors to build a comprehensive set of working standards and a quality assurance system that is built soundly on what our young people believe good youth work is all about. In 2012 we will be able to show everyone the proven value of that work. Our young people will come centre-stage to tell you about the impact of our youth work, what makes it so special and important and that high quality, authentic youth work makes a real difference to young lives, in ways that can't be replicated or replaced by formal education or 'targeted intervention'. Young people will be our champions, advocates and best salespeople.

The pressures on us all in the next few years to compromise our purpose and mission, compete in cut-throat contract bidding and strain the effectiveness and integrity of our work to breaking point will grow. We are convinced that innovation, imagination, a rock-steady focus on the needs and participation of young people and a relentless effort to drive up the quality and impact of our youth work is the way forward. Good youth work is more vital now than ever. Help us to keep it alive and thriving.



Social interaction with new people is an important learning experience



TYA and me

"I joined Youth on Health as a representative in 2005 and since then I have been involved with The Youth Association for many different things. From the Facilit-8 project I have gained accreditations to put on my UCAS form, however every project will give me lots to talk about at university. Other sessions and conferences have given me so much confidence in public speaking, as I have had many experiences of talking to representatives of many different organisations and, in one case, Gordon Brown. I now am able to talk enthusiastically, confidently and fluently which has had a huge impact on me in school and job interviews. I know it will always be valuable in later life.

In fact I have really enjoyed and been so inspired by what The Youth Association does that I am helping to organise and run an event to raise awareness of involving young people in governance to gain an EPQ qualification through school. It is something that I am very passionate about, having first hand experience of how beneficial it is.

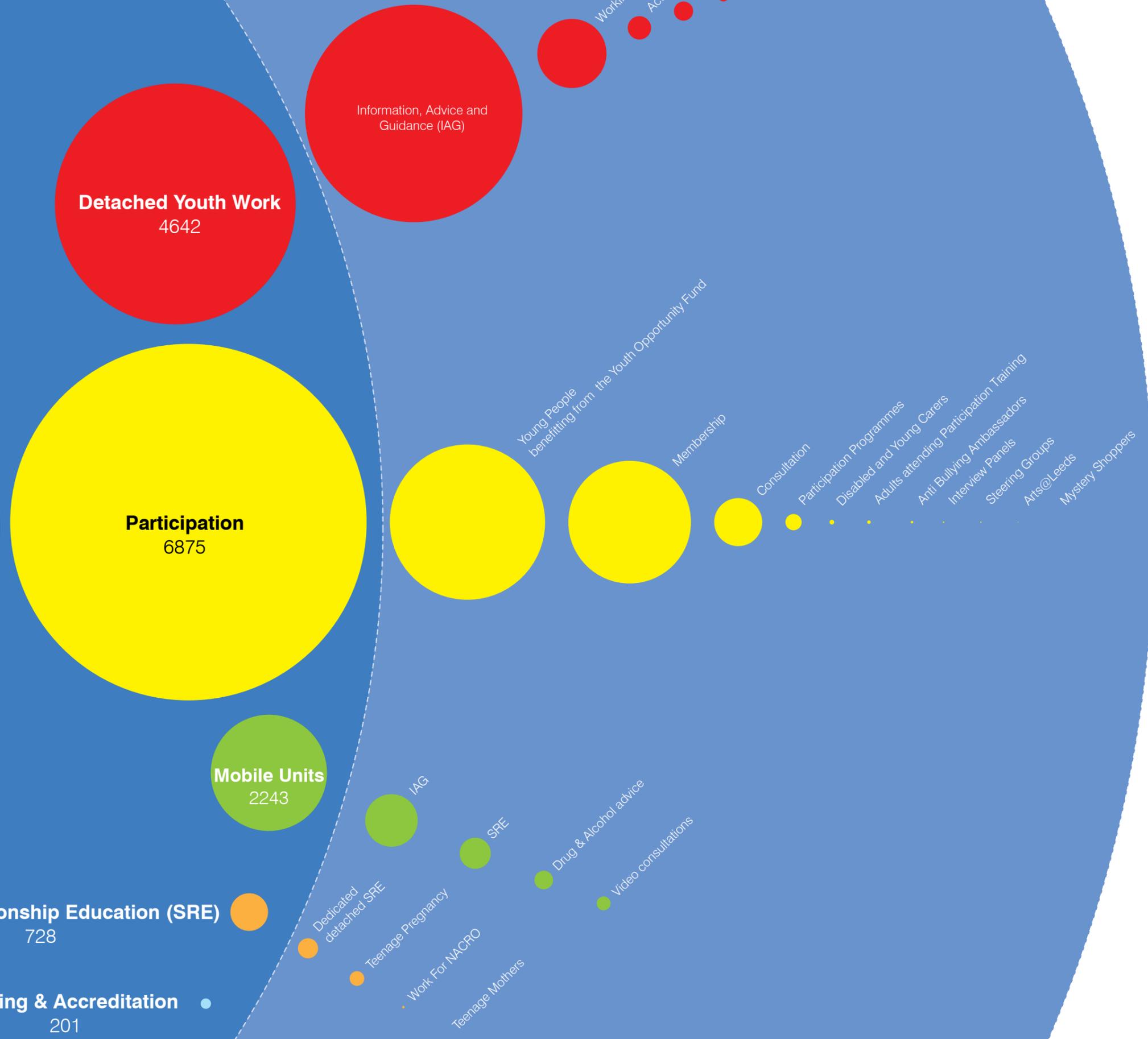
Through working with The Youth Association I have gained a much broader mindset and I am much more aware of decisions that involve Leeds.

Working with The Youth Association has been a lot of fun, allowing me to make a lot of friends. The confidence and experience of team work has definitely given me an advantage at university when applying for my degree, which is languages and management.

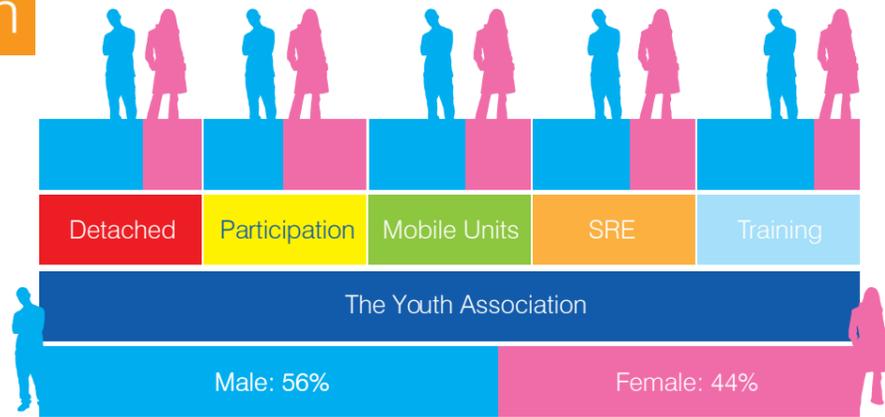
It's hard to describe the huge impact that The Youth Association has had on me, but if I could sum it up in three words it would be inspirational, confidence-building and enjoyable!"

Claire Higgins

Total number of young people
14,695



gender break down



Source - TYA monitoring

social issues in the areas in which we work

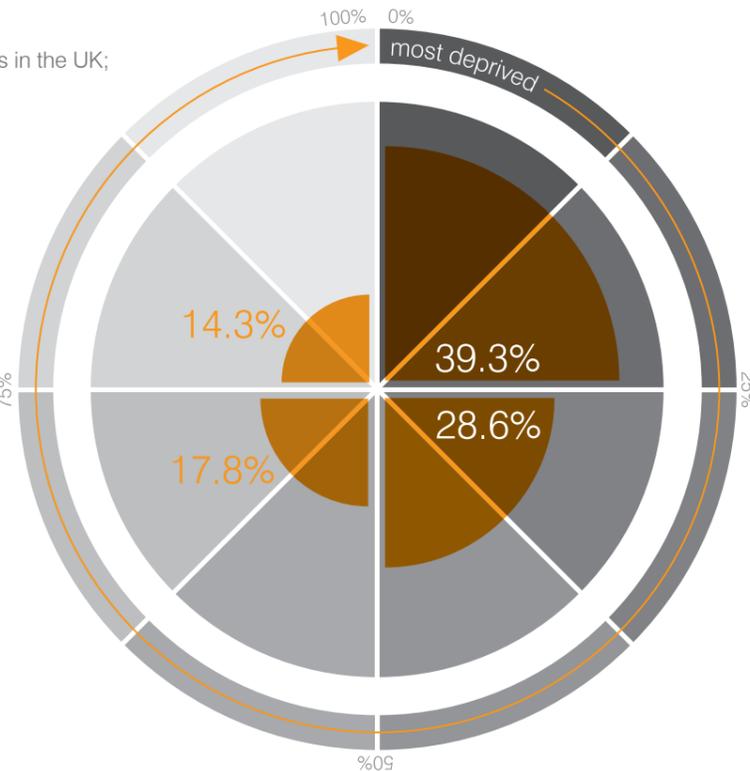
Qualifications = No. of people in area with no qualifications
 Young parents = Conceptions in under-18s
 Youth jobs = Youth unemployment



Source - National Statistics Office

where we work - deprivation

As you can see we work in some of the most deprived areas in the UK; over a third of our work is done in the most deprived 25%, over two thirds is done in the most deprived 50% in the UK.



where we work - postcodes

LS9	BD3	S63	LS10	HD6	LS11
WF10	HX1	LS28	S71	WF8	LS14
LS5	BD17	LS4	LS26	LS25	WF2
S73	LS6	WF4	LS27	KX2	WF1
WF11	WF2	LS18	WF3	LS13	LS3
LS12	BD10	HX3	S70	LS1	WF9
HD4	LS2	LS23	S75	LS8	WF1
LS15	LS7	LS17	HD9	LS16	LS24
LS20	WF12	WF14	LS22	LS19	BD11
LS21					

Source - National Statistics Office

- 50,806** number of contacts with young people
- 53** postcode areas worked in
- £1m** awarded to young people BY young people
- 8,500** condoms distributed
- 301** young people from NEET to EET
- 874** youth work sessions
- 232** home visits made
- 491** young people consulted on national and local issues
- 1189** TYA associates joined up and CRB checked
- 295** organisations worked with
- 16,047** overall contacts made through detached work
- 538** detached youth work sessions
- 79%** drop in anti-social behaviour during detached sessions (compared with 2009-10)
- 787** young people reported feelings of increased confidence and other 'soft outcomes' of detached work
- 503** young people moving on to positive destinations as a result of detached work
- 4365** magazines produced and distributed to young people
- 4** young people debated in the House of Commons
- 20** young people and councillors took part in 'political speed dating'
- 1575** mobile unit sessions
- 76** qualifications achieved by young people
- 165** accreditations given to young people
- 771** credits achieved by young people

We pride ourselves on the wide range of youth work services we provide to neighbourhoods and communities across West and South Yorkshire. For many years now, we have made it our policy to keep our services as flexible, mobile and accessible as we possibly can. That has enabled us to direct our work to where it is needed most. Although we do work with young people in our offices in Wakefield, Leeds and Manvers, the vast majority of our work is delivered on the streets, from our mobile units, in schools or in building-based projects run by partner organisations. In this sense, our work is best understood as being 'nomadic'; we do not have a big youth project building of our own to support and we are always happy to work with groups of young people where they choose to meet and gather. This has helped to keep down the delivery cost of our work and to maximise the numbers of young people we can work with.

The record shows that last year we worked with close to 15,000 different young people, many of whom live in some of the most deprived areas of Britain. In total, we recorded 50,806 contacts with young people, and that means that we worked with each individual an average of 3.5 times. The intensity of that work varied widely, from one-off contacts to pass on information or to survey young people's opinions, to training and development programmes that involved many hours of highly structured group work lasting months. As a direct result of our more intensive programmes, 201 young people achieved Open College accreditation through TYA. For the majority of those young people, their accreditation with us was the first and only qualification they have achieved.

Our mobile information, advice and guidance service has been in operation since 2003 and has continued to cover stretches of West Yorkshire, reaching young people who would otherwise have little or no access to the support services they need. Well over 2,000 individual young people have been supported by our mobile service last year and 301 of them have been helped to find work, training or further education. By offering the 'C-Card' service, our mobile units have been instrumental in distributing some 8,500 condoms to young people in an attempt to tackle some of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in western Europe. Where other 'Connexions' services had given up trying to re-engage young people who had lost contact with all support services, our fleet of four mobiles continued to show their versatility by making 232 home visits to those young people, many of whom took the opportunity to climb on board with their families and find a way back to a positive future.

Funded by a two-year grant from the Department of Education, The Youth Association delivered a targeted programme of street-based or 'detached' youth work, throughout Wakefield and Barnsley. We registered over 16,000 contacts with 4,642 different young people on the streets of West and South Yorkshire. All of our detached work aims to draw groups that choose to be on the streets in their leisure time into challenging and developmental programmes of group work and activities. More than 40 such activity programmes were developed from detached work, including ten residentials. In the areas where we work, the police report that instances of crime and anti-social behaviour drop by almost 80% making our detached work the most cost-effective proactive intervention with street gangs in many neighbourhoods.

TYA and me

"In the Steering Group we have meetings to represent Barnsley, help organise trips for other young people in Barnsley and we get a voice in what we want to do.

If it weren't for The Youth Association we'd be doing nowt really. But we get into trouble for no reason, so this helps us get out of that, so we get to learn new stuff as well without getting in trouble. I've definitely been more confident in front of other people that I don't know."

Samara

Over the last ten years, we have developed a reputation as an innovator in the field of participative youth work. Much of that experimentation has happened in Leeds, where we support the Council by running all the operations of its Participation Unit. Given the size of Leeds and its population of young people, it is no surprise that TYA has been able to work with large numbers of children and young people in helping them to have a voice in the running of the city. Some 6,875 individuals were involved in our participation work last year. The scale, range and depth of that work was no less impressive than the quantity. We helped young people to be involved in the interview and selection process of some of the most senior executives of both Leeds City Council and the Children's Workforce Development Council. When 20 young people organised a 'speed dating' event with their local councillors, to grill them on their politics and opinions on youth



Ditching the urban environment for a new outlook and experience

Case Study

Young People with Disabilities

The Youth Association was commissioned by Aiming High to undertake a consultation with children and young people with disabilities and life limiting conditions. They wanted to know:

- If young people are satisfied with their short breaks
- What young people would like to do in their leisure time
- When young people would like to access short breaks
- What the barriers are that prevented the young people from accessing short breaks

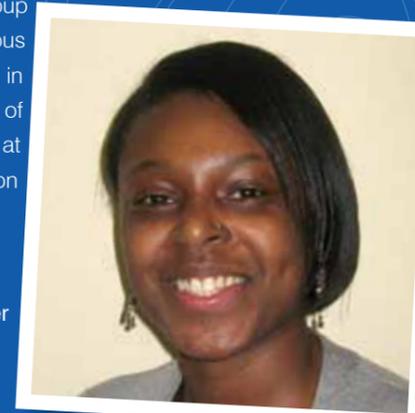
50 children and young people, aged between 4-20 years, with a wide range of disabilities took part in the consultation. A focus group of young people met to explore the questions in greater depth and make a DVD to show the importance of involving children and young people with disabilities in decision making.

Outcomes

- Young people organised and delivered a delegate event with key decision makers from Aiming High to feedback findings
- Strategic managers from Children Leeds made pledges to the young people's recommendations from the Aiming High Short Break report
- The creation of a Children Leeds working group that is dedicated to ensure children and young people in Leeds have a voice and influence in the services that they access
- TYA has also been approached by Barnardo's, The Children Society and the National Children's Bureau to use this project as a baseline on young people views about short breaks for their training needs analysis
- The development of a young people's participation group called The Higher Aspirations that supports and empowers young people with a wide range of disabilities to have a voice and make decisions about services that affect their lives
- The Higher Aspiration group was nominated for the NCVYS Young Partners Award 2010 and has been short listed for the North region. The group attended a glamorous awards ceremony in London on the 4th of December 2010 at the Lancaster London Hotel

Gemma Williams

Senior Youth Worker



services, the story made it into the national media. Continuing a long tradition, The Youth Association worked with young people to design, create and distribute over 4,000 magazines to young people across Leeds.

This snapshot overview cannot fully convey the true scale and impact of the thousands of sessions of high quality youth work that TYA has been able to deliver last year, but we hope it gives you a little insight into what we do and how we do it.

Case Study

Coping with bereavement

Through working in a School in Morley, I was referred a young person whose father had unexpectedly died a short time previously.

She was finding it really hard to deal with all the emotions that she was experiencing. This impacted on her severely as she was trying to keep focused on schoolwork (being in the middle of her mock GCSEs). As well as the 'normal' sadness, guilt and anger she also saw the effect that it had on others, as well as herself.

As adults we often find it to be a very difficult time when we lose a loved one, but for a young person it can be even harder to come to terms with. After all, this is usually the first time they have experienced death, loss and grief, and young people can find it difficult to talk to close family or friends about how they are feeling.

I was able to meet with her regularly on a one-to-one basis. During these sessions she was able to talk openly about how she felt and the rollercoaster ride which she was experiencing.

Each week we set small goals and talked through how she could achieve them. Throughout ongoing support of listening, reassuring and offering advice and guidance she came to understand that it was only natural to have these feelings and emotions. She became stronger in herself and more able to accept and deal with the loss of her father.

Sharon Barratt

Senior Youth Worker



A wide range of sport and activities plays a large part in our offer to young people





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