

Building brighter futures.

Gloucestershire Youth Support Team
Annual Report 2022-2023



shaw trust

We all have a part to play. This is ours.

The Youth Support Team has a unique role within the partnership landscape of children and young people services in Gloucestershire.

It is an organisation that works to provide integrated services under one banner, delivering varied but interconnected specialist elements for children and young people who need support. From Youth Justice to Substance Misuse to Education, Training or Employment, with each year the team can combine resources and specialist knowledge to empower and add value to core services for children and young people in the county.

Inclusion and diversity have a focus in the support provided by YST staff, recognising the over representation in vulnerable groups, of children and young people from black and ethnic minorities, those known to social care, those with neurodiversity or learning difficulties and those from the LGBTQ+ community. Understanding that

to support someone means accepting them for who they are as much as focusing on their needs. Our practice of assertive outreach, to engage with those children and young people who often feel let down by others, has led to meaningful relationships being made and support evolving into positive outcomes. We do not give up on children and will try again and again to reach out and support.

The staff in the YST consider themselves as 'stakeholders' in the future of children and young people and will support and challenge partners to improve outcomes wherever possible. Working alongside Gloucestershire Constabulary in more than one area, co-locating within Children's Social Care and working together with our Health colleagues.

As with previous years the YST continues to grow an ethos of respect and excellence in the workforce, who are passionate about providing the right support at the right time. Working alongside our partners and delivering better outcomes for children in Gloucestershire.

FOREWORDS



For over 15 years Gloucestershire County Council and Shaw Trust's Prospects Youth Support Team have worked together in partnership for the good of young people and their families across the county. When it was first commissioned this was a landmark contract bringing together teams from across children's services with the primary intent of putting the needs of the child at the centre.

Fifteen years on, this remains an exceptional approach, one that many other local authorities aspire to achieve. Changing the way public services are delivered, innovating to put the needs of the people we serve first, is at the heart of our work across Shaw Trust. Work that is impactful and life changing and I am delighted to share this annual report with you.

Chris

Chris Luck, CEO, Shaw Trust

I am proud to be part of a truly integrated multi-disciplinary service. The children and young people that come through to my team often have complex needs and cannot be seen in isolation. The way the YST works means that those young people can get timely support from specialists in many different areas, within easy reach and without waiting lists. This can then assist with decreasing their needs. I am proud that we have been able to meet the needs and continue to have a positive impact on the majority of young people we work with.

Karinne

Karinne Davies, ATM Health Team, YST



WHO ARE THE YST?

We stand side-by-side with 6,800 vulnerable young people. Every single year.

We support some of the most vulnerable young people across the county.

This includes children who have offended and those on the edge of the criminal justice system; those who are unemployed or homeless, teenage parents, those at risk of or being exploited, those who go missing from home or care and those with substance misuse or other health needs.

OUR 2022/23 IMPACT IN NUMBERS

6,800

Young people supported

82,000

Contacts with children, young people and families

480

Young people experiencing housing difficulties helped

100%

Of return interviews offered to young people not open to social care

97%

Of child substance misuse referrals left treatment in a planned way with at least a 50% reduction in use

100

Fellow practitioners offered training and support on dealing with exploitation

2nd

We remained in the 2nd highest quintile of the national recording mechanism for children in education



YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE

Acting early to build brighter futures.

The YJS in Gloucestershire recognises that children who offend are often vulnerable and facing multiple and complex challenges where traditional criminalising sanctions can be both ineffective and inappropriate.

We therefore take a Child First approach, working in partnership with statutory and third sector partners to provide effective prevention interventions to stop children becoming involved in criminal or anti-social behaviour; diversionary services to address behaviours and attitudes whilst avoiding a formal criminal sanction and child focused formal interventions to support the cessation of criminal activity. Through this work we are reducing the numbers of people who are victims of youth crime in Gloucestershire. Our delivery model brings in a level of integration that is unique within the country.

The YST in which the YJS sits, includes a variety of specialist services which can be accessed without delay for children entering or being diverted from the formal criminal justice system. This year our YJS has outperformed both the southwest and national averages in relation to several outcome measures.

HIGHLIGHTS

50% of the total number of youth justice interventions are now informal through the Children First process, which does not criminalise children.

The reoffending rate for Children First sits at circa 18.5%, compared to a national reoffending rate of 24% for youth cautions and 32% for all court disposals.

No children in Gloucestershire received a custodial sentence in year.

We delivered a safer communities schools group work programme to secondary schools across the county.

Co-delivered with the 2gether Trust, the children and young people's Liaison and Diversion service, within the Police custody suite and in the community, to ensure young people's needs can be identified and supported early.

Offered support, including restorative interventions to 100% of victims of youth crime.

Collaborated with children with lived experience of the system to improve our feedback processes.

Collaborated with the Stronger Safer Gloucestershire Partnership to deliver workshops on the consequences of knife crime as part of the Knife Angel National Anti-Violence Tour.

Achieved a reduction in the First Time Entrants (FTE) rate from 216 children in 2013 to 47 in 2022.



OUR YOUNG PEOPLE SAY:

“I have been supported for over two years. We have a really good relationship and they have been there through all the ups and downs, never giving up on me.”

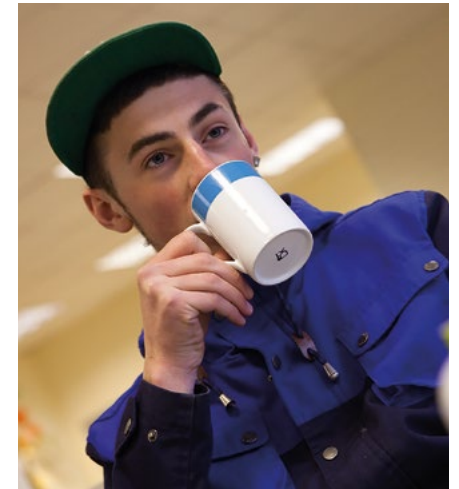
“My worker has helped me get a home but is helping me achieve my goals as well.”

HOUSING ADVICE SERVICE

Everyone deserves somewhere to call home.

We support vulnerable young people who are homeless or have accommodation concerns with advocacy, advising on housing law and homelessness and supporting young people and colleagues within the YST and the Local Authority (LA), to identify emergency accommodation.

We work closely with partners including, district councils, housing providers and the county council to deliver this vital support.



HIGHLIGHTS

Worked with more than 480 young people.

Supported 101 young people under the age of 18 to prepare for independent living.

Provided support to 254 care leavers referred via the emergency duty system.

Supported the Staying Put agenda advising on benefits.

Developed and delivered training and advice sessions to children’s social care professionals to ensure they understand the complexities of housing legislation.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

Positive next steps start right here.

Our specialist team supports young people aged 16 and 17 (yr12 & 13) who are not in education, training or employment (NEET) to build confidence, gain skills, qualifications and work experience and support them into suitable placements.

We also support care leavers (aged 18-25), focusing on longer term aspirations and confidence building. We support them to understand the adult work and education environment. This can include functional skills, CV writing, interview training, access to courses and how to liaise with the job centre, mainly through 1:1 support. We work in partnership with care home providers and the GCC leaving care team.

We use the Work Star assessment tool to ascertain the young people's readiness to access employment and training and then to map their progress.

HIGHLIGHTS

Ensured that Gloucestershire has remained in quintile 2 of the national recording mechanism for children in education, training and employment, (5 quintiles 1 being the highest). Ensuring that Gloucestershire is the leading county in the South West region.

Worked hard to ensure that the majority of young people's destinations post year 11 are known, with only 1.18% being unknown.

Developed robust partnerships with the DWP, GCC, further education providers and employers in the area to ensure smooth transitions.

Regularly produced and distributed the SPIED magazine full of helpful information.

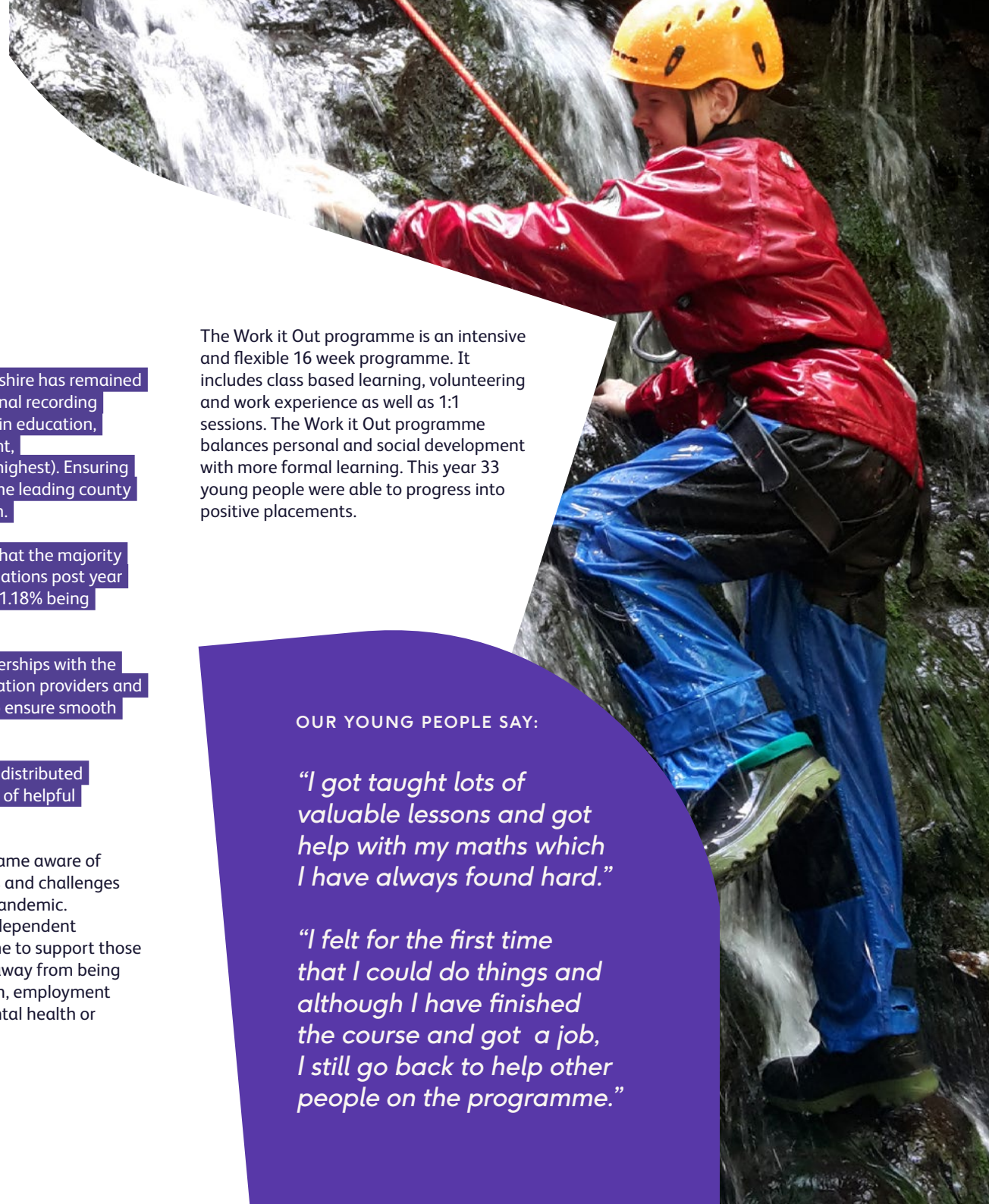
During this year we became aware of the additional pressures and challenges on young people post pandemic. We therefore sought independent funding for a programme to support those young people furthest away from being able to access education, employment and training due to mental health or complex issues.

The Work it Out programme is an intensive and flexible 16 week programme. It includes class based learning, volunteering and work experience as well as 1:1 sessions. The Work it Out programme balances personal and social development with more formal learning. This year 33 young people were able to progress into positive placements.

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE SAY:

"I got taught lots of valuable lessons and got help with my maths which I have always found hard."

"I felt for the first time that I could do things and although I have finished the course and got a job, I still go back to help other people on the programme."





MISSING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Setting a gold standard of safeguarding.

The YST has a small team that oversee the support given to children and young people who are reported missing from school, home or care/supported living placements.

The team ensure that every child reported missing in Gloucestershire is fully supported and that the information obtained through the interviews is used to adapt practice, influence care and trigger plans and keep children safe. We have a strong integrated partnership with the Police, Health, Education and Social Care.

Gloucestershire's Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI), specifically cited the good practice around missing children, recognising the dedicated role of the YST Missing Team.

The official JTAI inspection report said "Dedicated teams in the police and the youth support service focus on missing children, and these professionals know the children well. When children are reported to be missing from home or care, return home interviews are completed by the youth support team. These are offered within appropriate timescales and outcomes shared consistently with the police..."

They added "The Youth Support Team creates, manages and updates children's plans from information obtained from these interviews. These plans help to inform the actions and enquiries that the police use as a priority to trace a missing child quickly when they go missing. They are known as trigger plans. This intelligence-led response provides a better chance of tracing missing children earlier, thus reducing the potential risk of harm".



EXPLOITATION & COMPLEX ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Making sure no young person is left behind.

The team are specialists in both child sexual and criminal exploitation and work closely with Gloucestershire's social care teams.

They also have specialist training in Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) and provide support when this is identified. The team work on a 1:1 basis with children and their families. They apply structured interventions which cover assessment, analysis, planning, intervening and reviewing the effectiveness of the work. In addition, they offer consultations to social workers and other professionals to ensure that they have as much information as possible to support the individual.

We are proud that this year the team worked in an intensive way with 55 young people at any given time, the length of intervention varies depending on need. In addition, they engaged two young people in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme where they successfully achieved awards.

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE SAY:

"I really appreciate her support it's brought me a long way from where I was."



YST HEALTH PROVISION

4 specialist support teams for 4 unique health challenges.

Tier 3 support with substance misuse issues

The substance misuse team work with young people experiencing significant issues with substance use. Through 1:1 interventions, they ensure that the young person understands the safety issues involved in use and work with them to decrease their use.

- Develop and deliver training to other practitioners
- Share knowledge and skills to support young people
- 97% of young people left treatment in a planned way
- Young people leaving treatment reduced substance misuse by over 50%

Speech and language therapy support

The speech and language therapists support the work of the wider YST in many ways. They ensure that any documentation is accessible for all, they provide assessments for individual young people and training for partners and practitioners.

- Integral to the work of the YST
- Work closely with education providers, foster carers and the courts
- Help others recognise any potential issues for children and young people in their care

Physical and mental health interventions

The YST physical and mental health professionals work across the county. The physical health nurse ensures that children and young people coming in via the youth justice system have physical health checks and provides support and guidance around healthy eating, sleep issues, dental hygiene etc. We are particularly proud of the training provided to 60 GP's during this year on the importance of information sharing, access to appointments and treatment and a greater understanding of the work of the YST.

- Mental health and dual diagnosis professionals arrange fast access to necessary support
- Offer support for eating disorders, emotional and mental health issues below CAMHS threshold
- Pioneering approach to support that is a recognised area of need across the country

Sexual Health and teenage pregnancy

The sexual health and teenage pregnancy practitioner works with school aged young people who are pregnant or young parents. They also provide support to the most complex young parents or parents to be who are in the NEET cohort.

- Bambino's Group and 1:1 work offered to those that need it
- Support includes healthy relationships, understanding, and accessing benefits and housing
- Close partnerships with midwives, health visitors, hospital and wider education provision and social care
- ReSET programme covers pregnancy, young parents, sexuality and learning difficulties

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE SAY:

"I don't know what I would have done without them, I didn't know what to do and my family were struggling with me."

"I thought I would have to leave school but with their help I managed to do my exams. I am so proud of myself."

YOUTH WORK & POSITIVE ACTIVITIES

Engaging with the next generation.

The team deliver a mixture of targeted youth work intervention and open access provision which helps to identify young people who may be in need of more specialist work. The results? They speak for themselves.

4,300

Young people engaged with

500

Structured youth work programmes delivered

1,500

1:1 interventions offered

32

Young people trained in first aid

12

Young people supported through level 2 food hygiene qualification



Duke of Edinburgh Awards

The YST manage Gloucestershire's DofE provision focussing on young people supported by the YST as well as independent participants and home-schooled children. We are proud to offer young people who are not able to easily access this provision, the chance to accomplish this amazing award.

"I never thought I could do this. The support I got showed me that I was more capable than I thought."

AP, DofE Participant

"The open expedition was great, I was so scared but the people showed me how I could do it all and my family came and saw me get my award."

HS, DofE Participant



Members of Youth Parliament

During this year we supported the election processes for new Members for Gloucestershire. Three new members were elected. The YST inducted them into their roles and supported them throughout. Arrangements were made for them to meet the High Sheriff of Gloucestershire, Directors of mental health services and they were supported to complete media interviews throughout the year.

“The induction was a great opportunity and really enabled me to hone my ideas for policy motions and community projects.”

AL, Member of Youth Parliament

“Being supported to go to the votes for 16 launch was an amazing experience...everyone in the room shared a passion.”

MS, Member of Youth Parliament



We kept
153
families
fed this year

Healthy Holidays

During this year we continued to deliver our hugely successful Healthy Holiday programme. This provision is offered in addition to the contract and is sourced through volunteering, fundraising and donations and goes to families in need.

We delivered breakfast packs, meal ingredients and recipe cards. In addition, the project delivered on site activities with a healthy meal to children over the age of 11 during school holiday periods.

We are proud that since the beginning of Healthy Holidays in Oct 2020 we have delivered circa 27,323 meals to families across Gloucestershire and more than 3000 hours of volunteering have been given. This year 153 families and in total 666 people received meals.

“You have no idea how grateful I am for the food as it helps me feed my family during the holidays.”

SB, Healthy Holidays Participant

QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE

Better care begins with better planning.

Our well-developed Quality and Performance Framework ensures performance is tracked and measures are put in place to achieve targets. The quality framework enables staff to support young people and families to have access to a good quality service that meets their needs.

THE QUALITY & PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

A common approach to risk planning with the sharing of plans.

Robust monthly supervision and quarterly appraisal processes.

A quarterly feedback fortnight focus from our young people.

Production of detailed, data led quarterly reports to both the commissioners and the Youth Justice Management Board.

Groupwork and 1:1 evaluations.

Regular performance surgeries.

6 moderated case file audits per month, with a composite audit report supplied to GCC.

Regular training opportunities for all staff both formal and informal.

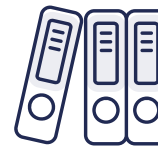
Proactive seeking of feedback from partners, commissioners and service users.

A well established compliments and complaints process.

The YST are proud of all their work but always recognise that there is more to do. In the coming year we will continue to improve our core practice. To do this we will:



Further build on the prevention of offending services, through the national Turnaround Programme.



Ensure training and development opportunities are provided to staff to ensure that practice is relevant and impactful.



Build on the development of our Youth Advisory Board, which meets quarterly and assists us to secure the voice of the users of our services.



Implement the learning from the external evaluation by Northampton University of our Work it Out programme.



Build on the Children First diversionary programme in Youth Justice, to address areas of disproportionality for children known to social care, those from ethnic minority backgrounds and females.

90% +
of young people
rated our team's
support as Excellent
or Good



One-to-one session with KS

KS'S STORY

Proving there's no such thing as a lost cause.

With very few places left to turn, KS was referred to the youth work team by Social Care for additional support with regulating her emotions, forming healthy relationships and building self-esteem. The first couple of one-to-one sessions were challenging. For both KS and her youth worker. Withdrawn, anxious about working with people she didn't know and reluctant to engage – KS had struggled to create a positive purposeful relationship in all of her previous support settings. Complete disengagement was quickly becoming a common theme. Something her youth worker was keen to stay one step ahead of.

By knowing how KS's anxiety presented, her youth worker could take a step back and empower KS to lead the sessions. This person-centred approach enabled KS to become more engaged with the process – talking freely about how she struggled to manage her emotions and can “explode” quite quickly.

With engagement back on track, KS's youth worker created a “negotiated curriculum” action plan for sessions to focus on understanding emotions, emotional health, sleep and coping techniques. Alongside this, KS began mapping her journey by plotting her progress against a Youth Outcome Star.

In her reviews, KS shared that this was helping her into a much healthier routine. The sleep sessions were enabling her to feel more awake during the day, she was concentrating much better at school and becoming more able to regulate her emotions. But most importantly, KS was starting to build friendships and shape the peer support system she'd felt was always going to be out of reach.

“Being able to turn up and feel safe to be myself is a big thing. I know that the people at the group really care about me and it's always fun. That makes it so much easier to talk about what's going on with me.”

Our partners.

We believe that all young people in Gloucestershire deserve the very best and recognise that this can only be achieved through true partnership working.

“Bespoke Mentoring and the YST have been working closely to support new starters for the WiO programme this year. The results of this front end engagement intervention have ensured all mentees are entering the programme with increased confidence and practised strategies to help manage their barriers. It is a fantastic partnership that really does meet the needs of each mentee.”

Christopher Powell,
Managing Director, Bespoke Mentoring

“We are working with very challenging and high risk young people, and safeguarding young people is a high priority for us all. I hope to see us build on the relationship we have to give more young people opportunities and a strong sense of connection to move away from criminality.”

Mikel Medley,
The Music Works

“The YST are a valued partner of GCC and it has been a pleasure to work with them for the benefit of the young people of Gloucestershire during this year.”

Verona Crossfield,
Gloucestershire County Council,
Senior Commissioning Manager