

National Youth Work Curriculum

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nya.org.uk

Acknowledgements

The National Youth Agency (NYA) would like to thank those who helped us consider and develop this National Youth Work Curriculum for England. Our learning group met to debate and agree on what is meant by youth work and the values and principles that ground youth work. Most importantly, we developed the model on which this curriculum is based.

The 2025 updated version of the curriculum is built on this foundational work and further developed with the help and support of youth work organisations, practitioners, NYA youth consultants and young people.

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Contents

Foreword	4	The National Youth Work Curriculum for England	21
Introduction	5	Youth work curriculum themes	21
What is youth work	5	Identity and belonging	22
What is the National Youth Work Curriculum for England?	8	Health and wellbeing	25
How to use the National Youth Work Curriculum	8	Democracy and participation	28
Where does youth work take place?	10	Economic and financial wellbeing	31
Different approaches to youth work	11	Creativity and fun	34
Striving for excellence in youth work	12	Our global communities	37
Focusing on young people's needs and interests	12	Skills for life, play and work	40
A framework of values, principles and ethics	14	The environment	43
Using the Plan, Do, Review approach to embed the curriculum in practice	15	Healthy and safe relationships	46
How the curriculum adds value to the issues that matter to young people	19	Arts, culture and heritage	49
		Related professions	52
		Appendix	54
		1. Key terms	54
		2. Legislation, standards and guidance	57
		3. Key organisations	64
		4. Resources	66
		5. References	66
		6. Examples	66

Foreword

Youth work has never been more important. In a time of rapid change, growing pressures on young people, and widening inequality, your role as a youth worker is vital. You create safe, supportive spaces where young people can be themselves, build confidence, and feel a sense of belonging. You offer trusted relationships, champion their voice, and help them navigate challenges and shape their futures.

This curriculum framework is here to support and strengthen your work. It sets out what youth work is, the values and principles that underpin it, and how it supports young people's personal, social, and educational development. It provides a clear, shared language for practice – whether you're working in a local authority, the voluntary sector, or as part of a community-based project.

Across the country, youth work looks different from place to place and happens in different spaces. But what unites us is our commitment to young people, and the belief that youth work changes lives. This framework centres young people in their communities and recognises that effective youth work doesn't happen in isolation. It grows from relationships, from trust, and from a deep understanding of the realities young people face.

This is more than guidance. It's a practical, flexible tool for you to use, adapt, and bring to life in your own context. It's a resource to help you reflect, communicate your impact, and stay grounded in the values that make youth work so powerful.

Use it with confidence. Use it with pride. Because what you do matters; every day, in every interaction, in every young person's journey.

Leigh Middleton
Chief Executive, National Youth Agency.



Introduction

What is youth work?

The key purpose of youth work is to:

“Enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society, and to reach their full potential.”

[Youth Work in England: Policy, Practice and the National Occupational Standards](#)

‘Youth’ is the stage between childhood and adulthood when young people go through major physical and emotional changes. Their brains develop rapidly, affecting how they think, behave and interact with others. This period is crucial for making important life choices, navigating complex social situations and adapting to a digital online world. Young people need support and guidance to help them explore new experiences safely, build relationships and take on challenges. Adapting youth work practice to support young people with a range of needs and differences, such as neurodivergence, is essential in creating an inclusive and equitable environment for youth work to take place.

Youth work...

...is a form of education that usually happens outside of school through informal and non-formal activities and experiences, starting with young people's interests, goals and experiences, helping them grow personally and socially by building on their strengths.

...mainly supports young people aged 11 to 19 years, but in some cases, it can include those as young as 8 or up to 25 years, depending on their needs. Unlike many other services, youth work is voluntary – young people choose to take part, providing a flexible approach based on a series of values, principles and ethics.

...can respond to specific issues young people face or help them build skills and experiences for the future. It adapts to change, listens to young people's concerns and plans activities that support their needs.

This includes learning:

- in real-life settings, such as communities and cultural spaces
- through experiences, including open discussions
- group activities that help young people learn from each other
- through creativity and play
- through individual support and targeted programmes

...does not have fixed outcomes so it can adapt to the needs, interests and concerns of young people. However, there may be times when funders, strategies or organisational objectives influence the desired outcomes. It's important for youth workers to be open and honest with young people, ensuring they stay at the heart of the process.



Youth work plays a vital role in many young people's lives, helping them grow personally, socially and politically. Youth work happens in many places – community centres, schools, youth cafés, clubs and on the streets (known as detached youth work). It includes a wide range of activities, such as outdoor adventures, drama, health projects, peer education, and programmes for specific issues, identities or groups. While access to youth work depends on where you live, the curriculum and its corresponding activities can be adjusted to fit different places, spaces and approaches.

Youth workers empower young people to get involved in their communities, respect different cultures, and embrace diversity. They help young people reach their potential and find creative ways to handle life's challenges. Whether you're a volunteer, sessional youth worker or a professional in the wider youth sector, the National Youth Work Curriculum can support you to help young people achieve their potential and life goals.

There are many different paths into youth work, but at its core, it's all about building strong, supportive relationships. That's why the National Youth Work Curriculum was created – to provide a clear framework for high-quality youth work and support a better understanding of how it helps young people learn and develop.

This document includes practical guides, resources and links to help you develop best practice youth work. For more information, visit [National Youth Work Curriculum – National Youth Agency](#).



The following sections explain the key parts of the youth work process, including:

- What is the National Youth Work Curriculum for England?
- How to use the National Youth Work Curriculum
- Where does youth work take place?
- Different approaches to youth work
- Striving for excellence in youth work
- Focusing on young people's needs and interests
- A framework of values, principles and ethics
- Using the Plan, Do, review approach to embed the curriculum in practice
- How the curriculum adds value to the issues that matter to young people.

What is the National Youth Work Curriculum for England?

The National Youth Work Curriculum for England is a flexible framework which allows youth workers to identify how engagement and activities can be used to support the personal, social and political development of young people.

The curriculum is a reference tool for youth workers and volunteers, young people, decision-makers, policymakers, and commissioners. It aims to guide individuals by describing how relationships between youth workers and young people provide opportunities for learning. Above all, the curriculum responds to young people's diverse needs, interests and concerns.

The curriculum comes to life with real stories from young people and youth workers. It's flexible to help create high-quality youth work. These stories show how having access to good youth services and trusted adults helps young people build relationships, opening opportunities that might not otherwise be available.

How to use the National Youth Work Curriculum

Inclusive at its core

The National Youth Work Curriculum is designed to be flexible, adapting to the needs of young people. It understands that they are experts in their own lives, and youth workers are there to guide them based on their interests, experiences and concerns. Unlike a strict school curriculum,

this approach allows space to explore important topics relevant to young people's needs and challenges.

The curriculum links different parts of life, helping young people explore topics like identity, health, money, creativity and relationships. It shows how these areas are connected and how young people can apply what they learn in real life.

At the core of the curriculum are young people – often confident and ready to make decisions about their lives now and in the future but who sometimes need support to feel empowered to do so. Youth work not only benefits young people but also helps them play an active role in their communities, tackling big issues and improving society.

The curriculum is inclusive. It encourages you to create tools and resources that reflect the local culture, abilities and experiences of young people, including those with disabilities or health conditions, ensuring everyone feels supported to participate.

To ensure youth work is truly inclusive, youth workers should strive to understand the different backgrounds and experiences of the young people they work with. This includes visible and invisible differences like race, sexual orientation, religion or belief and gender.

Youth work should challenge one-sided views and only Western-focused ideas, to make it more relevant to different backgrounds. Whether you work in a youth centre, park, school or other setting, you can adapt the curriculum to suit the environment. For example, a curriculum that only includes examples or ways of learning from Western countries might not reflect the realities of young people from different backgrounds. It could miss important traditions, knowledge or ways of solving problems that exist in other parts of the world. We want all young people to feel seen, valued and included in their learning.

Apply the [Equality, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging \(EEDIB\) Standards](#) to your thinking and ask yourself the following:

1 Do we ensure fair treatment for all young people?

Considering young people's backgrounds, identities and circumstances. Equity and equality standards promote justice by eliminating discrimination and providing equal opportunities for engagement.

2 Do we celebrate diversity and community building?

Youth work involves engaging with a diverse range of individuals. Incorporating diversity standards acknowledges and celebrates the unique backgrounds, cultures and experiences of young people, fostering an environment where differences are embraced, and strong, positive relationships and a sense of community are built.

3 Do we provide accessible and inclusive environments?

Make youth work services accessible to everyone, including those with hidden and visible disabilities, to ensure no young person is excluded. This involves making reasonable adjustments, removing physical and social barriers, and using inclusive communication methods. Inclusion standards ensure that youth work environments are welcoming places, where young people feel valued, respected and included, promoting a sense of belonging essential for personal development and wellbeing.

4 Are we addressing systemic inequalities?

EEDIB standards help address systemic issues that perpetuate inequalities. By actively promoting equity and challenging discriminatory practices, youth work can contribute to dismantling barriers that could limit the potential of young people, both individually and collectively. Are you working with young people and stakeholders to ensure they have an authentic voice in addressing inequality?

5 Do we enhance learning, growth and wellbeing?

In an inclusive and equitable environment, young people are more likely to engage actively, learn effectively, grow personally and experience greater wellbeing. EEDIB standards support the holistic development of young people through the National Youth Work Curriculum by removing obstacles and providing opportunities.

6 Do we actively promote social responsibility and advocacy?

Youth work shapes the values and perspectives of young people and youth workers. By applying EEDIB standards, practitioners demonstrate values of social responsibility, empathy and respect, supporting young people in contributing positively to a diverse and inclusive society. Youth workers aim to ensure every young person has a fair chance, providing opportunities to learn about challenging issues, develop advocacy skills and work together for positive social change.

Please see our EEDIB Standards for further information: nya.org.uk/eedib-standards



Where does youth work take place?

Youth work takes place in many different places, such as community centres, drop-in spaces, hospitals and secure settings. It adjusts to the needs of young people while respecting the communities they belong to. Wherever it happens, youth work is about trusted adults creating safer spaces and offering flexible support to help young people learn and grow through positive experiences and opportunities.

Settings may include:

- rural and residential areas
- beaches, parks and other outdoor spaces
- outdoor education and residential programmes
- youth centres and community buildings
- schools and colleges
- healthcare settings
- youth justice settings (like young offenders' services)
- secure settings (like prisons or residential care)
- faith-based settings
- uniformed settings E.g. Scouts
- mobile services and pop-up activities
- online and digital platforms.

Different approaches to youth work

Youth work comes in many forms, using different approaches to meet the needs of young people in various settings. These include:

- **Universal:** open to all young people, offering activities and support in different settings.
 - **Targeted:** focused on young people with specific needs or challenges using one-on-one support, group work, or early intervention – often in partnership with other services.
 - **Outreach:** delivered in the community, reaching out to young people where they are, whether in schools, parks or other locations to engage them in services or facilities.
 - **Detached/street-based:** engaging with young people in public spaces through informal conversations and activities, outside of traditional youth work settings.
 - **Centre-based:** delivered at youth centres, where young people can access activities, support and services.
 - **Community-based:** open-access programmes designed to support all young people in the community.
- **Outdoor education:** using outdoor activities like camps, water sports and adventure programmes to build skills and confidence.
 - **Focused:** centred around specific topics like mental health, education or employment, and working towards set goals.
 - **Digital youth work:** providing support, activities and resources online through digital spaces.
 - **Spiritual:** work that provides spaces to explore faith, build connections with others and engage in activities such as prayer, community service and conversations about values and beliefs. This work can be inclusive, welcoming young people of all faith backgrounds.

These approaches often overlap as youth work evolves to meet the changing needs of young people and communities, ensuring fair access for everyone.



Striving for excellence in youth work

Good youth work is based on building a voluntary and trusting relationship between the young person and the youth worker. Youth workers, whether paid or volunteers, should be well-trained and qualified for their roles. While some youth workers may specialise, all should have skills to work in various settings.

We publish a range of standards and frameworks, reports, briefing documents and other resources, with the aim of supporting youth workers to deliver high quality and safe provision.

Standards set the benchmark for excellence in youth work. They define expectations for quality, ensuring that youth workers uphold best practices in supporting and engaging young people. These currently include:

[Youth Work Practice Standards](#): an essential document illustrating best practice and outlining everything a provider needs to know to deliver youth work legally, safely and effectively.

[Safeguarding standards for the youth sector](#): these have been designed to support good safeguarding practices for all those working with children and young people.

[Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging \(EEDIB\) Standards](#): the principles of EEDIB are key to youth work.

[Digital Youth Work Standards](#): a set of standards which aim to help youth workers harness digital technology to enhance young people's outcomes.

Other useful resources can be found here:

[NYA, 'Standards and resources'](#)

[Also see Appendix – 2. Legislation, standards and guidance](#)



Focusing on young people's needs and interests

Youth work is a distinct bounded educational process adapted across a variety of settings to support a young person's personal, social and educational development to:

- explore their values, beliefs, ideas and issues
- enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society
- facilitate the learning of a set of practical or technical skills and competencies that help them to realise their potential

The relationship between a youth worker and a young person is voluntary. It begins with understanding where the young person is in their life, including their feelings, values, opinions and experiences. This allows young people to take the lead in shaping their own youth work experience, working alongside the youth worker as equals. By doing this, trust is built, which is key to effective youth work.

The youth work sector's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), underpins young people's rights, making sure they have a say in decisions that affect them. Since they know their lives best, youth work should give authentic opportunities to share their views and make a difference.

Practice (also referred to as Praxis) means putting these ideas into action. Youth work isn't just about theory, it's about how things are done. As a form of informal education, youth work helps young people to grow by offering:

- new and challenging experiences that push them out of their comfort zone
- time to reflect on their experiences and what they've learned
- real-life learning through activities, relationships and hands-on experiences
- both accredited and non-accredited learning opportunities
- access to opportunities like volunteering, forums and social action
- restorative and transformative learning to help young people reflect, act and grow personally as an individual and alongside their peers
- skill development to gain new skills or build on what they already know, to support personal growth and future opportunities
- fun and creative activities to support general wellbeing and happiness
- opportunities to build self-confidence and awareness



Figure 1: Testimonials taken from interviews with young people in June 2024 describing how youth work has positively influenced them

A framework of values, principles and ethics

Explaining youth sector values, principles and ethics can often appear complicated, we use terms interchangeably and they often feel repetitive. A Strategy Tree graphic has been developed to explain how youth work as an organic process is informed by this framework.

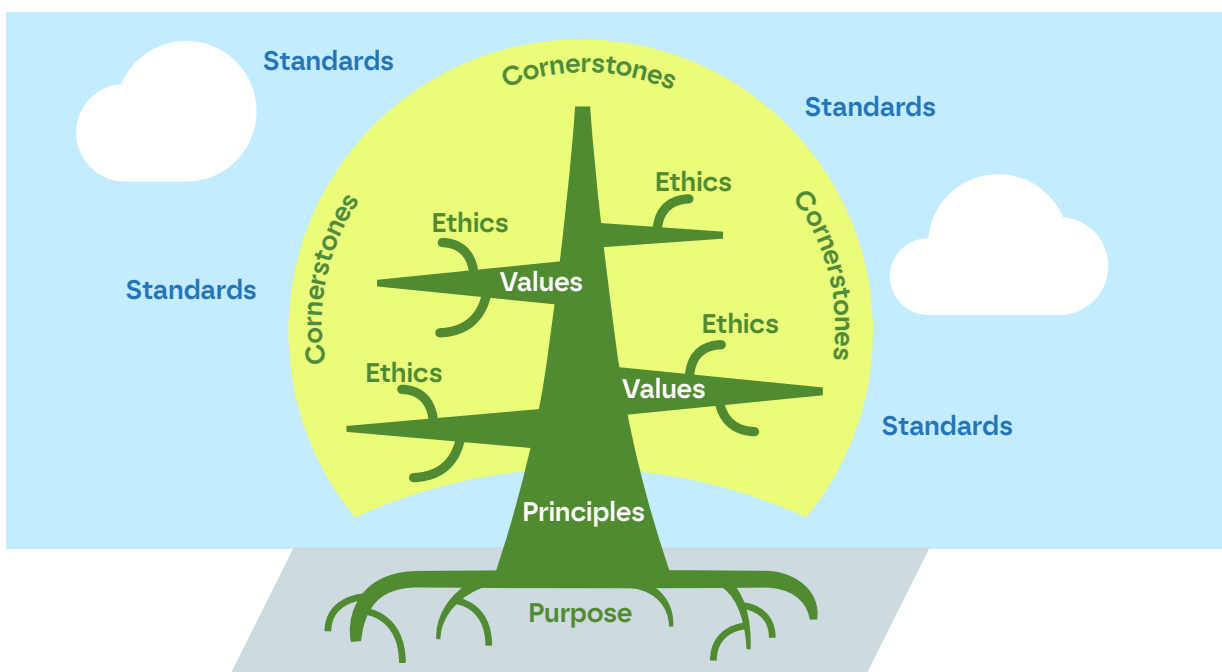
The Strategy Tree: a clear and structured approach

This Strategy Tree graphic demonstrates how the youth work framework is rooted in a clear purpose, with principles and values that provide strength, ethics that shape behaviour and cornerstones that demonstrate how professional practice positively impacts young people and communities. Each part of the tree represents a crucial element of a strong and effective approach. This includes:

- **Purpose (roots):** the foundation that defines why the sector or your organisation exists, grounding all actions and decisions.
- **Principles (trunk):** the core beliefs that provide stability and guides decision-making and practice.
- **Values (main branches):** the key ideals that shape the culture, attitudes and behaviours of professionals within the sector.
- **Ethics (smaller branches):** the moral standards, codes of conduct and professional integrity that ensure accountability and trust.
- **Cornerstones (leaves/fruit):** the essential practices, frameworks and benchmarks that bring the purpose to life and ensure meaningful outcomes.
- **Standards (surrounding environment):** the measurable guidelines, laws, policies and regulations that create a structured and supportive framework for growth.

By following this approach, organisations and professionals can ensure that work is deeply rooted in purpose, guided by strong values and leads to real, positive change in the lives of young people and communities.

Figure 2: The detailed framework of values, principles and ethics can be found in the Appendix.



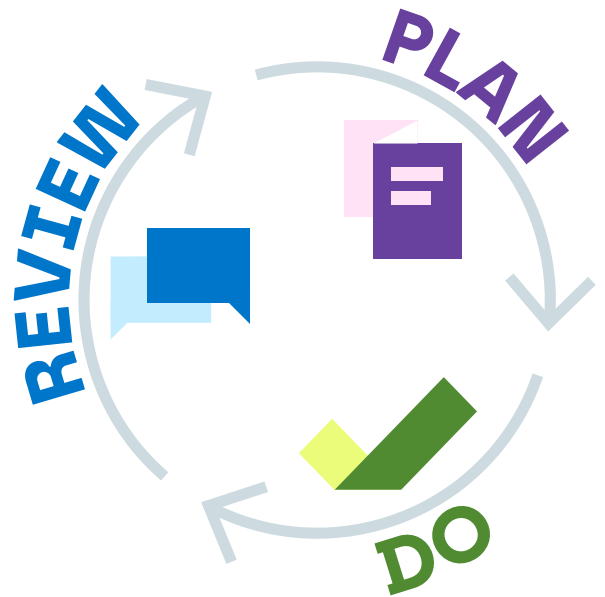
Using the Plan, Do, Review approach to embed the curriculum in practice

Youth work is about building trust and respect through working together. The curriculum enables young people to express what they want to learn and experience, making sure their opinions are heard. It focuses on helping them take control of their learning and reflect, offering different opportunities and experiences.

The themes outlined here are not a checklist of what youth work activities should cover, but rather they can be used to explore a specific topic, interest or need that young people wish to explore or that has been assessed as a need. For example, relationship sex education (RSE).

Young people should always be involved in shaping youth work themes to ensure they are relevant and engaging. For example, exploring food can connect to multiple areas of learning:

- Identity & Belonging – Sharing and preparing dishes from their heritage.
- Economic & Financial Wellbeing – Budgeting, meal planning, and smart shopping.
- Creativity & Fun – Designing menus and experimenting with new recipes.
- Skills Development – Learning to cook and gaining practical kitchen skills.
- Health & Wellbeing – Understanding ingredients and making healthier choices.



By removing barriers and encouraging young people to explore new skills, you empower them to gain confidence, independence, and a deeper understanding of the world around them.

When using the National Youth Work Curriculum, involve young people at every stage.



Plan

Planning youth work activities involves working closely with young people to understand their needs, interests and goals. Youth workers can use curriculum themes to spark ideas but should involve young people to help them learn, stay engaged and co-create activities. For inclusivity, it's important to think about how activities are designed, promoted and delivered. Consider language, access and the different ways young people like to engage, making sure everyone feels welcome and involved.

Key points for planning include:

- Designing activities that cover multiple themes: for example, combining environmental issues with wellbeing.
- Making learning fun and relevant: activities should be creative and help young people gain practical life skills.
- Listening and adapting reflecting on and adjusting activities based on young people's needs, abilities and backgrounds.
- Building trust and respect: ensuring young people are involved in decisions about their learning and participation.
- Inclusive planning: consider accessibility, language and ways to engage young people.
- Co-producing with young people: encouraging them to shape services and activities based on their experiences, so they feel empowered and involved.

Do

Run the activities, if you have listened to young people the activities are more likely to be relevant and engaging. This is the creative fun bit of the youth work process.

Key points for doing this include:

- Bringing activities to life: using games, practical activities, cookery and challenges to make learning exciting.
- Encouraging young people to express themselves: through art, crafts, music, drama or digital media.
- Shaping the experience: encouraging young people to add their ideas and twists to activities.
- Using team challenges: through sports, outdoor activities or interactive workshops.
- Including movement-based activities: through treasure hunts/orienteering, sports, construction challenges or dance.
- Gamify activities with points, rewards or friendly competitions: developing your activity into a game can increase participation and lead to broader outcomes.
- Guiding and offering support: enabling young people to engage at the level that works for them –make space for laughter and spontaneity.
- Encouraging young people to take the lead: they can run parts or all the activity.
- Being flexible: if an idea isn't working, make changes or try something else.

Review

Youth work should be flexible and responsive. This means regularly checking how activities are going, listening to feedback from young people and stakeholders, and making changes when needed. It ensures young people feel heard and supported in their growth.

Youth workers should reflect on their practices and biases to make sure they are creating truly inclusive spaces and opportunities. Seeking input from young people, colleagues and stakeholders helps determine what you could do differently. Young people should be actively involved in shaping their experiences through open conversations, safe feedback methods and shared decision-making.

Creative ways to do this include:

- asking fun questions like, “If today’s activity was a song, what would it be called?” and ask why.
- expressing feelings through music, memes or emojis.
- digital and physical surveys along with focus groups.
- celebrating big and small wins with shoutouts, trips or events.
- capturing experiences with photos, film, through lyrics or [slam poetry](#), or create a roadmap.
- using drawing, journalling, video diaries or group storytelling to reflect.



Figure 3: A basic example of journalling: Encouraging reflection on small and large life events can create meaningful, youth-led experiences.



You could encourage young people to illustrate a journey by hand, digitally or in any media of their choice with short statements describing each. Examples of journey points are shown above.



How the curriculum adds value to the issues that matter to young people

The National Youth Work Curriculum can help meet the needs of young people in your area. Here we outline how to take a specific issue and apply the curriculum framework to find a solution.

Issue: violence impacting young people. The number of serious youth violence (SYV) incidents in the area has risen sharply, and the welfare and safety of young people and the wider community are at risk.

Identity and belonging: SYV is complex, but a careful intervention can help young people understand their position and place within the community. Feeling a connection to the wider community through a youth work activity such as exploring what they contribute to society, how they are valued, what they offer to their peers and what their peers can offer them, can make all the difference in understanding their place, role and reason for belonging. Knowing

who you are and feeling you belong will lead to a sense of pride, attachment and commitment to the community and home.

Health and wellbeing: the obvious impact here is physical and emotional wellbeing. By engaging in youth work activities that increase awareness of individual health, young people are better informed to make positive decisions. Working with skilled professionals who help individuals connect with their futures through a healthy physical and emotional lifestyle will improve esteem, connectivity and general wellbeing. There are many benefits to engaging in targeted youth work provision that aims to reduce SYV. Creating a directory of trusted and proven skilled youth work organisations in the area will help you respond to prioritised needs.

Economic and financial wellbeing: working to reduce SYV will influence the economic and financial wellbeing of young people. Providing spaces and places for young people to have access to a trusted relationship with a youth worker, offers an environment where they can engage in employability workshops, explore routes into education and employment, work on developing a CV or develop the skills needed to secure future placements. Invest in young people and they will invest in their communities.

Skills for life, play and work: there are many skills that a young person can learn and develop to help them deal with the consequences of witnessing or living in an area identified as having SYV. These include a skills development course to apply emergency first aid, a workshop to develop the skills necessary to de-escalate violence using words, or even simply learning when to walk away from a potentially dangerous situation and/or call the authorities. Working alongside youth workers, young people can identify what skills they need to develop to keep themselves and others safe.

The environment: by engaging in a youth work project that helps young people understand their area and encourages them to take ownership of their environment, can develop a sense of attachment and pride. This leads to a desire to improve the general look of their community for the benefit of all residents. A community project that brings everyone together for a common purpose (such as an allotment) will positively impact people's feelings towards where they live and how they act.

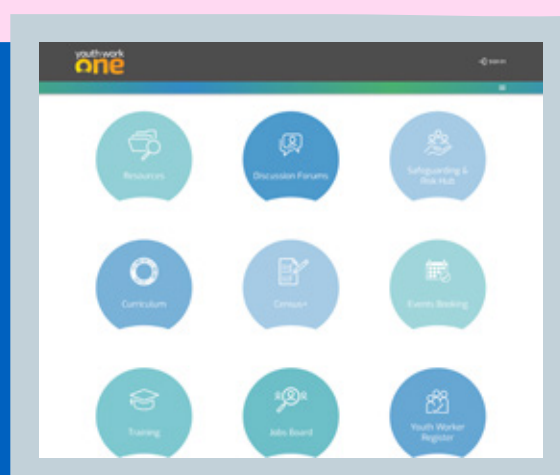
Healthy relationships: by working with a youth worker or volunteer, young people can develop the knowledge and emotional intelligence to recognise positive or destructive relationships in their lives. A skilled youth worker can empower young people to identify what they need from a friend or family member, as well as from adults and those in positions of authority. This recognition could lead to improved life choices and hopefully support them to move away from negative relationships (if possible), manage relationships they can't avoid (or ask someone for help), and build new positive relationships that will encourage personal growth and wellbeing.

Arts, culture and heritage: using the arts to explore, identify and connect with your heritage is key to bringing young people together. Understanding how differences and similarities relate can provide the knowledge to demystify new cultures and avoid potential community clashes. The arts are a fantastic way to bring people together through the medium of film, dance, visual arts and crafts, music or theatre. The arts can also break down barriers and unite people with a common purpose. Youth workers can help facilitate sessions that give young people a safe space to explore and experience what they enjoy most.

Taken from the NYA's ['How to fulfil your Statutory Duty'](#).

See the NYA's [Youth Club in a Box](#) to access downloadable templates for guidance and support.

Further resources and training can be found at [Youth Work One](#).



The National Youth Work Curriculum for England

Youth work curriculum themes





Identity and belonging

Description

‘Youth’ is the stage between childhood and adulthood, a time of significant emotional, physical and social change. It’s a time for self-discovery, developing new responsibilities and experiencing excitement and challenges. For some, this transition is empowering, but for others, it can bring feelings of uncertainty, pressure and exclusion. Every young person’s experience is unique, shaped by their circumstances, background and environment.

These transitions may include puberty and physical changes, shifts in family life and changes in education (for example, from primary to secondary, secondary to higher education, or moving into employment). It can also occur through the evolution of social circles – from friendships to leadership roles within youth projects.

Exploring identity can be one of the most exciting periods of adolescence. Young people express themselves through music, fashion, social media and other forms of creativity. This is a time for experimentation and self-expression, where young people can shape their identities and connect with others sharing similar interests and values. However, this process of self-exploration can be complex and confusing, especially if it conflicts with family, cultural or societal expectations.

It can be a time of anxiety and confusion, which can lead to insecurities that impact a young person’s wellbeing, mental health and life pathways. Aspects of identity, such as race, gender and physical ability, are visible, others, like mental health, neurodiversity, sexuality or financial struggles can remain hidden but can deeply influence a young person’s experience.

Youth work and youth workers can help guide young people through these stages. It gives young people the opportunity to mix with people from diverse backgrounds, values, beliefs and aspirations by creating a safe space for them to explore who they are, build confidence and express themselves without fear of judgment.

Youth work approach

Youth work helps young people explore and understand their identity and find a sense of belonging by:

- providing a space where young people can connect with others who share similar interests, backgrounds or experiences
- developing an approach that supports young people's participation from their first point of access
- supporting young people to understand how they see themselves and how others see them
- helping young people discover their values, beliefs and preferences
- encouraging young people to recognise their own biases and value diversity
- creating safe spaces where harmful behaviours and attitudes are challenged
- guiding young people to make informed choices about their lives, including understanding risks and taking responsibility for actions and self-expression
- helping develop communication skills, including managing their online presence and staying safe
- offering volunteering roles and responsibilities to support young people's independence and growth
- exploring youth culture together. For example, fashion, music, dance, festivals and creative activities like slam poetry and open mics support mutual learning and understanding
- promoting cultural understanding by connecting young people from different backgrounds through the creation of shared experiences
- enabling young people to express their authentic selves through arts, digital platforms and creative outlets like podcasts, film and storytelling
- helping young people understand and celebrate how their cultural background shapes their identity
- empowering young people to get involved in social action or participate in democratic processes like youth councils or forums
- providing guidance about a young person's rights and responsibilities, and how to enact them
- creating opportunities for young people to build resilience, this might include participation in activities or techniques that enable them to manage their feelings
- focusing youth work that works alongside young people to develop clear pathways between services and projects, with individualised levels of support, access to youth programmes, and ways to 'check in'.
- supporting young people through critical transitions in their lives such as in education, being in care, or experiencing youth justice organisations

Case study

Working with young people aged 11 to 25 years from London schools and youth centres, Know Your Roots used mixed-media technology to develop artwork celebrating the beauty of Black hair.

Participants embarked on a ‘super, kinky, curly exploration of the connections between heritage and hair’. They were given the opportunity to sharpen their creative skills and produce a vibrant online exhibition celebrating the beauty of Afro hair and the global influences of African hairstyles within other ethnic groups. They recorded the relevance of hair to their heritage for the London Metropolitan Archives and as a result have become part of London’s living history.

The groups, who came from diverse ethnic communities, were introduced to the topic from different perspectives. For example, in relation to geography, they learned how the texture of Black hair evolved as a protective factor against harsh UV rays.

Historically, Black hair communicated different aspects of life such as social prominence, tribal affiliations, and key milestones including age, marital status and periods of mourning. Perceptions of Black hair changed during colonialism and have endured to the present day. Many young people of African descent attending British institutions, such as school, still find themselves defending this innate aspect of their being through dress codes that promote a Western aesthetic about hair texture.

Know Your Roots gave participants the chance to create a counter-narrative to the ‘mainstream ideal’ of what beautiful hair is. At the end of the project, participants said their involvement increased their knowledge about Black hair and gave them a greater sense of pride. Know Your Roots was delivered in 2018 by Partnership for Young London.



Health and wellbeing

Description

Adolescence brings many challenges for young people's health and wellbeing. Youth workers should have the knowledge and resources to address issues like sexual health, substance misuse and other specific health needs.

Some young people may have health conditions or disabilities that require adjustments to the services provided, so it's important to involve young people in co-designing services and sessions to support their needs.

Youth workers have an important role in helping young people make informed choices about their health and wellbeing – and not just about physical, mental and emotional health, they're also affected by things like social status, gender, race, sexuality, culture, religion, neurodiversity, disability and class status. These factors can impact a young person's ability to reach their goals or be a part of their community. By improving health and wellbeing now, young people can set themselves up for a better future and, when they become adults and parents, help improve the wellbeing of the next generation.

Youth workers are in a unique position to support young people's health. They might be the first adults that young people turn to when they have concerns. Because young people trust youth workers, they are likely to talk about health issues and feel confident in the guidance they receive.

Young people have the right to be involved in decisions about their health and wellbeing. This includes accessing youth-friendly health services, receiving confidential advice and taking part in decisions about the services available. It's not just about giving consent for treatments, but also about giving young people a voice in shaping the services they use.

The connection between youth work, health and wellbeing can be seen through an adapted version of the [Six Ways to Wellbeing](#):



- **Connect:** Build strong relationships with friends, family, and the community.
- **Stay Active:** Engage in sports, dance, or movement to improve mood and reduce stress.
- **Be Present:** Practice mindfulness and self-awareness to manage emotions.
- **Keep Learning:** Explore new skills and hobbies to build confidence.
- **Give Back:** Volunteer and support others to create a sense of purpose.
- **Take Care of Your Body:** Eat well, stay hydrated, get enough sleep, and make healthy choices

By integrating these principles, youth workers help young people navigate challenges, make informed decisions, and take charge of their health and wellbeing.

Youth work approach

Youth work helps young people explore and understand issues relevant to their health and wellbeing by:

- promoting positive physical, social, emotional and mental health
- helping make informed choices about lifestyle, managing risks and taking responsibility for actions
- providing activities that encourage good health, like physical exercise and outdoor play
- ensuring access to support and services when needed
- offering accurate information and guidance
- supporting relationships, including sex and relationship education, in a way that feels comfortable for young people
- building trusted, safe relationships with each young person
- modelling respectful relationships and discussing the differences between healthy and unhealthy ones
- helping young people navigate the differences between online and offline worlds, including misinformation and online harm
- offering opportunities for young people to meet peers and interact with others outside their usual social circles
- encouraging lifelong learning by supporting young people to develop new skills and interests through hobbies, creative pursuits, and learning experiences that build confidence and personal growth.
- promoting kindness and community involvement to encourages volunteering and social action to create a sense of purpose and strengthen community ties.
- supporting healthy habits to educate young people on the importance of nutrition, hydration, sleep, risks and overall self-care, helping them understand how lifestyle choices impact their wellbeing.

Case study

The Wandsworth Community Empowerment Network has worked with local people, faith groups, southwest London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust, the council, other statutory services, schools and the voluntary sector to develop Wandsworth Coproduction: [A Whole-System Approach to Community Care and Prevention](#).

This work recognises the need to analyse why there is an overrepresentation of Black and minority ethnic young people in mental health services, school exclusions, looked-after services and the youth justice system, which has all led to complex trauma. One response has been to work with young people and stakeholders to develop the [Black Minds Matter](#) programme.

This initiative tests new ways of working with and empowering young people and their peers to build their confidence to act in leadership and activist roles. In recent years, the young people have developed and hosted a local BME Children and Young People's Mental Health Services Conference.

Young people engaged in this programme developed crucial skills and knowledge related to leadership, civic engagement, identity and belonging.



Democracy and Participation

Description

Democracy is more than just voting—it’s about understanding how decisions are made and how young people can get involved. Youth work creates a space for young people to explore important political topics and develop their understanding of democracy. Youth workers guide young people through the processes of voting, learning about political parties, policies, and other ways to participate in decision-making.

Supporting young people’s rights and voices is crucial. When young people understand their rights, they can advocate for themselves and others. Youth work helps them build skills like critical thinking, empathy, and social awareness, enabling them to engage thoughtfully with the world. Youth councils, forums, and campaigns provide opportunities for young people to make a real difference in their communities.

Engaging with politics and global issues helps young people see how decisions impact their daily lives. Youth work teaches how to find reliable information and recognise misinformation, which is crucial for informed participation in political discussions. Debates, youth-led campaigns, and exploring democratic rights in a global context help young people develop a broader understanding of political systems and social change.

In the digital age, young people need to understand media bias, recognise fake news, and use social media responsibly. Youth work helps them engage safely in online discussions and activism through education and by encouraging responsible online behaviour.

Connecting with local and global communities broadens young people’s perspectives. Virtual exchanges, discussions on social movements, and projects on issues like climate change help them understand how local issues connect to global challenges.

Youth work supports young people in developing leadership skills and taking action. Campaigns, community service, and teamwork build a sense of responsibility and help young people prepare for future leadership roles.

Youth work approach

Youth work supports democracy and participation by:

- Enabling young people's voices to shape discussions, activities, and projects they participate in.
 - Providing opportunities for young people to engage in democratic decision-making through youth councils and campaign groups. Helping young people understand different types of engagement and the power these provide to individuals.
 - Ensuring equal access to opportunities and challenging barriers to Participation.
 - Supporting young people to challenge and question services and organisations, ensuring they are heard and responded to.
 - Creating safe, inclusive spaces for young people to explore democracy and political systems, regardless of background or prior knowledge.
 - Supporting young people's understanding of their rights and responsibilities, empowering them to stand up for themselves and others.
 - Promoting critical thinking, empathy, and social awareness to help young people engage in their communities and support causes they believe in.
- Educating young people on political issues, voting, political parties, and policies to help them develop a well-informed view.
 - Supporting young people to engage with political issues and systems. This includes educating them on how to vote, understand political parties and policies, and develop a well-informed perspective.
 - Encouraging discussions, debates, and youth-led campaigns to provide opportunities for active participation and help young people recognise how global and national decisions impact their daily lives.
 - Equipping young people to recognise misinformation, media bias, and fake news, and educating them on digital rights and responsible social media use.
 - Encouraging virtual exchanges, global discussions, and projects that connect local issues (e.g., climate change, migration, human rights) to global challenges. This helps young people see the bigger picture, understand political systems, and become more aware of their role in a global community

Case study

The Lewisham Young Mayor's Programme began with the 2004 Young Mayor Election, in culmination of a young people's participation project based in Lewisham Youth Service.

It was designed to mirror the political structure of the borough particularly given the change to a directly elected adult Mayor of Lewisham, so that there could be a formal and constitutional recognition of the voice of young people and represent this.

The programme sits distinctly in the Mayor's Office in Lewisham instead of the Children and Young People's Directorate, as this is key in providing genuine dialogue between the Executive Decision Maker (Directly Elected Mayor) in the council and the Young Mayor and advisors.

The programme enables young people, politicians, council officers and partners to work together to develop ideas, while also addressing issues of concern and interest. In doing so, young people's active and effective participation in democratic processes and local governance is genuinely enhanced.

It creates the opportunities for wider skills development, economic and financial understanding along with opportunities to develop leadership skills.



Economic and financial wellbeing

Description

Economic and financial wellbeing is essential for supporting young people's security, independence, and long-term success. It empowers them to make informed choices and plan responsibly for their future. By understanding budgeting, managing bank accounts, credit cards, pensions and taxes, young people gain the skills needed to confidently manage their finances.

Youth work helps young people develop important life skills such as teamwork, decision-making, reflection and critical thinking. These skills are valuable across all aspects of life, including future employment, and are increasingly sought by employers alongside formal qualifications.

It also inspires young people to build their aspirations, explore career opportunities and connect with their community. By engaging in activities like work experience, volunteering and entrepreneurship, young people can develop their creativity and entrepreneurial spirit, helping them reflect on their current circumstances and think about their future with confidence. Key areas of support include:

- **Financial Literacy:** Learning budgeting, fundraising, and responsible money management.
- **Employment & Education:** Support in accessing further study, employment, apprenticeships, and training, alongside guidance on employment rights and fair pay.
- **Career Development:** Information on local, regional, and international career opportunities and help with applications, personal statements, and identifying transferable skills.
- **Independent Living:** Skills for managing finances, housing, and daily responsibilities, including accessing financial support for education, living costs, and healthcare.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Exploring business opportunities, understanding financial risks (including fraud awareness).
- **Digital & Media Literacy:** Ensuring young people gain confidence in digital technologies, media consumption, and online safety, while also learning to navigate and critically assess digital content, including financial risks associated with online transactions and social media.

By embedding these skills in youth work, young people gain the knowledge, confidence, and resilience to take control of their financial futures, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Youth work approach

Youth work helps young people have control over the economic and financial aspects of their lives, providing:

- opportunities to learn about budgeting, both personally and through fundraising projects
- programmes focused on financial literacy education
- access to further study and employment opportunities, along with support for employment rights and fair pay
- information and advice on career opportunities, both locally, regionally and internationally
- guidance on training, and further and higher education
- support in developing employability and work-related skills
- advice and practice writing applications and personal statements, including identifying their qualities and transferable skills
- guidance to learn independent living skills
- information on how to access financial support for education, living costs and healthcare
- opportunities to explore entrepreneurship, using young people's skills, interests and passions
- guidance on how to assess financial risks and avoid fraud, especially online
- support in knowing how to seek advice on money matters
- confidence and skills in using digital technologies and multimedia

Case study

The LGYPP Young People's Project worked across a range of rural communities in north Warwickshire.

The young people involved lived in predominantly former mining communities with high levels of unemployment, poverty, and limited access to facilities through poor and expensive transport links. Young people in one of the villages played a key role in bidding for and securing funding to support the sustainability of their youth club. They were supported to form a development group that worked with project members to identify what they gained from attending the project, and what they wanted it to offer them in the future.

Supported by the lead youth worker, this information was used to develop funding bids. Projects led and developed by young people included running a community fête as income generation, a trip to London for young women who hadn't left the locality before, and a large-scale community clean up and graffiti project to create art that reflected young people's ambitions.

Throughout their engagement, as well as having fun, young people developed skills related to financial and economic literacy, arts and heritage, and leadership and civic engagement.



Creativity and fun

Description

Young people attend youth services for many reasons such as to relax, socialise and have fun. Research shows that we all are more likely to try new things, push ourselves, learn and develop positive mental health when having fun.

Developing creativity and critical thinking helps young people look at things differently, come up with ideas and understand how to apply knowledge to unique circumstances. This can be achieved individually and through shared creative group activities.

Giving an outlet for other ways of thinking and learning beyond formal education can enable young people to apply ideas, imagination and dreams to their reality. The learning can include critical-thinking skills, open-mindedness, teamwork, decision-making and creative skills.

Youth work approach

Youth work gives young people the opportunity to have fun and develop their creativity by:

- providing space where young people can meet their friends and socialise
- offering activities that young people enjoy and want to participate in
- helping young people learn from these activities and question and look at issues from different perspectives
- supporting young people to plan and develop their own recreational activities, hobbies and opportunities provide a variety of fun, creative activities such as art, drama, music, and sports that allow young people to relax and express themselves.
- offering opportunities for teamwork and collaboration, where young people can work together on projects or group activities, supporting social interaction and developing critical thinking.
- creating safe, inclusive spaces for young people to meet and form friendships, promoting positive social connections and boosting mental health.
- encouraging the exploration of new ideas and activities by introducing innovative experiences that challenge young people to think outside the box, such as creative workshops, outdoor adventures, or cultural activities.
- supporting skill-building through play by organising games or group challenges that are fun but also encourage problem-solving, decision-making, and collaboration.
- providing platforms and spaces for young people to lead and share their ideas, allowing them to express creativity while building confidence in their abilities and leadership skills.
- creating opportunities for reflective discussions where young people can share their thoughts and experiences, helping them to develop critical thinking and communication skills.
- incorporating digital tools and technology into fun activities, such as digital storytelling, music production, or video editing, which can engage young people in new forms of creativity and learning.
- encouraging self-expression and identity exploration through activities that focus on personal creativity, such as writing, crafts, or photography, which allow young people to connect with their emotions and experiences.
- supporting young people to plan and develop their own recreational activities, hobbies and opportunities
- that align with their interests, giving them the freedom to explore their talents and dreams, which boosts motivation and self-esteem.

Case study

National youth charity, Onside have 'Youth Zones are located in regions across England.

These universal, open-access youth centres provide a safe place for young people to meet with peers, engage in structured and planned activities or simply socialise and have fun. Young people participate in the design and evolution of each Youth Zone from conception, through building, to opening.

The zones provide a range of activities and opportunities during each session, which are often co-designed with young people. There is no expectation to participate in the activities, but young people are supported and encouraged to access the opportunities on offer. Examples of activities might include arts and crafts, music production and performance, team sports, climbing and cooking programmes.

Young people learn key skills of planning, resourcing and understanding democratic processes when planning activities and have a voice in the development of the Youth Zone.



Our global communities

Description

We are global citizens, our lives are interconnected and impacted by events across the world, and the decisions we make have global impacts. Advances in travel and technology have brought about constant change. Studies show that young people are increasingly interested in understanding this global impact on human rights and social justice, but they also value and appreciate their local communities.

Youth workers play a crucial role in helping young people make sense of global concerns in an ethical and informed way. They provide safe spaces where young people can discuss and process complex global events, encouraging critical thinking, compassion and a balanced perspective. Youth workers support young people to cope with difficult emotions such as anxiety or frustration about world issues, helping them channel feelings into positive action rather than feeling overwhelmed.

This can happen through structured activities, discussions and international experiences, whether engaging with global issues within their communities or offering opportunities to travel. Encouraging young people to look beyond their immediate surroundings helps them broaden their horizons, develop a deeper understanding of global connections and appreciate different perspectives. Meeting people from other countries, whether in person or through virtual exchanges, fosters a greater awareness of cultural similarities and differences while reinforcing their understanding of their identity and community.

Active participation in social action is a key part of youth work, empowering young people to influence change locally and globally. Platforms like youth councils, forums and public speaking opportunities give them a voice in decision-making and policy discussions. Digital activism through blogs, podcasts, and social media allows young people to raise awareness and advocate for causes they care about, such as climate change, mental health and human rights.

By equipping young people with the skills, knowledge and emotional resilience to engage with global issues, youth work helps them move beyond fear or uncertainty and instead feel empowered to take meaningful action, contribute to positive change and see themselves as part of a wider global community.

Youth work approach

Youth work can help young people develop as global citizens by:

- providing opportunities to explore how a local community and everyday choices have global links and influences
- offering opportunities to understand the impact of local and global concerns on our lives and others
- exploring social justice and human rights and how they apply to all people
- offering opportunities to develop links with young people from other countries, both virtually and through international experiences
- helping young people access opportunities to volunteer and work abroad
- encouraging young people in critical thinking on a local, national and global scale
- supporting young people to make sense of global issues that concern or worry them
- exploring and understanding new communities, embracing difference and common cultures
- encouraging participation in social action to help influence change in their communities and beyond
- helping young people navigate the digital landscape effectively through workshops on how to recognise misinformation, understand media bias and responsible online engagement
- providing opportunities for active participation on political issues such as debates and youth-led campaigns
- helping young people express their views and drive social change through responsible online activism – petitions, blogs, podcasts and digital storytelling
- supporting young people in developing and leading campaigns to highlight issues they care about, such as mental health, climate change or social justice

Case study

Time for Tea is a project from MomentumWorld.org (based on the work of peace activist Satish Kumar). It challenges young people to take an issue they care about to relevant decision-makers and think about it over a shared cup of tea.

This promotes mutual respect and allows the voices of young people to be heard. This project uses active participation to support young people to collaborate and identify what their 'big issues' are, and what they want to say about these things to the people that they want to say it to.

The young people use creative design approaches to repackage tea, incorporating the message that they want to share. Youth workers supported them to deliver the message to their identified audience, where possible including a meeting for discussion and dialogue on this topic. Young people then tell the story of their Time for Tea project through creative mediums, sharing on their networks and the MomentumWorld web platform.

This creates opportunities for connectivity with other young activists with shared interests, inspiring engagement with new topics and ideas. This project example crosscuts several curriculum themes, including participation, arts and economic wellbeing.



Skills for life, play and work

Description

Youth work plays a vital role in helping young people develop skills that support them in education, employment and everyday life. These skills can be learned intentionally through training and qualifications, but often occur naturally through participation in activities, challenges and real-world experiences.

Young people may want to develop specific skills such as cookery, music production or football. But youth workers may also offer more formal and structured opportunities that challenge and stretch young people beyond their average interests, for example, the expedition section of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. This develops map-reading skills and camp crafts. It helps young people learn to communicate, make decisions, contribute to a group working together, plan, solve problems and learn how to be organised.

Digital literacy is an essential skill in today's world, and youth work helps young people understand how to use technology safely and effectively. Whether it's learning to navigate social media responsibly, developing digital creativity or using technology for education and employment, these skills are crucial for the future.

Throughout the youth work relationship, young people learn social and personal skills. They develop an understanding of themselves, their communities and society, what they want to change and how to challenge themselves and take ownership. These skills are transferable to school, family, community or working life.

It is also part of the youth work process that youth workers help young people to reflect on and identify the learning and development of skills that they have gained over time and which are the result of their experiences and learning.

Youth work approach

Youth work is about giving and developing young people's skills by:

- offering opportunities for young people to learn specific skills
- developing social and personal skills over time
- providing opportunities to reflect on and identify learning
- providing further opportunities to apply and develop those skills
- creating environments where young people can explore their interests, build confidence and develop new skills without fear of judgment
- helping young people navigate technology safely, use digital tools effectively and develop digital skills.
- supporting career exploration and employment skills, helping young people discover their passions and strengths by offering career guidance, job readiness programmes, CV/personal statements writing support, interview practice, and access to training courses or apprenticeships
- offering group activities, leadership opportunities and community projects to foster essential skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, communication and decision-making
- connecting young people with relevant courses, qualifications and learning opportunities that help them gain the knowledge and certifications needed for further education and employment
- supporting wellbeing and confidence building through mentorship, positive reinforcement and engaging activities. Youth work helps build self-esteem and develop a strong sense of identity

Case study

Young people leaving care often face difficulties transitioning to independent living. They struggle to maintain tenancies and face high eviction rates.

The Holdings in Bournville, Birmingham, provides supported housing to young people aged 16 to 25 years who are making the transition to fully independent living. This includes young care leavers, those coming to Birmingham to pursue educational opportunities and those referred through other young people-focused services.

It is a small project, with nine fully self-contained flats. The Holdings' youth workers offer a safe home and work with young people to develop essential life skills, like budgeting and cooking – vital to maintaining a successful and independent tenancy.

The team use youth work approaches to support young people with their personal and social development skills, which helps them to contribute and achieve as members of their community. Young people are given the opportunity to take the furniture with them when they move into their first independent home.



The environment

Description

Many young people are deeply concerned about the environment and the impact of human activity on the planet. They are leading movements, making sustainable lifestyle choices, and pushing for change at local, national and global levels. Youth work is vital to support learning, action and leadership in this area, whether in their personal life, community or on a larger scale.

Through youth work, young people can explore the connections between global citizenship, sustainability and environmental responsibility. They can learn about the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, critically assess their impact and consider how they can contribute to a more sustainable future.



Figure 4: The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals can be found here: [THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development](#)

Youth work also provides hands-on opportunities, such as peer education programmes, coastal clean-ups and campaigns that influence governments and organisations. It helps young people develop the skills and confidence to act on the environmental issues that matter to them.

Over recent years we have seen an increase in travel and tourism, giving young people the chance to explore the world while considering environmental and cultural sustainability. Whether through ecotourism, conservation work, volunteering or employment, youth work can support young people to make informed, ethical and sustainable choices.

Enjoying the environment and doing activities outside goes beyond traditional outdoor education – it's about using the natural environment to build knowledge, skills and positive behaviours that benefit individuals, communities and the planet. While outdoor activities like hiking or conservation work are important, youth work can also connect to outdoor learning through creative arts, digital media (like Film making, photography, soundscapes), cooking, sports, and global conversations (like climate change, animal welfare or conflict).

Learning doesn't just happen inside buildings, it extends to the world around us. Whether through hands-on experiences or innovative approaches, youth work helps young people connect with nature, develop practical skills and act for a more sustainable future.

Youth work approach

Youth work can help young people consider the environment and sustainable development by:

- considering the impact of their lifestyle on the local, national and global environment
- understanding and implementing the UN sustainable development goals in their own daily life
- offering opportunities for young people to develop creative responses to areas of interest
- supporting young people to take collective action, including linking with and signposting to other groups
- developing forums that enable a response to local regeneration
- helping them play a key role in protecting and the sustainable development of beaches, the sea, green and urban spaces, and other open spaces
- developing programmes and facilities alongside young people that respond to sustainable living challenges, such as energy, water and recycling
- exploring inequality in access to the wider environment
- providing opportunities to become involved in conservation projects
- exploring the opportunities the wider world has to offer and how they can make a positive contribution

Case study

Groundwork embraces environmental youth work to bring young people closer to the communities they live in. Groundwork's Young Green Leaders brings the best parts of youth work and youth-led social action together with a focus on the environment.

An example is when young people from Crumpsall, Manchester, were inspired to transform an area of their park locally known as 'The Obelisk', following regular interactions and support from Groundwork's youth workers in the area.

A team of 10 young people coordinated improvement works with the [local Friends group](#), Manchester City Council and Groundwork's landscape architects. The group safely cleared the space and worked together to install new planting, improving the appearance of the space and its biodiversity. This simple action ensured young people felt closer to their community, developed transferable skills and became great advocates for the environment.

Through their engagement with Friends of Park programmes, young people had the opportunity to lead and steer engagement in parks, heritage and nature projects and lead events. These projects give opportunities for active participation, civic engagement, relationship development and leadership skills development.



Healthy and safe relationships

Description

Humans are social beings. As young people become more independent of their families, they must learn how to develop healthy relationships, whether friendships, sexual relationships or those with colleagues and people in the community or workplace.

Youth work can give young people the opportunity to make new friends and meet other young people beyond their families and communities, helping them mix with people from different backgrounds, values, beliefs and aspirations. Through this, young people can learn how to negotiate appropriate boundaries in different relationships. More specifically, relationships and sex education can help young people understand what safe and healthy sexual relationships are and how to give and respect consent.

Developing a sense of self-esteem and self-worth helps young people establish confidence in their sexuality, gender, bodies, abilities and broader identity. Social media and digital technology offer opportunities for young people to relate with people from all over the country and world, but the principles of safe and healthy relationships remain the same. Young people need to be able to safely negotiate digital relationships in an increasingly complex online world.

Youth work approach

Youth work helps young people understand their right to healthy and safe relationships by:

- offering relationship support and guidance to young people, including sex and relationship education, in settings and in a way chosen by young people
- providing a trusted and safe relationship for individuals
- modelling positive respectful relationships and exploring the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships
- creating spaces where young people can meet, connect and build relationships with peers beyond their families and communities
- advising young people on how to access trusted information and services, both offline and online
- helping young people interact with people from different backgrounds, beliefs and aspirations, promoting respect and understanding
- supporting young people to understand and feel confident in their identity, whether related to sexuality, gender, body image or abilities, and offering opportunities to improve self-esteem
- assisting young people to navigate online relationships and communities to help them understand how to form safe and respectful online relationships, set boundaries and avoid risks

Case study

The Windmill Park Children’s Centre youth group in Southall, west London, ran a drama and improvisation programme for young people to explore areas of their lives and community.

Young people said that the biggest issues affecting their health were peer pressure and abusive or unequal relationships. Young people worked with the drama tutor and youth workers to explore what was going on in these relationships.

They looked at developing ways to deal with them through the medium of drama. They used improvisation to write new endings to experiences, games to examine the difference and relationship between thoughts and actions, and talked about motivations.

The work ended with the performance of short plays the group had written for their peers on the estate. A project evaluation showed that young people found drama a useful way of exploring issues close to them while maintaining a bit of distance. One young person said, “It’s easier to talk about these things if it’s like you’re talking about someone else.”



Arts, culture and heritage

Description

Arts, culture and heritage are ways we express who we are and share our stories, traditions and experiences, in person and online.

- Arts include music, dance, crafts, theatre, film, painting, photography, writing, and digital creativity like graphic design, animation, video editing and podcasting. It's about expressing yourself and connecting with others, whether through creating, performing or sharing art in digital and physical spaces.
- Culture shapes how we live and think, from food and clothing to music, language and celebrations. Digital platforms allow young people to engage with global cultures through social media, online communities and virtual events.
- Heritage includes history, traditions and customs passed down from families and communities. Digital tools, such as music apps, virtual reality and online archives, help young people explore and preserve their heritage in new and exciting ways.

In Britain's multicultural society, young people are keen to learn about and celebrate their own and others' cultures. Youth work plays a key role in supporting this by helping them explore traditions, customs and folklore across different backgrounds. Arts, culture and heritage help us connect, share our stories and celebrate what makes us unique. From landscapes and architecture to digital art, online exhibitions and creative media, there is so much for young people to explore about how cultures develop and evolve. These experiences build identity, foster belonging and promote respect for diversity.

Many young people lack access to traditional art spaces, but youth work can provide opportunities for them to take part in cultural activities and create and showcase their work – whether through drama, music, digital art, podcasts or video storytelling.

By supporting young people to express themselves through traditional and digital mediums, youth work champions creativity, builds connections and helps young people shape the cultural world around them. It opens doors to discover their history, learn from others, and engage with arts, culture, and heritage in meaningful ways.

Youth work approach

Youth work helps young people take part in and explore arts, culture and heritage by:

- supporting young people to explore and develop their artistic talents, through poetry, lyrics, music and dance
- encouraging young people to engage with arts, culture and heritage as audience members, creators, curators and visitors
- creating opportunities to experience local, national, and global arts and history
- exploring different cultures and what they have in common with peers through creative activities
- recognising and celebrating the role of youth culture in society
- working with young people to understand and overcome challenges that limit access to arts and culture
- encouraging young people to gather and share family and community histories using creative tools like podcasts, film and digital storytelling
- bringing young people and older generations together to share experiences and traditions
- linking to youth groups globally to share ideas and cultural experiences
- using arts, drama and media to help young people express and understand social change in their lives and communities
- exploring how technology, culture and social trends shape the future
- supporting learning through online archives, film, virtual reality and social media
- providing safe spaces for young people to explore how their background and experiences shape their identity
- helping young people learn about their social, cultural and community heritage by bringing artists into youth spaces and running creative projects
- creating opportunities for young people to experience the arts, history, and heritage of their region and country
- exploring both long-standing traditions and new cultural influences, including learning about new communities
- helping young people understand the history and culture of the British Isles in relation to neighbouring countries and the wider world
- exploring history through online archives, virtual reality and social media
- helping young people explore how technology, culture and social trends will shape their lives and the world around them

Case Study

Based in Manchester, Beat Bazaar projects provide creative and cultural experiences for young people and the community, increasing participation and engagement in music and the arts through workshops in music production, singing, songwriting, digital arts and media.

Working with diverse communities, it organises multicultural exchanges, providing intercultural dialogue. It also runs a range of projects and programmes including international youth work and leadership courses, centred on the themes of diversity, migration, multiculturalism, international collaboration, and informal and non-formal education. Some young people engaging in projects have also chosen to work towards accredited qualifications through their achievements, others have secured work experience placements that enhance their employability.

This work contributes to the annual international folk and cultural festival Góbéfest, which attracts 17,000 people to Albert Square in Manchester and welcomes 250 performing artists from Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and the UK along with young people from the project.

Beat Bazaar projects cover many aspects of the youth work curriculum, including creativity, fun, identity and belonging, and global citizenship.

Related professions

Youth workers can provide an essential bridging role between young people, families and services. Often youth work complements and supports the work of other professions, as we show below. It is an essential part of multi-agency working, with its unique position of being led by young people and driven by their goals and needs.

Teaching

Youth work approaches are often the most appropriate when addressing wider, personal health and social education-based topics. Youth work is person-centred and led by young people and their learning needs, rather than being outcome focused. This creates positive spaces for individualised, differentiated, informal and non-formal learning opportunities. This approach can work well within compulsory education settings. The complementary style of this pedagogy is well suited to young people who struggle with formal educational approaches, such as those with attachment difficulties or who have experienced trauma.

Social care

Youth work approaches are successfully used within many social care settings. It encourages the empowerment of young people and helps them have a voice in their journey. Research tells us that young people in the care system often feel unheard and that decisions are made about them and for them, leaving them feeling impotent and disempowered. Youth workers advocate for young people and help them develop skills to advocate for themselves. Youth work relationships and skills are also vital when helping young people transition to independence from local authority care.

Health

Youth work has a historic place in health-based structures in England, both through supporting engagement in activities for young people who are longer-term inpatients in clinical settings, and through the provision of health education. Youth work approaches are demonstrably successful for working with young people around substance use and misuse, mental health and, sexual and reproductive health. Relationships with trusted adults who are trained, skilled and equipped in these key areas are transformational in connecting into activities that promote physical, social, and emotional health, while helping them navigate challenges related to identity, relationships, and social pressures.

Youth justice

Youth work operates within the secure estate and at most levels of youth justice engagement. The curriculum and its approaches engage with young people from different perspectives, with a focus on helping young people realise their goals and ambitions. The unintended or indirect outcome of this is a reduction in engagement with criminal activities and harm reduction. Youth work relationships can apply contextual safeguarding to create spaces for young people to explore their life experiences and choices that feel safe, and focused on them, rather than others. Youth workers work with young people who are victims of crime as well as perpetrators. Youth work recognises young people as children and young people first and focuses on this as the key component of relational practice.



Appendix

1. Key terms

Belonging

Goes beyond inclusion to foster a deeper sense of connection and purpose, ensuring that everyone feels valued and integral to the community.

Contextual safeguarding

[Contextual safeguarding](#) is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse.

Data protection

[The UK Data Protection Regulation \(UK GDPR\)](#) and the [Data Protection Act 2018](#) controls how your personal information is used by organisations, business, or the government. Everyone responsible for using personal data must follow strict rules called 'data protection principles' unless an exemption applies. There is a [guide to the data protection exemptions on the Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\) website](#).

Diversity

Recognises and celebrates the unique identities, experiences, and perspectives of people, promoting and valuing differences.

Equality

Ensures that all people receive the same opportunities, rights, and treatment, inclusive of all backgrounds and identities.

Equality, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EEDIB)

Represents a set of guiding principles designed to shape inclusive youth work practice. This is to create fair, inclusive, and diverse environments where everyone can participate fully and feel valued. This is for young people and youth workers alike. [Read our EEDIB Standards here](#).

Equity

Acknowledges that people may need different types of support to achieve fair outcomes and ensures differentiated resources are available to enable this to happen.

Evaluation

The use of information from monitoring and elsewhere to judge and understand the performance of an organisation or project.

Formative evaluation

Take places where there is continuous feedback during a course, programme, or project. It provides information that can be used to adjust or improve the programme as it proceeds.

Health & Safety (safe practice)

[The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974](#) is the primary piece of legislation covering occupational health and safety in Great Britain. It's sometimes referred to as HSWA, the HSW Act, the 1974 Act or HASAWA. It sets out the general duties which:

- employers have towards employees and members of the public
- employees have to themselves and to each other
- certain self-employed have towards themselves and others

Impact

Usually the broad and/or long-term effects of a projects or organisations' activities, outputs, and outcomes, after taking into consideration an estimate of what would have happened anyway (i.e., the outcomes that can be attributed to a project or organisation).

Impact measurement

The set of practices through which an organisation establishes what difference its work makes. We use the term to define a broad set of practice that include measuring both outputs and outcomes, this does not mean we equate measuring outputs with measuring impact – it is just part of the overall process.

Inclusion

Focuses on creating welcoming environments where everyone feels respected, welcome and able to participate fully in what they choose to.

Informal learning

Happens naturally in real-life settings, through conversations, group work, and shared experiences.

Intersectionality

Encourages us to understand the multiple and complex ways that inequalities can overlap and lead to discrimination (for example, the over-representation of young, working-class Black men in the criminal justice system).

Measurement/Outcomes framework

A list of the outcomes that an organisation seeks to achieve together with information on indicators of these outcomes; data sources, methods of analysis, and measures of its processes and quality.

Monitoring

A systematic way to collect and record information to check progress and enable evaluation.

National Occupational Standards (NOS)

[Define the competencies](#) required to carry out the functions carried out by the youth sector workforce.

Non-formal learning

Is planned and structured, with learning built into activities like volunteering, peer education, and community projects.

Outcomes

Changes that occur because of actions.

Outputs

Products, services or facilities that result from an organisations or project's activities.

Praxis

Is the embodiment of theory in practice. It is putting into practice in our work young people all the theoretical underpinnings and learnings that inform quality Youth Work.

Process

The youth work process places young people at the centre of practice. Youth Workers aim to empower young people to overcome the challenges, disadvantages or obstacles that stand in their way of achieving their maximum potential.

Recorded outcome

Young people set their own goals and intended outcomes. A recorded outcomes is when a young person's personal goal has been achieved and they have reflected upon their achievements, for example this could be a challenge, skill, volunteering or changes to attitude or behaviour.

Reflective supervision

Regular collaborative meetings between two parties, it is an in-depth conversation about our experiences as practitioners' that focuses on ways to reflect upon values, principles, practices, strengths, and areas for development.

Safeguarding (safe practice)

Every organisation and its individual staff members have a duty of care to ensure the protection of the young people they are working with, from unnecessary risk and/or harm. The protection of young people is based on the principles outlined [Working Together to Safeguard Children and the UNCRC](#).

Social impact

The effect of an activity on the social fabric of a community and the wellbeing of the individuals and families.

Strength-based approach

Youth work engages with young people as individuals with strengths, assets, potential and lived experience, identifying what young people are good at or interested in and building on what can empower young people to have control over their lives.

Summative evaluation

Is carried after the youth work course, programme or project has completed and provided estimates of its effectiveness.

Transformative evaluation

Involves all stakeholders in the process to ensure [a holistic view is taken](#).

Vision

The long-term changes organisations would like to achieve, as aspirations for the future. This helps direct the work and measure the work of organisations.

2. Legislation, standards and guidance

There are several documents, laws and frameworks used to inform qualifications, training and best practice in youth work.

A framework of values, principles and ethics

The key purpose of youth work is to:

“Enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential.”

[NYA, ‘Youth Work in England: Policy, Practice and the National Occupational Standards’, 2023. Published on \[NYA.ORG.UK\]\(#\).](#)

The values and principles of youth work are the ethical foundations that inform how youth workers make decisions about their work. The youth work relationship with young people is underpinned by youth work values as defined in the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for youth work. These values provide an ethical foundation that informs good practice.

As the Professional Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) for youth work in England the NYA sets the occupational standards for youth work.

[NYA, ‘National Occupational Standards and English Youth Work Policy’, 2020. Published on \[NYA.ORG.UK\]\(#\)](#)

Updated in 2019, the NOS set out the values of youth work that should underpin all practice and describe the competencies required to carry out the tasks undertaken by the youth work sector. Employers can use them to inform job descriptions, consider skills needs and identify areas of improvement, and can also support an individual’s professional and continuous development.

Each NOS comprises performance criteria that an individual should demonstrate to be competent in the sector.

As a subcommittee of the NYA, the Joint Education and Training Standards Committee works across the Home Nations (usually consisting of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) to uphold the professional standards of youth work qualifications through the NOS, so they are owned and established by the sector, not the government. The application of the NOS depends on the national, regional and local context.

A rights-based approach

The curriculum is informed and supported by legislation that set out young people’s rights and consider the outcomes achieved through the youth work process. There are several important international declarations of rights that underpin youth work good practice.

The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights ‘proclaimed that childhood is entitled to special care and assistance’.

In the UNCRC, 54 articles set out the rights that all children and young people should receive. Youth work is rights-based and uses Article 12 in particular:

- **Article 12:** every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.

Other key rights that drive youth work include:

- **Article 13:** children have the right to get and share information as long as the information is not damaging to them or others.
- **Article 14:** children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practice their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide their children on these matters.
- **Article 15:** children have a right to meet together and join groups and organisations, as long as this doesn't stop other people from enjoying their rights.
- **Article 16:** children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes.
- **Article 31:** children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities.

The Convention is recognised in numerous central, regional and local government policies affecting young people, for instance:

- Ofsted's criteria for all LA children's services
- for care leavers
- for youth services and provision of 'positive leisure-time activities'
- in matters of education
- others such as NHS Youth

Statutory duty on services for young people

In England, youth work is primarily recognised under 'Services to Young People' as outlined in **Section 507B of the Education Act 1996**.

LAs have a statutory duty to provide a local youth offer for young people and, in line with the strengthened guidance published on 28 September 2023, are required to ensure that their local youth offer is responsive to the needs of young people.

The updated statutory guidance for LAs provides greater clarity on what is required and specifies the need for high-quality and effective practice provided by trained youth workers.

Read the government's statutory guidance here:

Department for Culture, Media and Sport, [Statutory guidance for local authorities on services to improve young people's well-being](#), 2023. Published on GOV.UK.

Youth work is also implicit in other policies, such as:

The Children Act 2004 (later built on by the [Children and Families Act 2014](#)), which focuses on moving towards early identification and intervention of young people's needs to help support the child, but also wider family and living environment.



Figure 5: The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child can be found at Unicef.org.uk

And adapted for young people at: [A young person’s guide to the Children and Families Act 2014](#).

[The Children and Social Work Act 2017](#), which places duties on the police, clinical commissioning groups and LAs to work together (as well as with other partners locally) to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 \(2024\)](#) statutory guidance: a guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children.

Note paragraph 59 recognises that ‘youth services not delivered by local authorities or district councils’ are of importance and paragraph 60 applies this to volunteers.

Other key legislation:

[Online Safety Act 2023](#): a new set of laws that protects children and adults online. It puts a range of new duties on social media companies and search services, making them more responsible for their users’ safety on their platforms.

[UNCRC](#): a legally binding agreement signed by 196 countries (as of 12 July 2022) which outlines the fundamental rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities

[Equality Act 2010](#): information and guidance on the Equality Act 2010, including age discrimination and public sector equality duty. The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.

[Crime and Policing Bill](#): now allows the police to prosecute adults for using and exploiting a child to commit an offence.

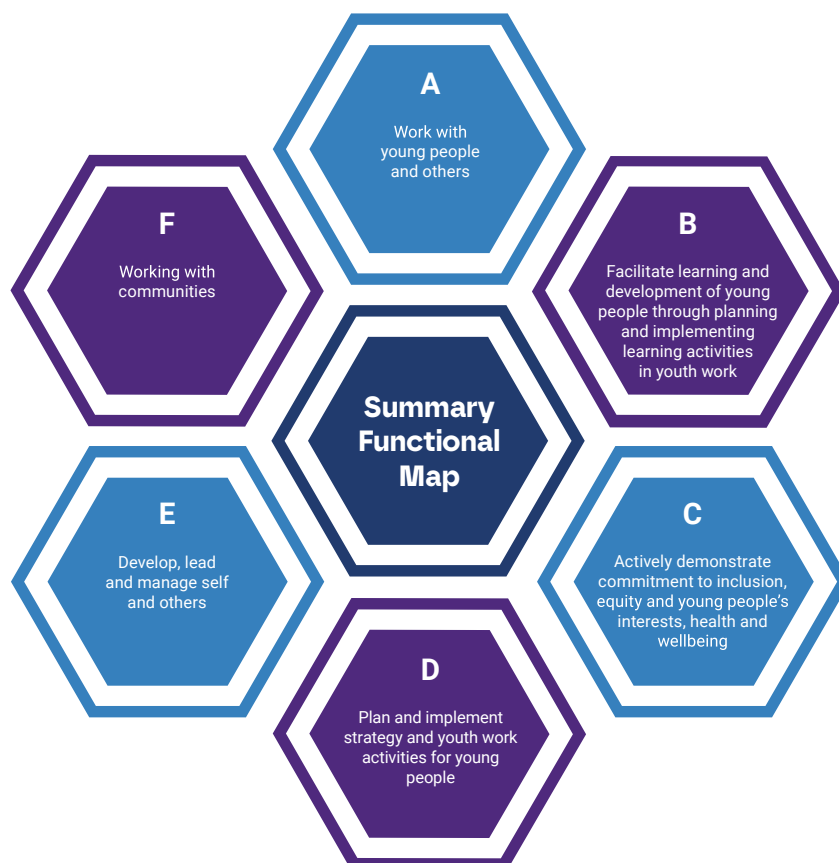


Figure 6: National Occupational Standards Summary Functional Map

Standards and guidance

Youth work values

Participation and active involvement:

- Young people choose to be involved, not least because they want to relax, meet friends, make new relationships, have fun and find support.
- The work starts from where young people are regarding their values, views and principles, as well as their personal and social space.
- It goes beyond where young people start from, but widens their horizons, promotes participation and invites social commitment, by encouraging critical and creative responses to their experiences and the world around them.

Equity, diversity and inclusion:

- It treats young people with respect, valuing each individual and their differences, and promoting the acceptance and understanding of others while challenging oppressive behaviours and ideas.
- It respects and values individual differences by supporting and strengthening young people's belief in themselves, and their capacity to grow and change through a supportive group environment.
- It is underpinned by the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence.

Partnership with young people and others:

- It recognises, respects and is actively responsive to the wider networks of peers, communities, families and cultures that are important to young people and through these networks helps achieve stronger relationships and collective identities through the promotion of inclusivity.

- It works in partnership with young people and other agencies that contribute to their social, educational and personal development.
- It recognises the young person as a partner in a learning process, complementing formal education and promoting access to learning opportunities, which enable them to fulfil their potential.

Personal, social and political development:

- It is concerned with how young people feel, and not just what they know and can do.
- It is concerned with facilitating and empowering the voice of young people, encouraging and enabling them to influence the environment where they live.
- It safeguards the welfare of young people and provides a safe environment to explore values, beliefs, ideas and issues.



The Five Principles of Youth Work

These are the foundation of youth work, shaping how youth workers support and engage with young people. The principles guide how youth work is delivered, ensure consistency, fairness and effectiveness. They shape approaches to engagement, learning and support for young people.

1. Participation and Empowerment

Meaning: Young people are empowered to make their own choices, have their voices heard, and take an active role in shaping their learning, development, and engagement within their community and society. They feel valued, supported, and truly listened to at every step, creating a strong sense of ownership and agency in their journey and making change.

2. Voluntary Relationships and Engagement

Meaning: Young people choose to be part of youth work, and our role is to create an environment that encourages their participation and makes them feel welcome, respected, and valued. By respecting their autonomy and giving them the freedom to choose, stronger connections and relationships are built, which encourages meaningful engagement

3. Non-formal Education / Informal Learning

Meaning: Youth work offers learning through real-life experiences and meaningful conversations, helping young people build skills, confidence, and self-awareness in a relaxed, informal setting. This approach nurtures growth beyond traditional education, supporting development in a way that feels natural and accessible.



4. Professionalism and integrity

Meaning: Youth work adheres to ethical standards, policies, and legislation that uphold our integrity and respect. By doing so, we create safe, trusting environments where young people can grow, knowing they are supported with professionalism and consistency in every interaction.

5. Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Meaning: Youth work ensures equal opportunities for all young people by actively challenging discrimination and creating an environment where everyone feels respected, valued, celebrated and included, regardless of their background. Our commitment to diversity and belonging creates a community where young people thrive without barriers.

Youth Work Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics is our commitment as youth workers to young people.

- We uphold professional boundaries and safeguard young people, maintaining the highest standards of integrity in our work.
- We empower young people to explore, grow, and actively shape their future and communities.
- We encourage growth through curiosity and challenge, always prioritising safety and well-being.
- We are fair, inclusive, and committed to equity and equality, creating diverse environments where everyone feels valued, differences are celebrated, and barriers to participation are actively removed.
- We put young people first, never advancing ourselves at their expense.
- We offer honest, non-judgemental, unbiased guidance to support young people's growth.
- We collaborate with allied services and other agencies, encouraging multi-agency working.
- We promote open reflection, and critical thinking, welcoming feedback from young people, colleagues, and others.
- We listen to the voices, needs, and desires of young people, ensuring their perspectives shape our actions and responses, and build respect, trust, and empowerment.
- We respect privacy and confidentiality, sharing information only with a clear purpose, consent, or as required by law.
- We commit to lifelong learning, continuously developing our skills to ensure our work remains impactful and relevant to young people.
- We engage both online and offline with the same care, integrity, and respect, ensuring young people are supported equally in all spaces.

[Read the full Youth Work Code of Ethics here.](#)

Four cornerstones of youth work

The cornerstones act as a guide, ensuring youth work stays true to its purpose and values.

They provide a framework that help youth workers follow best practices and maintain high standards, as outlined in the NOS.

1. Participation

Youth work helps young people take the lead in their learning, have a say in issues that matter to them, and get involved in decision-making. Young people should help shape the activities, curriculum and direction of youth work in partnership with youth workers.

2. Equality

Youth work is for all young people, welcoming and valuing everyone, respecting differences and building connections between individuals and groups. It promotes fairness, human rights, social justice and creates spaces where all young people feel safe, included and able to thrive.

Youth work challenges unfair systems and power imbalances, working to remove barriers that prevent young people from fully participating. It recognises that some young people face multiple layers of discrimination and ensures they receive the support they need to have equal opportunities.

3. Education

Youth work provides informal and non-formal learning opportunities that support and complement what young people learn in school and college. It helps them learn about themselves, others, important issues, and how to be active in their communities.

4. Empowerment

Youth work helps young people build the skills and confidence to make decisions and act on issues that matter to them, their communities

and society. It gives them the chance to take control, speak up, and advocate for change. Empowered young people can shape their futures, influence decision-making and create positive change around them.

National youth work suite of standards

Standards set the benchmark for excellence in youth work. They define expectations for quality, ensuring that youth workers uphold best practices in supporting and engaging young people. These currently include:

[Youth Work Practice Standards](#): an essential document illustrating best practice and outlining everything a provider needs to know to deliver youth work legally, safely and effectively.

[Safeguarding standards for the youth sector](#): these have been designed to support good safeguarding practices for all those working with children and young people.

[Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging \(EEDIB\) Standards](#): the principles of EEDIB are key to youth work.

[Digital Youth Work Standards](#): a set of standards which aim to help youth workers harness digital technology to enhance young people's outcomes.

Other useful resources can be found here:

[NYA, 'Standards and resources'. Published on NYA.ORG.UK.](#)

Other guiding documents

[Youth Work Register](#): created by the NYA, the register is a new database for youth workers. Free to join, practitioners can keep a record of ongoing learning and continuous professional development.

[The NYA Quality Mark](#): produced by the NYA, this reflective tool supports LAs and youth work providers to develop a culture of learning and growth.

[The Framework of Outcomes for Young People 3.0](#): designed to ensure youth organisations are working towards common positive outcomes for the young people they help.

[A guide to commissioning outcomes for young people](#): produced by the NYA, this supports LA commissioners to understand the challenges of commissioning youth work and involving young people in a meaningful way.

[How to fulfil your Statutory Duty](#): produced by the NYA, this is a toolkit for LAs on how to fulfil your statutory duty under Section 507B of the Education Act.

[UK essential digital skills framework](#): the framework defines the digital skills adults need to safely benefit from, participate in, and contribute to the digital world.

[After-school clubs community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers](#): produced by the Department of Education, this covers advice on what policies and procedures providers of activities, after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school settings must follow regarding health and safety, safeguarding and child protection, staff suitability and governance.

3. Key organisations

[EU Youth Strategy](#): the [European Commission](#) and its Member States work together to support young people through the strategy.

[European Youth Parliament](#): one of Europe's largest youth platforms for civic education, intercultural encounters and the exchange of ideas – run by young people, for young people. Its mission is to inspire and empower a generation of informed, open-minded, responsible and active citizens that shape society and drive impact.

[Federation for Detached Youth Work](#): resources, blogs and networks focused on the development of detached youth work practice. Detached youth work occurs wherever young people are (either geographically or developmentally), and not in a building or within a specific programme or activity.

[Institute for Outdoor Learning](#): the professional body for organisations and individuals who use the outdoors to make a positive difference to others.

[Local Government Association](#): the national membership body for local authorities, working on behalf of member councils to support, promote and improve local government.

[National Youth Agency \(NYA\)](#): the Professional Statutory Regulatory Body for youth work in England.

[Regional Youth Work Units](#): a network of regional youth work units in England, collaborating across regions to promote good youth work and young people's voices.

[The Commonwealth: Society and Young People](#): the Commonwealth Secretariat is dedicated to nurturing the potential of young people and fostering equitable and resilient societies across its member countries. Its comprehensive initiatives span youth development, gender equality, health, education and peacebuilding.

[UK Youth](#): a leading youth charity working across the UK. It is a sector-supporting infrastructure body, a direct delivery partner and a campaigner for social change.

[UNICEF](#): the United Nations Children's Fund is a child-rights organisation established by the UN in 1946.

[Young People's Foundation Trust](#): Established in 2021, Young People Foundations Trust (YPF Trust) is an organisation that grows, supports and enables place-based collaboration and partnerships focused on the needs of young people and the organisations that support them through a growing network of Young People's Foundations (YPFs).

[Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families](#): listens to and learns from children and young people, works with them to build better solutions, and amplifies their voices to aid better understanding of mental health conditions.

[Arts Council England](#): the national development agency for creativity and culture. Helping people across England to experience and benefit from creativity.

[Association for Young People's Health](#): works to understand and meet the health and wellbeing needs of children and young people aged 10 to 25 years.

[Brook](#): a national charity offering clinical sexual health services and education and wellbeing services, plus training and support for professionals.

[British Red Cross](#): supporting people in the UK and around the world with information, education programmes and toolkits.

[CEOP Education from the National Crime](#)

[Agency](#): supporting organisations and individuals to deliver education and raise awareness of online child abuse and exploitation. Part of the National Crime Agency's Child Exploitation and Online Protection's education team, aiming to help protect children and young people from online child sexual abuse.

[Childline](#): a free, confidential email, online chat and telephone service, available any time, day or night. Part of the NSPCC since 2006, it helps anyone under 19 years in the UK with any issue they're going through.

[Family Lives](#): provides targeted early intervention and crisis support for families.

[Family Planning Association](#): provides accurate, unbiased and up-to-date information on sexual and reproductive health, and offers high-quality resources for relationship, sex and health and personal, social, health and economic education.

[NSPCC](#): National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the leading UK children's charity Offering information, training, therapeutic services, advice for families and access to National helplines.

[Music Hubs](#): play a critical role in fulfilling the vision and goals set out in the government's 2022 National Plan for Music Education. Find out more at: GOV.UK, ['The power of music to change lives'](#).

[Oxfam](#): a humanitarian organisation and network fighting for justice for a more equal world.

[Salto Youth](#): part of the European Commission's training strategy, Salto stands for support, advanced learning and training opportunities for youth. It works within the Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps programmes.

[Sport England](#): an arms-length body of government responsible for growing and developing sport and getting more people active across England.

[The Mix](#): a UK based charity that provides free confidential support for young people under 25 years.

[The Money Charity](#): a charity promoting financial education and wellbeing for everyone.

[The Proud Trust](#): a life changing charity providing education, support and advocacy for LGBT+ young people and their communities.

[UN Sustainable Development Goals](#): 17 global goals, information and resources

[World Wildlife Fund](#): a leading independent conservation organisation.

[Young Minds](#): supporting the mental health of young people.

[Youth Employment UK](#): an independent, not-for-profit social enterprise founded in 2012 to tackle youth unemployment. As experts on youth employment and unemployment, it is ideally placed to understand the complex landscape facing young people, employers and policymakers.

[Youth Music Network](#): a free to join online community for everyone whose work involves making music with children and young people.

4. Resources

Youth Work One: a free-to-access portal for the youth sector

[Youth Work One](#) is a one-stop shop for everyone working in the youth sector in England, as well as anyone interested in the latest learning, resources and evidence around best practices and impact when working with young people in youth settings.

It provides a range of easy-to-use directories of resources, funding, events and jobs, as well as hosting the National Youth Sector Census, NYA Youth Work Register and forums to share best practices and support.

Users of Youth Work One are encouraged to share their resources, events, jobs and funding opportunities that are of mutual benefit to others.

5. References

Lundy, L. (2021), [Enabling the Meaningful Participation of Children and Young People globally: the Lundy Model](#), Queen's University Belfast.

National Youth Agency, 2020, [National Youth Work Curriculum](#).

UNICEF (2023), [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

Youth Work in England: Policy, Practice and the National Occupational Standards, [National Occupational Standards and English Youth Work Policy](#).

Geetanjali Basarkod, PHD Six Ways to Wellbeing: www.basarkod.com/sixways

6. National Youth Work Curriculum thematic examples

Please visit nya.org.uk/category/curriculum/ for examples of actual practice to help stimulate ideas – you can adapt and use these when planning activities with young people and colleagues.

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