



Impact Report

2025/26

Because of The Way

PAUL SNAPE

CEO, THE WAY YOUTH ZONE

Because of The Way... more young people are finding their place

This year has been a powerful one for The Way Youth Zone.

In 2025/26, 3,414 young people used our Youth Zone, that's around 1 in 19 young people or 5% of the city's young population. Each of those young people represents a story of connection, opportunity and support.

But it also tells us something important. It means that 95% of young people in Wolverhampton are not yet benefiting from the engaging activities, exciting opportunities and trusted support that we know can help them grow and thrive. That's why our ambition is to keep increasing our reach year on year, so that more young people can experience everything The Way has to offer.

2025/26 has been our year of refocus - a time to listen, learn and strengthen what matters most. We've expanded our reach, sharpened our offer and created more opportunities for young people to feel safe, confident and inspired.

We also know that many young people are facing increasing pressures, from challenges with mental health to the impact of growing up in an uncertain and fast-changing world. In this context, the value of professional youth work has never been clearer. Our trained youth workers build trusted relationships that support young people to open up, grow in confidence and develop the skills they need for their future.

Every day, we see the difference this makes. Because of The Way, young people are building friendships, discovering new passions and becoming more confident in who they are.

None of this is possible without the dedication of our incredible team and the generosity of our supporters. Because of you, young people have somewhere they belong and somewhere they can thrive.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to reaching more young people, deepening our impact and ensuring every young person who walks through our doors has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Thank you for being part of this journey.



OUR VALUES

Together



“No one left behind”

Honest



“No filters, just be yourself”

Energetic



“Give it everything you've got”

Welcoming



“A place for everyone”

Aspirational



“A chance to level up”

Youth Led



“Say it, own it, change it”

THE BIG PICTURE

2025/26

3,414

**YOUNG PEOPLE WHO CALL
THE WAY THEIR PLACE**

41,129

**MOMENTS OF CONNECTION
WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

618

**SESSIONS THAT BROUGHT
YOUNG PEOPLE TOGETHER**

3,497

**HOURS HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE
GROW AND THRIVE**

28,000

**TOTAL FREE
MEALS PROVIDED**

21,805

**TOTAL MEMBERS
SINCE 2016**



WHO WE REACHED

Because of The Way, we continue to reach young people from across Wolverhampton, creating a space that is open, welcoming and inclusive to all. Our growing membership reflects the demand for safe, supportive opportunities for young people to connect, try new things and feel part of something positive.

We are proud to reach a diverse community of young people, including those from different backgrounds, schools and those with additional needs, ensuring everyone feels they belong.

1,884

**NEW YOUNG PEOPLE
JOINING OUR COMMUNITY**

39%

**GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN
FINDING SUPPORT AND
BELONGING**

61%

**FROM POSTCODES
FACING THE GREATEST
CHALLENGES**

65%

**FROM DIVERSE ETHNIC
BACKGROUNDS ACROSS
WOLVERHAMPTON**

19.7%

**YOUNG PEOPLE WITH
ADDITIONAL NEEDS**

333

**SCHOOLS REPRESENTED BY
OUR YOUNG PEOPLE**



GETTING STUCK IN

Because of The Way, young people have had the chance to step out of their comfort zones and try something new in a safe and supportive environment.

Every week, there are over 150 activities on offer across 6 days. From climbing and football to music production, cooking and creative arts, every session is an opportunity to explore interests, build confidence and have fun.

This year, we introduced new sessions shaped by the needs of the young people who attend The Way. We recognised that moving from Juniors (8–12) to Seniors (13–18) can feel like a big step, so we created Inbetweeners — a session for 11–15 year olds to help build friendships, confidence and a smoother transition.

We also introduced Chill n Chat, a quieter 3–4pm session designed to offer a calmer start to the evening, particularly for young people who are home-schooled or may find busy sessions overwhelming. Together, these sessions are helping more young people feel comfortable, included and ready to get stuck in.

560

YOUNG PEOPLE BECAME
INBETWEENERS

733

YOUNG PEOPLE STARTED
THEIR EVENINGS WITH A
CHILL N CHAT HOUR

Getting Stuck In - Number of Engagements with Young People



RYAN, 15

“I never knew climbing was a thing And then I tried it and then started doing it outside of The Way too.

Before I came to The Way, all I did was sit on my Xbox just not being social.

Climbing has definitely helped me with my confidence, my ability to try new things, problem solve, have fun and be safe at the same time. ”



FEEL SAFE AND SUPPORTED

Because of The Way, young people have access to consistent, trusted support when they need it most. From responding to safeguarding concerns to providing targeted mentoring, our team is there to listen, guide and take action.

This support doesn't stop at one visit. The high number of young people returning after their first session shows the trust they build and the value they place on having a safe, welcoming space where they feel supported every time they walk through the doors.

262

**YOUNG PEOPLE RECEIVING
TARGETED SUPPORT /
MENTORING**

493

**SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS
LOGGED**

77%

**MEMBERS DIDN'T JUST VISIT
- THEY CAME BACK**



BECAUSE OF THE WAY... REAL CHANGE HAPPENED

84%

**FEEL LESS
ANXIOUS**

79%

**FEEL MORE
RESILIENT**

83%

**FEEL PHYSICALLY
HEALTHIER**

92%

**BETTER AT
MANAGING THEIR
FEELINGS**

BUILD SKILLS FOR LIFE

Because of The Way, young people are gaining the skills, confidence and experience they need for the future. Through life skills sessions and opportunities like our Young Leaders programme, they are stepping up, taking responsibility and learning how to lead.

From planning and delivering activities to reflecting on their own progress, young people are developing real-world skills that will support them in school, work and everyday life.

598

LIFE SKILLS SESSIONS

22

YOUNG PEOPLE
BECAME YOUNG LEADERS

BECAUSE OF THE WAY...
REAL CHANGE HAPPENED

67%

FEEL THEY'VE
IMPROVED
LEADERSHIP SKILLS

89%

FEEL BETTER
PREPARED
FOR THE FUTURE



ELSIE, 14

“ In December of 2024, I was given the opportunity to become a young leader. When I accepted this position, I didn't know how much of an impact it would have on my life, it's truly my happy and comfort place. I am so lucky to be able to build upon many skills while being surrounded by many people who support me so much. I am also so lucky to be able to do what I adore so much. Being a young leader has provided me with so many opportunities including in school. ”

WIDENING OUR REACH

Because of The Way, we have been able to take our support beyond the building and into communities across Wolverhampton. Our outreach team connects with young people where they are, building trust and creating pathways into The Way.

A high proportion of those we reach are from the city's most deprived areas, ensuring support is directed where it is needed most. Crucially, many young people go on to attend sessions at The Way, taking their first step into a safe and positive environment.

1,816

**OUTREACH TEAM
CONVERSATIONS OUT AND
ABOUT IN THE CITY**

67%

**YOUNG PEOPLE WE MEET
ON OUTREACH ARE
FROM MOST DEPRIVED
BOROUGHES**

72%

**YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WE
ENGAGED DURING
OUTREACH HAVE THEN
ATTENDED OUR YOUTH
ZONE**

CRAIG, 14

“I’m less scared of going out now. Before I wouldn’t go out to meet my mom at the shop, but now I would go by myself. So it’s really helped.

Basically, these lads come up to me and when they started talking to me and then they just took my phone and run. I’m scared of gangs and being stabbed and everything. It helps me get out more, it helps me make new friends, it helps me feel comfortable around people, it helps me trust more people.

Nobody treats you differently here. It was hard for me to talk about how I feel to other people before, but it has helped me a lot. ”





THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE

Because of The Way... young
lives are changing

89%

MORE CONFIDENT

67%

MADE NEW FRIENDS

67%

**FEEL THEY'VE IMPROVED
LEADERSHIP SKILLS**

89%

**BETTER PREPARED
FOR THE FUTURE**

JAMES, 16

“ Before coming to The Way, I wasn't doing much and I rarely go out except for school and was very dependant on people when I did go places.

It's helped me with my confidence and with my social skills. It has also helped a lot with my anxiety by allowing myself to be more independent and feeling more free to express myself. ”



REFOCUS TO REFINE

2026/27

Because of The Way... we're not standing still - we're getting better every year

2025/26 has been a year of refocusing - listening to young people, strengthening what we offer and expanding our reach across Wolverhampton. We've seen more young people through our doors, created more opportunities and focused our efforts on what makes the biggest difference.

This year has also seen the development of The Way2Work, creating clearer pathways for young people to build skills, gain experience and prepare for their future. From early exploration to leadership opportunities, young people are beginning to see what's possible. In 2026/27, our focus is to refine our programme, offer and partnerships - ensuring we retain young people, improve the quality of youth work and achieve stronger outcomes without stretching capacity or diluting what makes us special.

At its heart, good youth work is about building meaningful, trusted relationships that improve outcomes, alongside great activities. That's where our focus will be.

What are we refining?

Do fewer things, better

Focusing on youth voice, alumni pathways and employability programmes like Way2Work that deliver clear outcomes

Stop what doesn't add impact

Stepping back from activity that does not support retention, progression or meaningful outcomes

Learn and adapt

Shaping our delivery based on evidence, insight and learning, not habit

BOBBI, 16

“ As a Young Leader, I represent the values of the programme. I want to develop this skill to ensure that my actions, language and attitude set a standard that younger members can look up to and learn from. ”



BECAUSE OF OUR PATRONS...



Because of our Patrons, thousands of young people have access to opportunities, support and experiences that help them thrive.

Behind every activity, every conversation and every success story is a community of businesses and individuals who believe in young people and choose to invest in their future. Our Patrons are more than supporters. They are advocates, partners and champions of The Way.

Through their generosity, expertise and commitment, they help us provide a safe place to belong, trusted adults to turn to and opportunities that inspire young people to discover their potential.



Welcome to Our New Patrons in 2025/26

During our REFOCUS year, we were delighted to welcome a number of new Patrons to The Way family.



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