

Our Strategy

Early Help, Lasting Change

January 2027

The Need We See

Across Swindon and Wiltshire, there is a clear opportunity to improve outcomes for children and young people by investing earlier, working differently and strengthening community-based support. Needs often emerge gradually and can be addressed through timely, relationship-based intervention. Prioritising early help strengthens protective factors, improves outcomes for families and reduces long-term pressure on statutory and crisis services.

From birth to age 18, children's wellbeing is shaped by the quality and accessibility of support around them. Early childhood, school readiness, adolescence and key transitions are moments where preventative input can positively influence life chances. Trusted support, especially through skilled practitioners rooted in communities, helps children and families build wellbeing, stay engaged in learning and move more confidently towards adulthood.

Young Swindon and Wiltshire contributes by providing sustained, high-quality youth work in community settings. Through trusted relationships, safe spaces and youth-centred practice, it builds resilience, confidence and belonging while reducing inequalities in access to early support. Over the next five years, its role is to help shift the system from reactive intervention to proactive, preventative support rooted in communities.

Our Vision

We want to see a Swindon and Wiltshire where every child and young person has access to everything they need to live a life full of hope and independence. Where any struggles with their health, wellbeing and flourishing are rare, brief and never repeated.

That's the goal we're working towards, what we exist to build, the future we're aiming for.

A five-year road map

This is the north star we're committing to for the next five years. Real change takes time. Community-led change takes patience. A five-year roadmap allows us to make longer-term commitments to the kind of change we know makes a lasting difference. Change that is led by and rooted in the children and young people we see each day.

We know the world won't stay still during that time. We'll have a general election, the use of AI will be firmly established, the landscape of jobs for young people will look different, the landscape of education will continue to shift, and the impact of climate change will mean the world of 2032 will be very different. So, our strategy will have a two-year cycle, enabling us to be flexible to the changing world around us.

A foreword from our CEO

For 26 years, Young Swindon and Wiltshire has stood alongside children and young people as they navigate the opportunities and challenges of growing up. While the world around them continues to change, one thing remains constant: when young people have trusted relationships, supportive communities and access to the right opportunities, remarkable things happen.

This strategy sets out our ambition for the next five years and our belief that every young person deserves the chance to realise their potential.

The challenges facing young people today are significant, but so too is their resilience, creativity and potential. Through high-quality youth work, early help, skills development and stronger community connections, we will work alongside young people and their families to create lasting change. We remain committed to ensuring that support is available when it is needed, delivered with compassion, without judgement, and built around the strengths and aspirations of each young person.

I am immensely proud of what our team, volunteers and partners have achieved so far, but I believe the best is still to come. Together, we can build a future where every young person across Swindon and Wiltshire feels seen, supported and able to thrive. That is the ambition at the heart of this strategy, and I am excited about the journey ahead.

Andy

Andy Malcolm
Chief Executive



Our Strategy – Early Help, Lasting Change

Ensuring every child and young person across Swindon and Wiltshire has everything they need to realise their potential. That's the hope and ambition that is driving us in our new strategy, and it's what we'll be putting all our energy and focus into between now and 2032.

It's an ambitious dream but we're ready for it.

We've had 26 years of locally driven impact and innovation, from working alongside local businesses to deliver long-term volunteer-led mentoring for young people needing early help, to leading on play-based group intervention with Memory Makers, to innovating and mobilising support for young people who are absent from their education. Our legacy is rich, our work is impactful, and we're ready to go again.

Our intention is simple - We want every young person to have the opportunity to thrive. That means creating pathways into employment for those furthest from the labour market, developing new strength-based approaches to education, supporting young people to build positive identities, delivering interventions that change lives and nurturing strong, place-based communities of support. It is our commitment to Generous Collaboration that will make it all happen – we are better together.

Our goals are ambitious. As ambitious as the children and young people who we see, day in and day out. Like them, we'll go after our goals with everything we've got. We know change takes time – that's why we're setting out a long-term strategy.

But the need is urgent. Isolation is rife. Poverty is deepening. Homelessness is rising. And fewer opportunities exist for children and young people to live independently. But our young people hold the answers. They're full of hope and determination and we will join them there.

We're going to be led by them, by connecting and catalysing child-led change, by speeding up and sparking change, supporting new ideas and helping good ones grow.

That's our new ambition – and we've already started pursuing it.

Our Mission

We work alongside young people, families and communities to provide trusted support, create opportunities and influence systems so that young people can achieve their potential. We are committed to creating a world where every child and young person gets the support they need, when they need it.

Our strategy sets out the part we'll play, and why.

Why us?

We take a whole-community approach to creating lasting change. By combining professional youth work, early help, skills development and strong local partnerships, we support young people to overcome challenges, build confidence and unlock opportunity. We bring together the people, resources and relationships needed to turn individual interventions into lasting, system-wide impact for young people across Swindon and Wiltshire.

Our Values

Our values are more than words on a piece of paper or stuck to the wall. Our values are how we live as we achieve our mission. They're how we work with our colleagues, our partners, our communities, and most importantly – our young people.

Our values will be at the heart of our organisation.

WE'RE GENEROUSLY COLLABORATIVE

We always want to work together and will do whatever we can to make that a reality.

CARING IS OUR EXPERTISE

Everything we do, we do because we care.

WE SPEAK UP WHEN THINGS AREN'T RIGHT

We know what needs to change, because young people tell us. If they raise their voices, so do we.

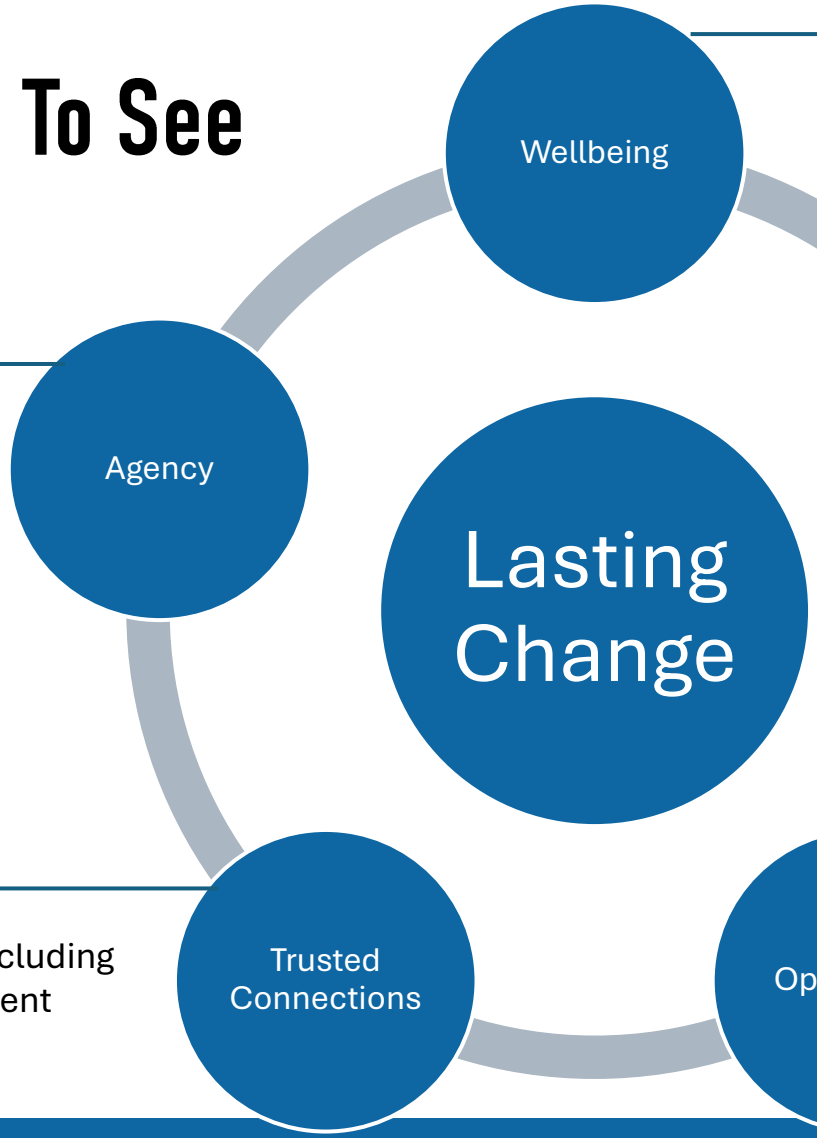
WE PUT YOU FIRST

Whoever you are, we welcome you and encourage you to be your true self.

Because of our values, we know our strategy must be grounded in an organisation that is fit for purpose. An organisation that has everything it needs to see our ambition through and to build communities where young people can come alive.



The Change We Hope To See



Known by ourselves and by others

Access to the people and support that enables lasting change

Access to the things that improve our lives

Healthy relationships, including with those who are different from us

Freedom to choose and control our lives

Our Priorities

We know a lot of things need to be right for children and young people to flourish. We also know that there are core parts to the jigsaw that increase impact and help shape lives.

Our 26 years of work, our children and young people who we work with each day and our experience and expertise on our staff team all point to four key elements that when in place can make a life-shaping difference to those we are privileged to work with.

So we will work earlier with children and young people in need, we will have a razor focus on building supportive communities of trusted adults, we will focus on skills and strengths, and we will build good health and wellbeing.









Working Earlier

Building Community

Focused on Skills

Empowered by good Health

Priority 1 – Working Earlier

Our Priority

We will work as early as we can with children and young people with emerging concerns with their education, health and wellbeing.

We know all the evidence shows that the earlier we can support those who need it, the better the long-term outcomes will be.



Our Goals – Working Earlier

By 2032, we will have established broad offers of alternative education and early help support with measurable increases in young people's attainment, belonging and access to opportunities

Why this goal?

We know that a world where every young person feels confident in accessing their education and is secure in their learning potential unlocks their futures for them.

We know that a young person's education is the foundation for their future. We will work to reduce barriers to attendance, support re-engagement, and unlock new skills in preparation for future careers.

Our Value Drivers

People First – Supporting each young person's individual journey through education, providing them with what they need to succeed

Caring is our expertise – Promoting psychological safety in learning by working intensively with young people to achieve their potential

Generously Collaborative – Actively working with schools and partners to ensure we provide young people with the best package of support

Speaking up – We will empower young people to advocate for their educational aspirations.

What will it look like

- *We will always be led by the voices and needs of our young people*
- *We will develop and deliver a diverse set of vocational training offers focussed on the interests of young people and emerging job market trends*
- *We will develop an offer of an educational experience that is not available in mainstream educational settings through being a provider known for excellence and outcomes*

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Priority 2 – Building Communities

Our Priority

Every child and young person will have access to a supportive community of trusted professional adults whenever and wherever they need them.

We know the power of community in action. Young people move between projects, build relationships with different members of our team, share their ideas and, most importantly, see those ideas listened to and acted upon. We see young people who don't just come to us for an intervention, but who want to spend time with us, contribute, belong and be part of something. **That is why we must build communities, not interventions.** Because when young people feel known, heard and valued, they don't just access our work, they become part of a community that believes in them.



Our Goals – Building Communities

By 2032, we will have established thriving youth communities across all our core places of work, with measurable increases in young people's sense of belonging, trusted relationships, participation and access to opportunities

Why this goal?

Strong communities create lasting change. When young people have trusted relationships, a sense of belonging and access to support, they are more likely to thrive and overcome challenges.

We believe every young person should have access to a professionally qualified youth worker and a supportive community, regardless of their background or circumstances. Our role is not simply to deliver interventions, but to build the relationships and connections that help young people develop confidence, find their voice and create positive change.

Our Value Drivers

People First – Our community work will ensure young people are seen, heard, valued and known.

Caring is our expertise – Young people thrive in supportive communities, not clever interventions

Generously Collaborative – We will build strong partnerships with those who already know and care about their communities, with Parish Councils as a key starting point.

Speaking up – We will equip and encourage young people to use their voice, advocate for themselves and influence the communities they are part of.

What it will look like

- *We will be led by the voices, experiences and needs of young people*
- *We will be the provider of choice for place-based solutions in our region*
- *We will create an established training pathway that creates vocational training and learning pathways for new youth workers*
- *We will have an active and sustainable youth work presence across our core places of work*

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Priority 3 – Focussed on Skills

Our Priority

To ensure every child and young person has everything they need to flourish as they grow into independent adults.

We are convinced that purposeful and rewarding employment leads to a bright future, so we will have a sharp focus on creating spaces that allow young people to develop employment skills and harness their strengths. We will be a strong voice in shaping career pathways for young people and unlocking new opportunities



Our Goals – Enterprise + Skills

By 2032, every young person over 16 that we work with will have the opportunity to enter employment with us or through us.

Why this goal?

As young people enter the workplace, their employment becomes one of their largest communities. We recognise the importance of feeling like you belong and can succeed at work.

We are convinced that purposeful and rewarding employment leads to a bright future, so we will be focussed on creating spaces that allow young people to develop employment skills and harness their strengths.

Our Value Drivers

People First – Our skills work enables young people to learn about themselves and support themselves.

Caring is our expertise – People thrive when they feel they belong and can succeed in their communities, this includes employment

Generously Collaborative – We partner with employers, councils, government departments and many more to improve pathways and prospects to employment

Speaking up – We support young people as the experts to shape the future of employment

What it will look like

- *We will have placed-based employment pathways into local jobs*
- *We will have a diverse range of career pathways for young people to engage in*
- *We will directly develop three pathways ourselves, starting with hospitality*
- *We will develop further social business opportunities to increase our direct employment opportunities for young people*
- *We will be established as experts across the region in employment of young people and a key partner within Skills Boards*

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Priority 4 – Empowered by Good Health

Our Priority

Every child and young person feels informed, empowered and in control of their lives and can make knowledgeable decisions about their care and their future.

We will improve population health for children and young people by delivering early, preventative support that builds emotional wellbeing, reduces inequality and helps prevent potentially avoidable repeated or crisis escalation.



Our Goals – Empowered by Good Health

By 2032, we will enhance the health and wellbeing of young people by embedding health literacy across our services, creating inclusive community connections for those with long-term health conditions, and ensure young people's voices shape the decisions that affect their lives.

Why this goal?

We know that young people are more able to thrive when they have the knowledge, confidence and support to understand their health and wellbeing.

Lasting change is achieved by embedding health literacy, awareness & confidence across our projects and communities. By advocating with and for young people, and by ensuring their voices shape decisions, we will help services and communities respond to what young people tell us matters most.

Our Value Drivers

People First – We will place young people's health experiences, voices and choices at the centre of the project

Caring is our expertise – We will create trusted, supportive youth work spaces where young people can build health literacy, emotional wellbeing and connection

Generously Collaborative – We will work with public health priorities, share learning and strengthen community-based opportunities that prevent crisis escalation and reduce inequality.

Speaking up – We will advocate with and for young people so their experiences, needs and ideas shape health and wellbeing decisions, campaigns and services that affect them.

Our Starting Points

- *Build health literacy into youth work sessions, activities and conversations*
- *Create regular community-based opportunities for young people with long-term health conditions*
- *Plan and deliver accessible local and national health campaigns*
- *Use evidence, feedback and data to understand what is changing for young people and to improve our offer as it develops.*

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How we will work

SHAPE THE SYSTEM

Collaboration is how we fix the pressure in the system.

We will work relentlessly with others to be architects of change, supportive partners whilst holding power to account, centring the voice of children and young people in shaping the support they want to see.

ROOTED IN RESEARCH

Our work will be led by rigorous research, high quality evaluation and innovative service development. We will proactively respond to emerging trends, forming and contributing to a wealth of knowledge about the experiences of children and young people

DRIVEN BY INNOVATION

Through being energised by our **collective hopefulness** we will lead change through child-led innovation across all our work.

How we will develop as an Organisation

By 2032, we will be an outstanding provider of high quality, high impact professional youth work.

Why this goal?

We know brilliant things can happen when children and young people experience professional youth work.

Lasting change in young people's lives starts with those closest to youth work. When youth workers and young people themselves are supported and empowered, they can come together to rethink and reshape the world around them —designing approaches that are more responsive, inclusive and grounded in real lived experience

Our Value Drivers

People First – We will always put people ahead of programme-led design
Caring is our expertise – We will be open about how our efforts are boosting wellbeing + opportunities for everyone, and where we need to do better.
Generously Collaborative – We will commit to always working in partnership as that is how we improve the system
Speaking up – We will always recognise our imperative of advocating for our children and young people

Our Starting Points

- *We will always be led by the voices and needs of our young people*
- *We will Invest in our Board of Trustees and our infrastructure so that we are always fit for purpose*
- *We will become a data mature organisation driven by not only what we see but what we understand*
- *We will be relentlessly focused on reducing our environmental impact*

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Our Enabling Goals

We know that to achieve our ambitions, we need to have big goals as an organisation. These 5 key areas will enable us to achieve our vision, they will underpin our success and drive us towards better, longer-term outcomes for children and young people.

GOAL 1

Effective Governance

We know brilliant things happen when good people put their knowledge and skills to use. We will build a Board of Trustees that is fit for purpose and more.

GOAL 2

Led by our young people

We know that to be an effective organisation for young people, you have to be led by young people. We will build exceptional youth voice and participation pathways across our organisation.

GOAL 3

Quality practice across all areas

We know young people deserve our best work, so we will have a firm commitment to the highest standard of training, practice and safeguarding across the board.

GOAL 4

Diversified income portfolio

We know that the most effective youth work happens over the long term. We will build an income portfolio that is diverse and flexible to make this happen.

GOAL 5

Fuelled by Innovation

We know that the best work is yet to be done. We will continue to be driven by improving practice, trying new approaches and leading innovation across the system.

Join Us!

If you are motivated by our strategy. If you share our goals. If you are a doer.

We want to work with you.

This is our ambitious strategy for shaping the next five years of youth work across our region, for improving outcomes for children, young people and their families, and for delivering the change that we believe will make a difference.

We won't be able to do everything all at once. But with you, we can move faster. Together, we can meet the challenges of this moment.

We'd love to hear from you.

