

About the NYA

The National Youth Agency (NYA) is the Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) for youth work in England. The NYA is committed to enabling high quality youth work across a range of settings to benefit the health and outcomes of young people and strengthen local communities. The NYA do this by providing guidance, support, advice, training and staff development opportunities for youth workers and youth work organisations.

Summary

We welcome this consultation on SEND reform, particularly its recognition of youth workers and volunteers as critical to the wider ecosystem of wellbeing support for young people, their families and communities. Youth workers play a vital role in promoting young people's wellbeing, safety and community cohesion, offering trusted relationships and accessible support that complements statutory services. Their contribution is especially important in addressing school absence, one of the most pressing challenges facing the education system. Absence rose sharply following the pandemic and remains persistently high, with severe absence entrenched for too many young people. While schools are central to tackling this issue, the causes of absence are often complex and multi-faceted, requiring coordinated, community-based responses that address wider barriers to engagement. At present, the potential of youth work to support young people within and alongside schools is not being fully realised.

The current SEND crisis among young people in England has coincided with a £1.2 billion real terms cut in spending by local authorities on youth services since 2010¹, which has limited access to safe spaces and trusted, early support. Alongside wider pressures on local services, these cuts have contributed to fragmented support and inconsistent referral pathways for children and young people with additional needs. Youth workers are uniquely positioned within communities to identify emerging needs early, connect young people to appropriate services, reduce pressure on schools and GPs, and strengthen multi-agency collaboration. Realising this contribution, however, requires sustained investment in youth services, a well-supported workforce, and meaningful integration of youth work within local SEND and education systems.

1. We want children, young people and their families to be involved in making better, evidence-based decisions about SEND, both in their local area and across the country. How can we make sure children, young people and their families have a genuine say in these decisions?

The Education Select Committee's recent report into solving the SEND crisis² revealed that since 2014 the number of children and young people identified with SEND has surged from 1.3 million to 1.7 million with families navigating a system that too often feels adversarial, fragmented and under-resourced. The inquiry found parents exhausted from fighting for basic support, teachers stretched beyond capacity and committed professionals working within services buckling under pressure.

¹ YMCA, 2025, [Beyond the Brink? The state of funding for youth services.](#)

² UK Parliament (2025) [Solving the SEND Crisis](#)

Cuts to youth services have coincided with rising numbers of families needing support leaving young people with SEND nowhere to go and exacerbating crisis across education, health and justice systems. This has left many workforces that deliver frontline support to young people and their families without the adequate resources and training they need to respond effectively and compassionately to the diverse needs of children and young people with SEND.

With many youth services disappearing across communities since 2010, early intervention and identification of young people who need SEND support has left young people and their families falling through overburdened service gaps. Collaboration is central to rebuilding trust with young people and their families and youth workers are essential in bridging that gap between young people and schools. Youth workers are often the first to identify when young people need additional support but are routinely missed as the profession that acts as a vital lynch pin for young people, schools and their families. Many youth services run additional SEND provision and across England, and specialist SEND youth clubs exist but as is the case with the youth sector more broadly, they too have faced funding cuts. For young people with SEND and their families, these services offer lifelines of support, respite and connection.

As recently as April 2026, local press in north England reported that a youth club for children with SEND closed its doors after nearly 50 years due to council budget cuts. Parents, young people and carers urged the local authority to keep the provision open, but the council did not consider the service to fall under statutory services. However, local authorities have a statutory duty to provide a local youth offer for young people.¹⁷ Under Section 507b of the Education Act (1996), all young people aged 13 to 19 years (and up to 25 years for those with special educational needs and disability SEND) have the right to access youth work activities which are for the improvement of their wellbeing and promote their personal and social development. Whilst the statutory duty exists, sufficiency benchmarks do not, leaving a postcode lottery of SEND youth provision support across the country and young people and their families without a voice in decisions that affect them.

Aligned to the National Youth Strategy's³ ambitions to move from a fragmented to collaborative approach to support the wellbeing and additional needs of young people, the statutory duty must be strengthened, and youth workers should be recognised for the pivotal role they play in developing young people's emotional and social wellbeing, especially those with SEND. The strategy highlights the crucial role of youth workers in facilitating youth voice and acknowledges they often act as a conduit between young people and education and health services.

For the SEND reforms to be effective, the Government must embrace youth voice participation⁴ by providing a space for young people to share their experiences and work with families to have their say through engaging them in strategy and governance decisions both at the community and national level. The NYA has developed a framework for working with young people in governance⁵ to support these objectives. Embedding youth work expertise and lived experience in SEND reform would reinforce the National Youth Strategy's focus on youth voice and highlight youth workers' essential role in expanding SEND capacity beyond the school gates, thereby supporting meaningful youth participation for many young people and families who have felt unheard for too long.

³ Department for Culture, Media & Sport (2025) [Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy](#)

⁴ NYA (2025) [Youth Voice and Participation](#)

⁵ NYA (2025) [Framework for Working with Young People in Governance](#)

3. How can we ensure that children are best supported by the Universal offer? (Universal offer of support will run across all schools. This includes high-quality adaptive teaching, calm environments, and early help when needed)

We welcome the introduction of the Universal offer, which will set a new baseline for mainstream education settings for children and young people aged 0-25. In particular, we welcome the explicit reference to offer young people accessible and enriching provision beyond the classroom and strong partnerships with families and wider services. The NYA's Better Together: Youth Work with Schools⁶ report revealed that youth work significantly improves engagement with learning and breaks down barriers to attendance, as well as boosting young people's mental wellbeing and confidence.

Case Study: Aldridge Foundation – Bright Futures Wellbeing Programme

Bright Futures is for young people who are facing challenges and need extra support to remain productively engaged in education and on the best path to fulfil their potential. The programme has been designed by the Aldridge Foundation for young people aged 13 to 15 who are lacking confidence, experiencing personal challenges such as social anxiety, or who are at risk of disengaging with education. The programme, delivered by youth workers, includes:

- Regular in-school coaching sessions to build confidence.
- Expeditions and outdoor experiences.
- Sessions to build on the skills developed through experiences and set goals for their continued education and wider lives.

The impact of the wellbeing programme had the following outcomes:

- All of the young people reported an improvement in their social and life skills.
- Together, they set targets for the new academic year to help keep them focused on learning and coping well with life as they prepared for exams, further education and beyond.

Source: NYA Better Together: Youth Work with Schools report (2023)

⁶ NYA (2023) [Better Together: Youth Work with Schools](#)

NYA's Better Together report found that the challenges many children face in attending, engaging and attaining in education cannot be solved solely by schools and young people need targeted support from practitioners beyond the school gate which requires significant reforms to youth work, not least sustained investment and CPD training.

Reinforcing the importance of partnerships and youth work in schools, the Children's Commissioner's School Census⁷ highlighted that school leaders understand that the things their children are struggling with will not be solved by schools alone. Schools face knock-on effects from a lack of service provision in the local area and are often the only provider left who can fill that gap of support for pupils in the community. Since 2010/11, more than 4,500 youth work jobs have been cut and 750 youth centres closed.⁸

Whilst the Universal offer makes clear that the wellbeing of all children is the responsibility of everyone, what is missing is the clear commitment to investing in youth work, not as an optional add on but as an essential service for young people, their families and communities.⁹

The NYA has long called for the strengthening of the statutory duty on local authorities to provide a local youth offer and safeguard youth services. In 2025, a 10-minute rule bill¹⁰ was introduced to Parliament to place clear duties on councils to properly plan, deliver and resource youth services, rather than treating them as optional so that young people can access safe spaces, a trusted adult and opportunities to help them thrive.¹¹ By strengthening the statutory duty, Government would signal the importance of youth work in addressing the burgeoning SEND crisis among young people and by doing so facilitate better join up between agencies working with young people, alleviating pressure from the health, education and youth justice workforces.

Local authorities could also focus on mapping local provision, coordinating early help services and reducing the postcode lottery that currently affects young people's access to quality SEND provision in mainstream schools, helping to restore and rebuild trust between communities and schools. In short, the universal offer will only be effective if the offer of access to high quality youth work is made available across all schools and communities.

7. How do you think early years settings, schools, and colleges can best support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people?

Moving beyond the above settings, strengthening the statutory duty on youth services and embracing partnership and collaboration is fundamental to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. The NYA's National Youth Work Curriculum¹² is a flexible framework that enables youth workers to identify how their interventions can be used to support the personal and social development of young people. The health and wellbeing element of the curriculum highlights that youth workers are often the first adults young people turn to when they have unmet health and education needs. In response, youth workers can identify what support a

⁷ Children's Commissioner (2025) [The Children's Plan - The Children's Commissioner's School Census](#)

⁸ Local Government (2020) [Re-thinking local: youth services](#)

⁹ NYA (2023) [How to fulfil your Statutory Duty under Section 507B of the Education Act: A toolkit for local authorities](#)

¹⁰ NYA (2025) [Natasha Irons MP Introduces Bill to Safeguard Youth Services](#)

¹¹ NYA (2025) [Youth Services Bill](#)

¹² NYA (2025) [National Youth Work Curriculum](#)

young person needs early on, engage with relevant agencies including schools and adjust programmes to support young people with health conditions or disabilities.

Research from Onside on the role of youth work in tackling school absence¹³ found that for young people who access their youth services before the age of 11, the reduction in absences tripled between 2022-2024. By intervening earlier, youth work can play an important role in helping schools prevent unauthorised absence from escalating, providing timely support and sustained engagement that addresses root causes of absenteeism before disengagement with school becomes entrenched.

The above evidence demonstrates clearly that youth work is proactive in early intervention and has a vital role to play in supporting young people with their mental health both in and out of school, its value on young people, families, community, society and the economy should not be underestimated in SEND reform policy development.

11. What should the top three priority areas be for building and sharing evidence within the National Inclusion Standards?

We welcome the commitment to develop National Inclusion Standards and a new remit for the Children's Commissioner to provide independent oversight and scrutiny of SEND reform. We also welcome the commitment to ensuring the National Inclusion Standards are informed by evidence, with close multi-agency work with experts as well as children, young people and their families to promote belonging and inclusion in schools. To foster clear expectations for leaders on the standards, we recommend the top three priority areas for building and sharing evidence:

- **Shared professional inclusion standards** - To ensure every young person feels seen, heard and valued, we recommend using the NYA's Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EEDIB) Standards.¹⁴ They reflect the commitment of the entire youth sector - paid and volunteer youth workers, leaders, organisations, and communities who work together to create safe, supportive, and inspiring spaces for young people. As a resource, these standards can support the joint accountability for all professionals working with young people ensuring children from all backgrounds feel supported and included by their schools and communities and have access to appropriate referral pathways if needed i.e. immigration support. Having shared benchmarks, shared language and training on inclusion would support a joined-up community approach to put youth work on a surer footing with schools and facilitate more cross-sector collaboration in the interests of young people. The NYA's Better Together: Youth Work with Schools¹⁵ report recommended a joined-up approach for training and workforce planning between schools and youth work, such as integrating youth work values and approaches into initial teacher training and CPD training. Our EEDIB standards could act as the vehicle to kick start shared inclusion standards and guidance across the education, health, justice and voluntary sector to overcome the current siloed policy approach of supporting young people's inclusion, belonging and wellbeing.

¹³ Onside (2026) [Back to School: Can youth work help turn the tide on absence?](#)

¹⁴ NYA (2025) [Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging \(EEDIB\) Standards](#)

¹⁵ NYA (2023) [Better Together: Youth Work with Schools](#)

- Youth voices and youth workers on the proposed independent national expert panel -**
 In developing the National Inclusion Standards, we recommend that young people with lived experience of the school and SEND system have a seat at the table to ensure young voices have their say in decisions that affect them and their peers whilst also holding the panel to account. We also recommend that the expertise of youth workers is represented on the independent expert panel. Youth workers offer unique insights into supporting the inclusion of young people from underrepresented groups across school, voluntary, health and community settings. Their expertise around the plethora of challenges young people face from additional needs, poor mental health to conflict at home can help inform evidence-based practice on what works to reengage young people in schools and promote inclusion and belonging. At present, we are not currently achieving the full potential of youth work in schools.
- Partnership working –** In the Government’s Every Child Achieving and Thriving White Paper¹⁶ there is a recognition that education does not begin and end with the school bell and central to improving all young people’s lives are effective collaborative partnerships. Local authorities, schools, youth services and voluntary services all have a role to play in supporting better outcomes for young people with SEND. However, not all professions are given the same status with youth work and volunteers often treated as optional add-ons, including in multi-agency safeguarding practice. To overcome this disparity and achieve better outcomes for all young people, we recommend strengthening the statutory duty on youth services to end the postcode lottery of support and foster better partnerships with all professionals promoting inclusion, support and belonging to meet the needs of all young people. Evidence has shown that when school leaders and staff work in partnership with youth workers, the results can be truly transformational.

Case Study: The Mix Stowmarket, local youth organisation

We work closely with two local high schools and have youth workers covering four days a week in each school. We have a partnership agreement with the school that enables us to work safely and have transparency in our work, which has been a huge enabler in our work. We have spent three years working within schools and our youth work has doubled in schools in that time.

Barriers have included communication with senior leadership, particularly at the top of a School Trust, as they struggled to understand our work and its impact. Once we sat down with them, explained our processes and combined this with what the school needed from us, it has been working brilliantly. We also send them reports each term so they can track our work and growth. We also provide crisis support when students are struggling most.

Source: NYA Beter Together: Youth Work with Schools report (2023)

¹⁶ Department for Education (2026) Every child achieving and thriving policy paper

13. What practical actions can help teachers, educators and leaders manage workload whilst implementing these changes?

In mainstreaming SEND support and the ambitions set out in the Every Child Achieving and Thriving White Paper, teachers and education leaders should embed youth workers and community expertise into the education system. Youth workers often have trusted relationships with young people and are frequently the first to identify emerging additional needs, particularly social, emotional and mental health needs that may not present clearly in the classroom. By recognising and formalising this role, schools can benefit from earlier identification and support for SEND without increasing workload pressures on teaching staff.

Embedding youth workers within schools allows them to draw on specialist skills in relationship-based practice, early intervention and family engagement. This helps teachers focus on teaching, while youth workers support emotional regulation, attendance, behaviour and transitions, areas that can otherwise consume significant staff time. For education leaders, this creates a more sustainable, multi-disciplinary model of support rather than relying on overstretched SENCOs or pastoral leads.

The Government's proposed Enrichment Framework is welcome but for it to deliver impact, it must intentionally bring schools and communities together as another practical lever to reduce workload pressure on teachers. Enrichment activities; arts, sports, mentoring, and social action provide low-pressure contexts where young people's strengths and needs can be understood holistically. Targeted funding which the government plans to distribute to 400 target schools across 9 regions should be used to strengthen the enrichment offer to support the SEND reform agenda by commissioning youth workers and community organisations to deliver inclusive provision aligned to school priorities. This reduces duplication, maximises existing expertise and ensures support is delivered in spaces where young people feel safe and engaged.

“AutismAble’s Youth Provision has young people with SEND at the heart of everything we do. They choose to come to our Youth Hub to socialise, develop their skills and have fun in a safe and inclusive environment. Our young people use their powerful voice to steer sessions, projects and the provision on a whole in the right direction.”

Sarah Windle, Youth and Outreach Provision Team Leader, AutismAble, South Shields

With evidence from the Education Policy Institute¹⁷ showing increased participation in extra-curricular activities is associated with higher outcomes, the commitment to a core enrichment entitlement including a set of enrichment benchmarks that sit alongside the wider National Youth Strategy are positive policy shifts. To go further, the Government should consider integrating youth work into national attendance policy and guidance to achieve its policy ambitions of driving standards, attainment and attendance for all young people.

Overall, leveraging youth workers and community partnerships helps manage workload by redistributing support, strengthening early intervention and creating coherent pathways around the child. This enables teachers and leaders to implement change without burnout, while delivering more effective, inclusive outcomes for young people with SEND.

¹⁷ Education Policy Institute (2024) [Access to extra-curricular provision and the association with outcomes](#)

17. How can we best support transition for young people with SEND, so that they are well supported into post-16 provision and further education, training or employment?

Young people with SEND often face additional barriers in accessing education, employment and training, and are at an increased risk of being excluded from school. These barriers can include unmet support needs, inaccessible learning environments or limited specialist provision, with gaps in support identified during the transitional period from education to adulthood.

The National Education Union identifies the need for a “more inclusive system which takes a more holistic, whole child approach towards behaviour support.”¹⁸ Youth workers can help bridge this gap in schools since youth work takes a relational, person-centred approach that is focused on achieving positive outcomes for young people.

Placing youth workers in schools and colleges offers clear long-term benefits, ensuring that vulnerable young people facing complex challenges can access support when and where they need it. Some of these benefits are outlined in NYA’s guidance around the benefits of Transitional Safeguarding¹⁹ for under-supported groups of young people aged between 15 and 24. This guidance explains that the nature of the trusted relationships forged between youth workers and the young people they support are not designed to change or stop when the young person reaches 18 or leaves formal care or education. This consistency of support is particularly important for young people with a learning disability, care leavers or other vulnerable groups who often report experiencing a “cliff edge” in support on turning 18, as service provision drops off rapidly and their needs are no longer met.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, youth workers provided support to young people facing mental health and wellbeing challenges. Their efforts enabled individuals to overcome isolation and foster increased confidence and self-esteem.

Case Study: Casey, King’s Trust

Casey has autism and ADHD, he left college following a lack of SEND support, which left him isolated in his room during the period of national lockdown and the sudden death of his father just prior to the outbreak of the pandemic. Casey cites the importance of the *Explore* programme that he took part in through the King’s Trust, which helped him to overcome his social and physical isolation.

“There’s a lot of people out there who, like me, struggle with social situations, struggle with making friends, struggle with confidence and motivation. I think without youth workers, those people may get stuck in those ways.” – Casey, aged 24, King’s Trust

Casey now enjoys his job working at M&S, spends time with friends and is happy. Casey credits his youth worker, Lorraine Lambert, for providing him with the tools to reach this place of professional and personal contentment.

¹⁸ National Education Union (2023) [SEND children and exclusion | National Education Union](#)

¹⁹ NYA (2023) [National Youth Work Curriculum: Transitional Safeguarding](#)

Such examples like Casey's underscore the importance of trusted, person-centred relationships in supporting young people who are NEET.

Digital youth work also plays a role in supporting young people with SEND transition to post school training, education or employment. VICTA²⁰ provides support to children and young adults from 0 to 29 who are blind or partially sighted and their families. VICTA supports young people and their families through advice, grants and activities, connecting them to opportunities such as online competitions, science fairs and volunteering to build skills, confidence and independence. The employment landscape is changing rapidly and SEND youth services are vital to supporting young people with additional needs access the digital skills they need to enter the labour market.

Building on this, there is significant potential for the DWP to strengthen the support provided through Jobcentre Plus by drawing on youth work-informed practice. Youth work-informed training would strengthen Work Coaches' relational skills, helping them build trust with young people who are NEET, many of whom face complex barriers to engagement. By improving work coaches' understanding of the challenges young people with SEND face, the DWP could ensure its employment support is more responsive, accessible and effective for those furthest from the labour market.

20. Through the Experts at Hand offer, we want to ensure that mainstream settings can get quick specialist support for children and young people. What arrangements are needed between local area partners (education, health, social care) to deliver this Experts at Hand offer effectively?

Partners should agree joint ownership of the Experts at Hand offer within existing local SEND and children and young people's partnership arrangements. This should reflect statutory duties to support young people up to age 25 and align with wider system priorities on early help, attendance and inclusion, ensuring the offer is embedded rather than operating as an add-on. Partnerships should include youth workers and connect to existing programmes where wellbeing, attendance and early intervention are shared priorities. This includes the Local Youth Transformation (LYT)²¹ programme which NYA is the lead delivery partner of, Young Futures Hubs and Prevention Partnerships aligned to the National Youth Strategy.

Whilst proposed funding of £1 billion for ICBs, schools and local authorities will seek to boost partnership in the interests of supporting young people with SEND, the Experts at Hand offer should explicitly include youth workers within its definition and categorisation of expertise. Youth workers are a vital workforce allied to education, health, justice and social care often identifying emerging needs early and engaging young people who may not respond to clinical or classroom-based approaches. This aligns with evidence from the Children's Commissioner School Census 2025 and established best practice of youth work in schools which is proven to deliver better outcomes for young people.

Alongside SENCOs, educational psychologists and speech and language therapists, youth workers bring relational, strengths-based expertise that supports social, emotional and behavioural needs and helps prevent escalation.

²⁰ VICTA (2026) [Empowering Blind Children and Young Adults](#)

²¹ NYA (2025) [Local Youth Transformation Programme](#)

The Experts at Hand offer will be most effective where partners share accountability, recognise the youth workforce as core expertise, and prioritise early help over crisis response. While the SEND community-based trusts proposed in the Every Child Achieving and Thriving White Paper are welcome, they must align with the local youth offer, Local Youth Transformation programme, Young Futures Hubs and ICBs, drawing on expertise across services, including youth workers. A single access route would enable swift triage, strengthen mainstream settings, break down siloes and reduce pressure on education and specialist services over time.

Current arrangements place responsibility for SEND largely with the DfE and DHSC, despite youth services and voluntary and community organisations playing equally critical roles in improving young people's education and employment outcomes. In improving better outcomes for young people and making this everyone's responsibility, aligned to the National Youth Strategy, responsibility must sit across all relevant government departments responsible for policy affecting young people including DCMS, the Ministry of Justice and Home Office.

32. In relation to pooled funding, we propose that every school becomes part of a local SEND group. Do you agree that this proposal aligns with our aim for all schools to be part of high-quality, community-based trusts?

Local SEND groups that collaborate to share expertise, provide peer support and strengthen provision across local areas will need clear operating principles and strong integration with the local youth offer, Local Youth Transformation (in areas where these exists), and ICBs. While local authorities will shape how these groupings are formed, a genuinely whole-community approach will only be effective if the statutory duty on local authorities to provide a local youth offer is strengthened.

The Schools White Paper rightly acknowledges delivering better outcomes for young people with SEND is a shared responsibility and evidence shown throughout this consultation response highlights the impact of youth work on reengaging young people with education, improves wellbeing and connects them to their communities. Schools should be part of high-quality community-based trusts, but youth workers, youth services and health professionals should also be represented in these local SEND groups for them to be effective and so young people are supported across all settings they interact with, not just schools. Youth work exists in all spaces and places, including in hospitals²², schools, colleges and in communities through detached youth work²³ which takes place outside buildings, meeting young people where they are.

34. How can we ensure the most effective use of these local partnership groups?

Local partnership groups will be most effective if they are underpinned by clear expectations, shared accountability and sufficient capacity. This can be achieved by:

- **Strengthening and aligning outcomes:** The Local Government Outcomes Framework already includes key SEND indicators, such as attendance, attainment and post-16 participation as well as youth services participation. This should be reinforced with clear sufficiency benchmarks for youth services, ensuring high-quality provision is universal and accessible to all young people, regardless of background.

²² NYA (2023) [Darren's Journey into Hospital Youth Work](#)

²³ NYA (2020) [Detached Youth Work Guidance](#)

- **Creating a common purpose:** Local partnership groups need shared language, objectives and accountability. Youth workers should be seen as a core part of local delivery, not an optional add-on.
- **Learning from effective practice:** Existing collaborative models, such as Area-Based Education Partnerships, show how diverse partners can work together to address local challenges. Government should actively support similar approaches, with clear expectations for youth provision, SEND groups, health services and local authorities.
- **Addressing system enablers:** SEND reform and the partnerships that support it will only succeed if funding is adequate, workforce shortages are tackled, governance is clear, and training is coherent and aligned across all professionals that interact with young people, including youth workers.

Together, these steps would help local partnership groups operate with clarity, consistency and shared responsibility, maximising their impact for young people with SEND and their families.

35. Which stakeholders are important for the success of local partnership groups, and why?

The success of local partnership groups supporting young people with SEND depends on the involvement of a broad and balanced set of stakeholders who bring complementary expertise, trusted relationships and shared accountability. Essential to the success of local partnerships will be the engagement of young people with SEND, their parents or carers. Their lived experience will ensure that services are designed around real needs, helping to rebuild trust and promoting engagement with families who have for so long felt let down by the lack of support they have received.

Youth workers, including those from voluntary and community organisations, should be seen as a core part of the partnership, complementing education, health, local authority and police partners. As stated throughout this consultation response, they often have trusted, non-judgemental relationships with young people and are well placed to identify additional needs early, particularly social, emotional and mental health needs.

Youth services including community-based providers and uniformed youth groups offer structured, inclusive enrichment opportunities that build confidence, social skills and a sense of belonging. These settings can be especially powerful for young people with SEND who struggle to engage in formal environments.

The voluntary and community sector brings flexibility, cultural understanding and reach into communities that statutory services may find harder to access, strengthening prevention and inclusion. Youth workers are essential to the success of local partnerships for the multitude of reasons outlined above.

For more information, please contact policy@nya.org.uk