Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

Young Futures Hubs

Guidance for Local Authorities

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Who is this document for?

This document has been produced for local authorities and partners working with central government to establish Young Futures Hubs. It sets out the vision for the programme and outlines the “Essential” and “Go Further” practices to develop a successful Young Futures Hubs. This document should be read alongside:

- Young Futures Hubs and Transformation Prospectus (provided alongside this document)
- Outcomes Framework
- Co-creation Guidance
- Out-of-school settings: safeguarding guidance for providers - GOV.UK

How this guidance has been developed and future development:

This guidance has been developed with learnings from the delivery of Early Adopter Young Futures Hubs, existing frameworks, sector briefings, and input from stakeholders, young people and cross government colleagues. As the programme expands, we will continue to develop this guidance by incorporating insights and lessons learned from local authorities.

1. The Foundations: Why, What and Who

1.1. Introduction

This Government is committed to breaking down barriers to opportunity, improving health outcomes, and making Britain's streets safer. Many young people face significant challenges, including poverty, adverse childhood experiences, discrimination, disability, limited access to support, and wider social inequalities.

As we committed to in 'Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy', we are delivering on our **10-year plan** to ensure every young person across the country has **somewhere to go, someone who cares for them and a community they feel part of.** As part of this, DCMS will deliver the Young Futures Hubs and Transformation (YHT) programme to improve local youth services and establish a network of 50 Young Futures Hubs by March 2029.

The Young Futures Programme is a Government manifesto commitment focused on delivering early intervention for young people at risk of poorer outcomes. Through a multi-agency approach, it collaborates with organisations across the health, crime, youth and career sectors to identify these young people sooner, ensuring they can access reliable and accessible support within their local communities. The two programmes are explained below:

Programme	Core Function
Young Futures Hubs	Local authority led, these are open-access spaces providing support focused on mental health and wellbeing, improving opportunities, and reducing vulnerability to crime. They also provide targeted support for those needing tailored interventions.
Young Futures Panels	Multi-agency panels, delivered through Violence Reduction Units/Serious Violence Duty Partnerships, that identify young people vulnerable to being drawn into crime and connect them to appropriate local support. Young Futures Hubs will refer young people vulnerable to becoming involved in crime, as outlined in the Young Futures Panels guidance and/or receive referrals from Young Futures Panels.

Together, these programmes support the Government's Safer Streets, Opportunity, and Health missions. They also align with *Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy* and wider youth funding programmes, while contributing to the Government's commitment to expand open-access wellbeing and mental health support for children and young people. This supports the ambition of the 10-Year Health Plan to shift from treatment to prevention, and from hospital-based care to neighbourhood-based support. This programme will also support local authorities

achieving the outcomes set out within the Children's Social Care National Framework.

1.2. Government's Vision for Young Futures Hubs

The Young Futures Programme will establish a network of 50 Young Futures Hubs by March 2029, building on existing local provision to:

- improve mental health and wellbeing
- increase access to opportunities, including careers support
- reduce vulnerability to young people being drawn into crime

These three objectives are closely linked; progress in one area supports and improves success in the others.

Young Futures Hubs will provide inclusive, open access support for young people aged 10–18 (up to 25 for young people with SEND) with flexibility according to local need, through both physical spaces and digital pathways. They will blend open access activities such as sports, arts, volunteering, and skills development, with targeted, evidence-based support for young people who need it, delivered by trained professionals.

Young Futures Hubs will create a new model of service delivery, using multi-agency partnership working across statutory and non-statutory services, voluntary and community organisations to bring provision together in one space. They will build on existing local expertise and services to introduce new coordination and enhance provision to address young people's needs. Young people must shape the design, delivery, and evaluation of the Hubs. Their involvement must be ongoing and meaningful and not limited to one-off consultation exercises.

1.3. Young People's Vision for Young Futures Hubs

Young people shared their vision for Young Futures Hubs through the Youth Transformation Task and Finish Group of 15 people aged 14–25 and 5 Pop-Up Consultation Events across the country for younger participants (aged 10–14).

They told us they welcomed the ambition of Young Futures Hubs to create safe, accessible, community-based spaces where they can access support, pathways to growth and trusted adults. They highlighted that the success of Young Futures Hubs will depend less on buildings or services and more on whether hubs create meaningful relationships as "staff make or break the experience", their hope for the hubs is that they feel genuinely welcoming and are shaped by the needs of local young people to feel like a "home away from home" rather than an institution.

Successful hubs should be a space where young people:

- Feel safe
- Feel welcome
- Feel understood
- Feel respected
- Feel represented
- Feel listened to
- Feel connected
- Feel able to influence decisions

1.4. Target Cohort

Young Futures Hubs are open to all young people aged 10 - 18 (up to 25 for young people with SEND) with flexibility to change the age range according to local need. Within this open access approach, local authorities should prioritise engagement and support for young people showing early risk factors linked to poor outcomes in mental health, opportunity and crime (see table below). Evidence shows that early intervention delivered through trusted adults with welcoming, accessible provision is effective in preventing escalation and improving long-term outcomes.

Young Futures Hubs should provide non-stigmatising support that builds trust, strengthens resilience, and connects young people to the right help at the right time. While delivery should reflect local context and need, local authorities are expected to ensure that resources are focused on young people at risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), vulnerable to being drawn into crime, or developing poor mental health outcomes.

While anyone can access services, hubs should be particularly accessible and tailored toward those with early risk factors, with the aim for 60% of young people accessing Young Futures Hubs targeted services having one or more early risk factor(s).

The following list is not exhaustive and provides early indicators that young people may be at risk. This is to be used alongside practitioner insight and consideration of individual circumstances.

List of Early Risk Indicators Across Programme Objectives
Disengaged, excluded or absent from school/ Not in Education, Employment or Training
Probable mental health condition
Looked after/care-experience

Harm-involved social networks
Experience of poverty or deprivation
Anti-social behaviour (perpetration of) or previous offending (particularly lower-level crimes such as stealing or minor theft)
Having a special educational need or disability (SEND)
Being in contact with social care, or parents contacted by social or educational services about young persons' behaviour
Having a parent/carer or guardian with a disability or mental health condition (including substance misuse).
Multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences[1]

Engagement with the target cohort should be achieved through three primary mechanisms:

- **Strategic Hub Placement:** Establishing Young Futures Hubs within high-need geographic areas to ensure proximity to the target cohort, effectively creating a model of targeted open access.
- **Partner-Led Identification:** Local authorities should use local data, insight, and the expertise of trained professionals and partners to identify, engage, and support these young people to access provision.

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[1]NHS: Most studies addressing the issue have mostly converged on a similar set of experiences falling under this term:

- verbal abuse
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- physical neglect
- emotional neglect
- parental separation
- household mental illness
- household domestic abuse
- household alcohol abuse
- household drug abuse and
- incarceration of a household member

- **Strategic outreach and detached youth work:** Young Futures Hubs should provide a targeted outreach and detached service for young people in spaces and areas that they feel most comfortable.

2. Guiding Principles

Young Futures Hubs should be built on the core values of youth work that prioritise voluntary participation, personal empowerment, and positive relationships between young people and practitioners.

2.1. Young Voices: Experts by Experience

Young people should be involved in decisions that directly affect them, including how services are delivered and when support is available.

Young Futures Hubs should:

- Empower young people to participate in decision-making.
- Use the Lundy Model to ensure young people have:
    - Space
    - Voice
    - Audience
    - Influence
- Actively engage and empower underrepresented groups to share their views, including girls and young women, young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, young people with SEND, and care-experienced young people.

2.2. Trusted Relationships

Trusted relationships are central to effective early intervention. Young people must have access to consistent, non-judgemental support from adults they know and trust.

Young Futures Hubs should:

- employ empathetic, skilled staff who reflect the communities they serve and take all perspectives into account.
- prioritise relationship-based practice across all provision
- support warm handovers between services, particularly during transition points
- create environments that promote belonging, peer support, and community connection

No young person should have to navigate support systems alone.

2.3. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Young Futures Hubs must be inclusive, accessible, and welcoming to all young people. No young person should be excluded from support because of their background, identity, needs, or circumstances.

Hubs should:

- provide safe and accessible physical and digital provision for young people aged 10–18 with flexibility (up to 25 for young people with SEND)
- identify and remove barriers to participation, including poverty, transport, discrimination, and accessibility needs
- actively reach and engage underserved groups
- enable access to specialist support where needed

Inclusion must be built into delivery from the outset, not treated as an additional consideration.

2.4. Safeguarding: A Contextual Approach

Safeguarding is a core responsibility and must be embedded throughout all Hub activity.

Hubs must adopt a contextual safeguarding approach, recognising that risks to young people can occur across different environments, including online, in schools, in communities, and in public spaces.

Hubs should:

- Identify and respond to any risks presenting in young people
- Maintain robust safeguarding policies, procedures, and information-sharing arrangements, escalating potential risks or vulnerability to appropriate services. Hubs should work with local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASAs) and safeguarding partner arrangements.
- Provide a named contact and lead for managing high-risk cases
- Ensure all delivery partners meet required safeguarding standards, including safer recruitment and staff training
- Align with Out of School Settings Safeguarding Guidance and National Youth Agency safeguarding standards

Safeguarding must be proactive, coordinated, and central to the way services operate.

2.5. Continuous Improvement

As a programme creating system change, there needs to be a way of reviewing and monitoring progress and ensuring Young Futures Hubs work for the young people they serve.

Hubs should:

- continuously adapt and grow services based on local insights and changing youth needs
- regularly gather and act on feedback from young people, families, and frontline staff to improve delivery in real time
- host regular forums and workshops where staff and partners can share what works and troubleshoot challenges together
- use a range of tools to engage young people e.g. informal youth led sessions, creative workshops, surveys to allow young people to engage through a mechanism that best suits their needs.
- review progress on Young Futures Hubs work quarterly.

By combining informal feedback with standard operational data and new ‘what works’ evidence, the hubs can ensure they are continuing to meet the needs of young people.

3. Operational Set Up

3.1. Governance and Partnerships

Young Futures Hubs will deliver across a complex service landscape. This will include statutory and non-statutory services and a range of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) led offers provided by youth services, crime prevention and justice partners, health partners and employment support.

Young Futures Hubs delivery will require a multi-disciplinary team to support young people's needs in a holistic way; leadership within the Young Futures Hubs needs to ensure a joined-up approach to working to discuss, identify and coordinate appropriate evidence- based interventions, and where required manage referrals and signpost to other local services.

Essential:

- An understanding of existing provision and local needs informed by young people and local organisations to create a plan for delivering the Young Futures Hubs.
- Embed or align the Young Futures Hubs in wider strategic plans within the local authority to provide holistic support to young people.
- Senior leadership buy-in from the local authority and other key services involved in the delivery of provision.
- Form a strategic working group (or utilise an existing group) with clear governance structures and explicit links to existing local authority frameworks and safeguarding arrangements. This group will establish formal terms of reference to map roles and responsibilities across all partners including: youth services, police, health (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) lead, local NHS service senior lead or within Integrated Care Boards(ICB)), social care, educational institutions, alternative provision settings, Department for Work and Pensions Youth Hubs, Best Start Family Hubs, Young Futures Panels, Prevent leads, youth justice leads and Violence Reduction Units/Serious Violence Duty Partnerships and justice partners, including prisons, family services providers and probation (where applicable).
- Develop strong connections with external services referenced in the above bullet point, alongside services in Annex A, to deliver multi-agency support for a variety of needs (via partnerships, alignment or co-location). This could be through:
    - **Joint Planning:** Form cross-agency groups to set shared priorities.
    - **Staff co-location:** Attend partner meetings or host services within the physical hub spaces, and ensure relevant insights are shared in line with information-sharing, consent and safeguarding requirements

    - **Data and information sharing:** Set up monthly information-sharing with health, police, education, and VCSEs, providing clear safeguarding protocols and ensure information management and data sharing protocols are in place.
    - **Partner training:** For example, specialist mental health and trauma training for hub staff.
    - **Insight sharing:** Feed frontline youth trends back to social care, police, and schools.
    - **Shared outreach:** Conduct joint community engagement with partners.
    - **Seamless transitions:** Use named trusted adults and warm handovers to prevent story retelling. Clear two-way referral pathways between the Hub and wider local services.

- Clear safeguarding protocols tailored to the setting, including for drop-in and outreach activities, with a named senior lead for decision making on high-risk cases.

- Young Futures Hubs staff should attend VRU Young Futures Panels, where there is geographic overlap.

- Display a youth-friendly privacy notice that every young person entering the Hub can easily review and query. The privacy notice should include information on how the young person's data might be used or shared, safeguarding processes, and referral pathway explainers.

- Establish robust procedures for young people presenting in forms of severe crisis requiring an immediate social care, healthcare or police response.

- There should be a Partnership/Hub Coordinator to develop partnerships and join up with existing local networks. All partners should have a shared understanding of and commitment to achieving the Young Futures Hubs outcomes.

- Where more than one Hub is established within your local authority, you must establish an agreed approach to services, delivery and workforce and provide a consistent offer, linking up support where appropriate.

- Branding developed for clear recognition of the Young Futures Hubs that is used across all sites and that meets the following requirements. DCMS will provide a branding and logo toolkit to support you with this.

    - The site is referred to as a Young Futures Hub on relevant signage and materials. The exact design of this, including the style and colour, should be determined locally through co-creation activities with young people.

    - The 'Funded by UK Government' logo is visible on all Young Futures Hubs related signage and materials.

- The ‘Youth Matters’ logo associated with the National Youth Strategy is visible on Young Futures Hubs related signage and materials where appropriate.

Go further:

- Meaningful involvement of young people in strategic leadership and governance.
- Remunerate young people for their time and expertise in co-creation and governance roles.
- Explore opportunities to secure co-funding or match funding opportunities.

Helpful Resources

- National Youth Agency safeguarding standards
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- NYA Safeguarding and Risk Management Hub
- Out-of-school settings: safeguarding guidance for providers
- Youth Justice Board Resource Hub: Partnerships
- TLNCF: Building Successful Partnerships
- Youth Voice Resource Partnership Guidance - Youth Justice Resource Hub
- Framework for Integrated Change: Anna Freud
- Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies: guidance for local authorities

Early Adopter Example: Manchester

To illustrate the practical application of the Young Futures Hubs model, the following case study highlights how Manchester approached governance and partnerships to deliver their Young Futures Hubs.

A Networked Delivery Structure
Manchester adopted a networked, partner-led delivery model for its Young Futures Hubs. Rather than relying on a single facility, the model integrated three existing core hubs with six spoke providers, supported by NHS-employed youth workers, VCSE delivery, and capacity-building.

Strategic Coordination and Commissioning
The Manchester local authority acted as a strategic coordinator and commissioner rather than to simply staff the hub directly. This approach enabled Manchester to distribute delivery across a wide ecosystem—including health, youth providers, neighbourhood centres, careers partners, and Greater Manchester networks. This structure facilitated rapid implementation and positioned the Hubs as a catalyst for broader youth system development.

Multi-Directorate Governance
Manchester 'Youth' team is positioned within the Neighbourhoods department rather than Children's Services. This supported a multi-directorate approach, where Strategic Directors from both departments formed a senior management group to oversee the programme. This governance structure was further supported by a cross-departmental Programme Steering Group, ensuring alignment across the organisation.

Partnership and Co-design
The LA prioritised an inclusive partnership approach from the outset. VCSE delivery partners were engaged early, and local VCSE area partnerships were commissioned to lead on youth voice and co-design, ensuring cross-agency consultation across the city. This model allowed the LA to fulfil its Section 507B statutory duty while ensuring youth voice remained central to decision-making. To support the co-design process, the LA commissioned their regional youth work unit, Youth Focus North West, and appointed a lead officer with a public health background to strengthen integration between youth services and public health priorities.

Young Futures Hubs and Panel Partnership
As one of two areas delivering Young Futures Panels and Hubs across North, Central, and South localities, Manchester integrates prevention, open-access support, and targeted multi-agency intervention for youth at risk of crime, exploitation, or violence below statutory thresholds. Operating since 2021 with the GM Violence Reduction Unit, the Panel model works alongside co-located M-Thrive mental health services to bring together police, youth justice, CAMHS, housing, and community partners. The Panel and Young Futures Hubs are closely aligned, with leads sitting in the same local authority directorate and strong operational links in place. Many Panel interventions are delivered from, or linked to, the Hub.
This includes referral pathways between the Panel and M-Thrive, or into identified Hub-based interventions. Referrals from the Young Futures Hub into the Panel generally follow existing Early Help, Education or police-based routes, and have found value in strong relationships between Hub staff, M-Thrive and Panel partners enable this. Young Futures Hub involvement in Panels has increased over time, strengthening referral routes and linking universal provision, targeted support and multi-agency decision making.

This alignment streamlines decision-making and referral pathways into Hub-based support—such as sports, arts, and mentoring—strengthening service consistency across all three localities by expanding existing infrastructure rather than creating new structures.

3.2. Spaces

To meet the needs of diverse young people across different areas, Young Futures Hubs may operate from a range of settings - from large youth or community centres, schools to smaller, locally based sites targeting young people in diverse communities. While facilities may vary, every hub should offer a consistent, welcoming experience. Whilst we recognise the increased need for in person connections, digital tools may be helpful in building trust and reaching young people where they are.

Local authorities will decide in collaboration with local partners, stakeholders and young people where hubs are located within each Top Tier Local Authority (TTLA), based on need, accessibility, and local data. Hubs will make best use of existing provision and infrastructure, with some capital funding available for minor refurbishments to repurpose spaces where appropriate. Identifying suitable spaces early in co-creation will help ensure delivery is proportionate to local scale and need.

Essential:

- Provide a visible, long-term, physical location, accessible via reliable transport. This could be through a single facility or a hub and spoke model with multiple locations. These should be located at neighbourhood, community and/or ward level in areas with high numbers of Young Futures Hubs target cohort and where there may be higher youth crime rates.
- Ensure spaces are accessible, welcoming and safe for young people in the target cohort including consideration of communication needs, neurodiversity, sensory needs, affordability, transport, digital inclusion and cultural understanding.
- Involve young people in shaping and reviewing the design and accessibility of these spaces.
- Include facilities for confidential 1:1 conversations between young people and trusted adults.
- Provide detached and outreach services to ensure engagement from young people less likely to access support and to remove geographic barriers to accessing support, as appropriate.
- Where possible, colocation of services to strengthen local join-up and smoothen young people's journeys. Where colocation is not feasible, warm handovers and referral processes should be in place (see Section 4.2).
- Establish a "digital front door" so young people (and families) know what to expect before they arrive in person.

Go further:

- Strategically target areas with lower existing provision to meet local young people's needs.
- Where available, utilise data on transport to assess the risk of local transport poverty and the implications for the choice of geographic location of hubs, and to optimise the location of detached and outreach services. The Department for Transport's Transport Poverty Tool is expected to be available in early 2027 and may be a useful resource.
- Mobile youth work buses to provide outreach work.
- Digital youth work.
- Sensory or quiet space available in any physical space for the hub.
- Display information to signal support on specific issues (Mental Health and Wellbeing, Justice Aware, LGBTQ+ topics etc.).
- Access to indoor or outdoor gardens and growing spaces that young people help shape, run and care for, designed to support wellbeing.

Helpful Resources

- NYA: Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EEDIB) Standards
- RHS Wellbeing Garden Blueprint: Youth-led Gardens

Early Adopter Example: Brighton and Hove

To illustrate the practical application of the Young Futures Hubs model, the following case study highlights how Brighton and Hove configured their facilities to support multi-agency partnership and accessibility.

Strategic Placement and Community Visibility
The hub, located in the north of the city, was intentionally situated to maximise community visibility and accessibility. By placing the facility directly adjacent to key local services —including a leisure centre, a medical centre, primary schools, and various sports clubs (such as boxing and table tennis)—the local authority ensured the Young Futures Hubs is a natural part of families' daily routines. Brighton and Hove anticipated that because parents, carers, and families frequently walk past the site for school access, the hub would benefit from organic promotion and word-of-mouth awareness.

Configuring Spaces for Multi-Agency Co-location
To support the multi-agency approach required by the Young Futures programme, Brighton and Hove implemented several physical and operational configurations to

improve service delivery and partnership efficacy:

- **Optimised Access:** The hub replaced traditional local authority Salto access systems with fob key entry, streamlining movement for partners and staff. access systems with FOB key entry, streamlining movement for partners and staff.
- **Confidentiality Protocols:** Recognising the sensitivity of services like wellbeing and sexual health, the team utilised side doors to provide separate, discreet access to confidential spaces.
- **Integrated Layouts:** Designers linked individual rooms to the main hub space. This configuration allows new providers to engage more easily with existing youth club members, facilitating easier referral and connection to new services.
- **Shared Infrastructure:** The hub includes a hot-desk office for co-located staff, ensuring a dedicated workspace for partner organisations. Furthermore, a shared storage agreement allows various providers to access equipment, thereby increasing the range of activities available while simultaneously reducing costs for individual youth providers. The local authority will be added to the Youth database linking external commissioned services to youth monitoring data.
- **Operational Coordination:** While the local authority leads on central timetable setting—prioritising targeted clubs during popular time slots—the structure remains flexible. Delivery providers are encouraged to build relationships with youth workers and attendees during these sessions, fostering a dynamic, youth-led schedule that evolves based on participant needs and partner collaboration.

3.3. Workforce

The workforce within a Young Futures Hubs is likely to consist of a range of paid staff and volunteers, with different skills and competencies, qualification frameworks, and professional bodies. To help staff build essential competencies for their roles, hubs ought to deliver internal and external training along with peer learning opportunities. These programs should adapt to the evolving needs of young people while embedding key youth work principles into every role. Training should also be regularly reviewed using feedback from young people.

Essential:

- The workforce will vary depending on the services offered and is typically multidisciplinary in make-up. However, the type of roles that you would expect to see include:
  - Partnership/Hub Coordinator
  - Lead Youth Worker with Level 6 qualification or equivalent experience
  - Mental Health Practitioner/counsellor, trained and registered to support triaging, and with crisis response as needed.[2]
  - Careers and Opportunity Lead
  - Violence Prevention Lead
  - Safeguarding Lead
  - Volunteers, including young people.
- Staff and volunteers are equipped and enabled to respond to young people's needs, and deliver the services offered in the hub, with reflective practice embedded in the multi-disciplinary team.
- All employers involved in Young Futures Hubs must follow the minimum recruitment practices in your code of practice - i.e. DBS check.
- Staff should be capable of providing early help for common and emerging needs, including anxiety, low mood, emotional distress, trauma-related needs, neurodivergence-related support needs, and family or relationship difficulties. This may include brief assessment, developing a collaborative understanding of need, guided self-help, low-intensity psychological interventions, group work, counselling, peer support, family-informed work and advice for parents or carers.
- Staff should be equipped with the skills to manage complex needs in an appropriate way, including needs that have already materialised but haven't been fully identified such as vulnerability to exploitation, violence, abuse, debt, parent/carer imprisonment and family relationships. This should include staff

[2] This could include Children and Young People's Wellbeing Practitioners (CWP), Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (PWP), CBT-informed practitioners, peer support workers, youth mental health workers, clinical supervisors and/or named links into local CAMHS or NHS children and young people's mental health services.

training in trauma-informed and non-stigmatising practice, mental health first aid, safeguarding and cultural competence and neurodiversity support.

- Staff are aware of wider local services available that may not be offered within the hub and can confidently link young people to them e.g. housing support, support for parental imprisonment.
- Delivery must align with existing multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, recognising the legal duties of settings and ensuring strong operational links between hubs and safeguarding leads. Staff should understand local safeguarding pathways and wider safeguarding processes.
- Evaluate current operational capabilities and align with professional standards for relevant roles to design and implement a targeted workforce training and development plan based on the insights gained.
- Prioritise workforce stability to give staff time to build genuine, trusted relationships.
- Hubs should ensure appropriate clinical supervision, consultation and escalation arrangements for staff delivering mental health support. This should include clear thresholds and escalation processes for when young people need specialist NHS mental health services, crisis support, safeguarding intervention or other statutory responses.

Go further:

- Involve young people in the recruitment, induction and training of staff.
- Ensure the workforce is relatable and reflective of the local community, including those with lived experiences similar to the young people they are supporting.
- Provide opportunities for young people to be part of the hub workforce.
- Create clear opportunities for youth leadership within the staff structure.
- When developing a workforce training plan, encourage staff to undertake enhanced safeguarding training.

Helpful Resources

- NYA Safeguarding and Risk Management Hub
- UK Youth Safe Spaces Framework
- Provider framework on Mentoring
- Safeguarding in out-of-school settings e-learning
- National Information Centre on Children of Offenders
- Youth Work Code of Ethics

4. Service Delivery and Referrals

4.1. Services

Young Futures Hubs should build on existing strengths while remaining flexible to meet emerging needs. Strong coordination across teams and partners will prevent duplication of services, align new developments with what already works, and create a more integrated and effective offer for young people.

Essential:

- Be co-created with local authorities, partners, and young people - including girls, young women, care experienced and minority ethnic backgrounds (those less represented in youth engagement/co-creation activities).
- Create a regular programme of activities with a timetable so young people can know what to expect and what they can access on any given day. Safe open-access provision during high-vulnerability times (4–6pm weekdays, weekends, holidays).
- Hubs must clearly provide information on urgent local support, crisis lines, and emergency procedures for use when the hub is closed.
- Operate a ‘no wrong door’ approach to ensure young people are advocated for across services.
- Take a strength-based approach focusing on positive goals and assets.
- Protect paid time for staff to build trust and engage in informal conversations with young people outside of structured activities.
- Provide a blend of open access services and targeted support, meeting all three aims of the Young Futures programme (preventing young people from being drawn into violence, improving their mental health and wellbeing, providing opportunities). These can be drawn from Annex B or developed independently.
- Services should be evidence based and build on best practice and resources relevant to each of the programme’s objectives:
    - Interventions providing opportunities and preventing young people from becoming NEET should draw from relevant evidence bases, such as the Youth Futures Foundation, and be designed to ensure clear routes to employment support services if needed, particularly where DWP Youth Hubs are also in place within an area.
    - Interventions to prevent young people from being drawn into violence should draw from relevant evidence bases, such as the Youth Endowment

Fund Toolkit outlining the impact and quality of relevant approaches. Hubs should deliver early, targeted support, and work in partnership with other local services as appropriate.

    - Mental Health and Wellbeing Interventions should be evidence based and National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) concordant, where appropriate. The mental health and wellbeing offer should reflect local need and provision but aim to offer more than signposting. Hubs should deliver early, community-based support with clear routes between NHS children and young people's mental health services, Early Support Hubs, Mental Health Support Teams, school nursing, public health, and VCSE providers. This will ensure young people can access the most appropriate support to meet their needs.

- Involve parents and carers on a case-by-case basis only when it is safe, welcomed by the young person, and beneficial. Staff must evaluate safety and individual comfort prior to outreach to prevent discouraging young people from seeking support or compromising the Hub's role as a confidential "third space."
- Develop partnerships connecting across services and a warm handover process (utilising the referral guide in 4.2) for all those receiving targeted support outside the hub, ageing out of the Young Futures Hubs support and accessing adult services (e.g. DWP Youth Hub, Adult Mental Health Services). This can include flexibility for Young Futures Hubs to continue support on a case-by-case basis, considering resource and capacity.

Go further:

- Implement youth-led provision as a central part of the core offer.
- Develop a plan for stigma-free access to food and/or hygiene products so that young people don't have to ask.
- Develop a strategy for out of hours support - flagging helplines and building partnerships with local support in the community.
- Shift away from strictly crisis-driven contact by enabling staff to share positive milestones and progress with families whenever the young person is comfortable doing so.
- Equip staff to signpost families toward relevant local support (e.g., local family hubs, voluntary sector organisations) and establish direct links with the Families First Partnerships program where appropriate.
- Include family support workers where appropriate to support young people to identify needs and communicate this to education staff and other

professionals, as well as work with families and existing professionals to understand individual needs.

Helpful Resources

- Youth Endowment Fund Toolkit
- Youth Work and Violence Prevention
- Youth Futures Foundation Employment Toolkit
- Youth Employment UK Resources
- What Works for Wellbeing
- Youth Access Quality Framework

Early Adopter Example: Bristol

Leveraging Existing Infrastructure
Bristol's approach centred on building upon existing youth provision rather than creating a new system from scratch. The local authority conducted an internal audit to map provision across the area, utilising site visits and analysis of existing offers, staffing levels, and organisational readiness. This process identified critical gaps and strengths, which directly informed the development of an eight-partner network of "spoke" providers, coordinated by Full Circle Docklands as the Hub Lead.

Governance and Operational Structure
Clear operational boundaries were established early to maximise efficacy. The hub maintains responsibility for coordination, commissioning, payment, and quality assurance, while the spoke partners focus on delivering specialist interventions. This division of labour ensures that no single organisation carries the full weight of delivery. Accountability is maintained through shared documentation, including alignment with the National Youth Agency (NYA) Quality and Safeguarding Standards.

Co-Design and Youth Involvement
The service model was co-produced with over 110 young people across twelve sessions. This engagement was instrumental in defining delivery priorities—specifically mental health and wellbeing, opportunities, and crime prevention—and refining the language used to engage with young people effectively.

The "No Wrong Door" Approach
The hub operates on a "No Wrong Door" philosophy, where open-access youth work serves as a universal, low-threshold front door. This model relies on trusted relationships to facilitate the early identification of needs.

Key features of this flow include:

- **Fluid Transitions:** Young people can move from open-access provision into targeted support without the need for formal re-referrals.

- **Continuous Pathways:** Tactical decisions were made to treat open-access and targeted services as one continuous pathway.
- **Reduced Stigma:** By integrating support rather than segregating it, the model allows for earlier intervention, reducing stigma and strengthening existing grassroots provision.

4.2. Expectations for Referrals

Based on insights from our Youth Transformation Task and Finish Group, the following referral principles offer guidance for local authorities and partners. These are core principles to safeguard young people's wellbeing during a referral process that should be adapted to suit local needs and settings.

- **Designate a Referral Coordinator:** A named worker should be responsible for tracking referrals, coordinating with receiving services, and verifying that support has commenced. If a referral is declined, the Referral Coordinator should work with the young person and relevant services to agree an alternative plan and ensure appropriate interim support until ongoing support is in place.
- **Establish a Warm-Referral:** Young Futures Hubs must ensure young people are formally introduced to receiving teams, providing accompanied meetings where appropriate, and maintaining contact until support begins.
- **Ensure Informed Participation:** Young people must receive clear explanations, using communication method(s) tailored to their needs, regarding the purpose of referrals, the services involved, data-sharing protocols, and expected waiting times in accessible formats.
- **Co-Produce Strength-Based Summaries:** Young Futures Hubs should work with young people, as the service users, to create referral summaries that they can review and amend, ensuring they retain agency over their own narrative.
- **Embed the "Tell Us Once" Principle:** Receiving services should review existing data to avoid requiring young people to repeat difficult experiences. Young Futures Hubs should share only necessary information, in line with data-sharing protocols.
- **Implement Youth-Friendly Confidentiality:** Young Futures Hubs must explain data-sharing protocols using practical language, detailing what remains confidential and what will be shared, and the steps taken before contacting parents or carers, where this does not conflict with safeguarding arrangements.
- **Parent/Carer Involvement:** If parent/carer involvement is unsafe, unhelpful, or likely to cause distress, enable the young person to nominate an alternative trusted adult (e.g., mentor, teacher, or youth worker) for support.
- **Provide a "Waiting Well" Offer:** During waiting periods, young people should have a named contact, regular updates, and access to interim resources, and continued Young Futures Hub or alternative support, as appropriate.
- **Guarantee Choice and Review:** Young People should be offered alternative service options, if interventions are unsuitable, ensuring support is not withdrawn if a referral fails.

Annex A: Suggested list of stakeholders and services to engage

While this list is not exhaustive, it hopefully provides a starting point for which services will need to be supported and partnered with to make Young Futures Hubs holistic and connected. Cross-sector conversations and early engagement with these bodies will be vital to maximising the impact of Young Futures Hubs and Transformation Programmes. This engagement should ensure joint ownership of outcomes and ensure widespread buy-in from across sectors. Working closely with these stakeholders and identifying existing services will also avoid duplication of effort.

Public Health, Wellbeing & Specialist Clinical Services,	Safety, Justice & Multi-Agency Safeguarding	Education, Employment & Enterprises	Family, Housing & Systems Transformation	Community, Voluntary & Peer Support Projects
• Health & Clinical Leads: Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), NHSE Mental Health Regional Health Leads, Public Health, School Nursing, Multisystemic Therapy providers, NHS Mental Health Services, Mental Health Support Teams, Health and Justice Vanguard sites. • Specialist & Target Support: Youth Information, Advice, Counselling and Support (YIACS) partners, Early Support Hubs, and specialist charities (neurodiversity support, domestic abuse, mental health).	• Policing & Community Safety: Local Police, Youth Justice Services (YOTs and YOT management boards), Violence Reduction Units, Serious Violence Duty Partnerships, Probation Services, Prisons, Community Safety Partnerships, Young Futures Panels (where applicable), Prevent leads. • Safeguarding Hubs: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) and Multi-Agency Support Teams (MAST).	• Education Providers: Schools, Academies, Colleges, Alternative Provision, Holiday Activities and Food Programmes. • Skills & Employment: Jobcentres, DWP Youth Hubs, Youth Employment Hubs, Careers Services (Careers Advisers, National Careers Service, Local Enterprise Partnerships Careers Hubs). • Enterprise: Local businesses.	• Social Care & Housing: Housing Associations, Care Leavers Services, SEND services/teams. • Family Support: Best Start Family Hubs, Healthy Babies services, Family Help teams, children's social care, Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams, Lead Child Protection Practitioners. • Transformation Projects: Council transformation teams and project officers (e.g., Family First, Child First, SEND reforms).	• VCSE & Local Partners: Youth charities, voluntary organisations, local sports, arts, and cultural organisations. • Parents, carers and families • Outreach & Mentoring: Faith-based organisations with youth outreach, mentoring and peer-support providers (aligned to Mentoring Quality Framework). • Community Hubs: Local VCSE stakeholders, Youth Hubs, and broader community partners. • Young People

Annex B: Example Service Provision

This non-prescriptive table includes examples of the universal, early help and targeted activities that could take place in a Young Futures Hub. Please note that Intensive Support activities can be outsourced/based in a spoke or co-located space, and some of the activities listed above are suggestions. We expect you to develop your offer in line with local needs/demand.

Universal Support (Open Access)	Early Help & Targeted Support	Specialist & Intensive Support
Drop-in youth provision	CBT-informed self-help	High-intensity counselling
Guidance and signposting, including guided self-help tools	Peer mentoring	Clinical mental health support
Youth work and trusted relationships	Enrichment programmes	Priority psychological support for at-risk young people
Sports, arts and enrichment activities	Targeted sports programmes	VRU and Youth Justice interventions
Positive activities and social action	1:1 asset-based mentoring	Employer job-matching pathways
Community volunteering opportunities	Attendance support	DWP Youth Hub employment support
Post-11 education pathways guidance	School retention interventions	
Educational and careers information	Skills workshops	
Self-development programmes	Work-readiness programmes	
	Career mentoring	