



[Department
for Culture,
Media & Sport](#)

Policy paper

Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy

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Applies to England

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Ministerial foreword

For two decades, this country has had no national strategy for its young people. And yet, during that time, the experience of growing up in England has been transformed.

This is the first generation to be entirely born into a digital world. Born in the aftermath of a global economic crash, they have experienced over a decade of austerity, political and economic turmoil, and a global pandemic.

As a nation, we have long worried about young people's ability to navigate online relationships, poor mental health and anxiety, the numbers of people who are not in education, employment or training, and the opportunity for this generation to succeed.

In our first year of government, we resolved to improve the lives of young people by ensuring we work as a collective across the cabinet. The Youth Guarantee will open up choices and chances to young people in England that are out of education, employment, and training. The Young Futures programme is a new approach to tackle knife crime and violence. Local Youth Transformation pilots are rebuilding capacity in local authorities after many years of devastating cuts to their funding. And we have launched a new Curriculum and an Arts Everywhere fund which puts creativity back at the heart of our schools and communities where it belongs.

But this is just the start.

The [State of the Nation report](#) sets out the reality of what it is like to grow up in England in 2025. It was co-produced with a steering group of young people from very different places and backgrounds, and underpinned by the biggest national conversation the government has had with young people in over a decade. That conversation took place across the towns, villages and cities in every region of England. It is a reflection of our belief that young people themselves have a clear understanding of the challenges facing their generation and a central goal of the government must be to put them back in the driving seat of their own lives.

What they present is stark.

This is the most connected and isolated generation in history. Young people have been amongst the greatest casualties of a decade of neglect and austerity followed by a global pandemic. As a nation, we have failed to invest in places for them to go and people who care for them. Too many young people have retreated into their bedrooms where the online world presents serious challenges to their safety and wellbeing. They care deeply about the future and place a high premium on education, but too many are held back by poor housing, poverty and a crippling anxiety about the future.

We are determined to change this. The State of the Nation report is the clearest picture yet of the challenges facing this generation and it runs like a thread through

‘Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy’. For too long, government intervention has been based on little more than pet projects or straws in the wind. Our government will ensure that every penny we invest helps to grip the challenges facing this generation - by, for and with them.

It is over 20 years since I found a group of young people at the youth homelessness charity, Centrepont, who taught me everything I know about how to make change. Those inspirational young people knew better than any government what was going wrong in their lives and needed us to respond, by walking alongside them to help them to fix it. For all the challenges they faced, they were as ambitious for themselves, their lives and their communities as any other. That is the other side of the stark picture presented in the State of the Nation report. This generation has no shortage of ambition for themselves, their families and their communities. They need a government that will match it.

That is our motivation for change. For too long, young people have been an afterthought when it comes to decision making. Yet the success of the nation depends on their success. To the millions of young people in England who have been neglected for too long, you have given us millions of reasons to step up - and our government will.

Lisa Nandy, Secretary of State

Foreword from the Youth Advisory Group

We came together to create this blueprint for change because we, as a group of young people, know through our lives and our work how challenging it is to grow up in England right now. We reached out for other young people’s views and we were not disappointed. An incredible number of young people responded to our ‘Deliver You’ survey and we are so grateful for that. Learning from this work and creating this strategy has been a true team effort where we have worked together to ensure all our voices are heard throughout the process.

This strategy was co-created with [Youth and Expert Advisory Groups](#). Being part of this has meant engaging with incredibly passionate individuals who champion young people, providing platforms, and most importantly, listening to us as we create a strategy that young people can be proud of.

Working on this project has been both exciting and informative and many in the team

have commented on how open those we have worked with in government have been; really listening and, crucially, making changes as a result of what we have said. The opportunity to have our voices heard as an incredibly diverse group of individuals demonstrates that this government values the thoughts of young people and is committed to making a positive impact on our lives.

We believe this strategy sets youth policy on a stronger path.

We dream of a world where mental health is taken seriously, where the safety of girls and young women is protected, and where individuals from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds can achieve on an equal playing field. We also envision a world where public services and communities prioritise supporting young people to thrive. This support should focus on meeting needs and building confidence and resilience, knowing that success in employment, academics, and community contribution will follow.

The wellbeing of young people must always be the priority. This requires well-funded and high-quality creative, social, and sports activities, along with the intentional commitment of adults across the community to play a vital role in young people's lives. It also demands significant political and social investment to reduce poverty, improve infrastructure, and ensure public services can fully support their communities. The priority of any community must be its young people and this means listening to young people as experts – as the government has done – but, most importantly, it means taking action that makes a difference to their lives.

We are ambitious about the change we will make. For us, the strategy will have made a difference if young people's mental and physical health outcomes have improved and it will truly have succeeded if we can look at the next generation and say they have hope and excitement for their future. Here's to creating a better, more hopeful world where all of us are valued and supported to thrive.

Executive summary

This is the first National Youth Strategy in England in over two decades.

It is a strategy that aims to directly confront the immediate challenges faced by more than 10.6 million young people.

It is also a strategy that – for the first time – recognises young people have been shut out of the decisions that affect their lives for far too long. For that reason, 'Youth

Matters: Your National Youth Strategy' was led by, and drew on, the experiences of over 14,000 young people aged 10 to 21 and up to 25 for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEN/D) in England.

Our State of the Nation report, published alongside this strategy, sets out a comprehensive picture of the challenges facing this generation, as well as their hopes and ambitions.

What is the problem?

Today's young people are the most connected generation in history - and the most isolated.

The places and spaces that young people have access to have dwindled over a number of years. As a result, many have retreated into their bedrooms and spend much more time online, where relationships can be less positive. This has dented their confidence in making and maintaining relationships in the real world.

Young people worry about their education and their career prospects, particularly in a world where jobs are changed by tech development and climate change. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the issues they face and a significant number of young people have concerns about their safety on the streets, on public transport, as well as about their physical and mental health.

All these issues can compound and are more likely to do so for young people who are more disadvantaged or vulnerable, impacting their opportunities, outcomes, and social mobility.

The problems highlighted are made more challenging as a result of years of austerity that left many young people and their families fighting for the basics. Between 2010 and 2023, local spending on youth services in England fell by 73% to £1.2 billion lower now than in 2010. In that period, more than 1,000 youth centres closed and more than 4,500 youth worker roles were lost. This has left local youth services in a fragile state, with young people feeling like there is nothing for them to do outside of school or college, no-one to talk to, and limited opportunities to express themselves.

What is the vision?

The problems set out above cannot be fixed overnight. They require immediate action but also a long-term plan for lasting change. Young people have developed a vision for the next 10 years: a future where all young people, no matter their background, have the skills, opportunities, and connections to thrive and are empowered to shape their own lives and the community around them.

This means providing all young people with a safe place to go, someone who cares for them, and a community they feel a part of.

To achieve those outcomes, we will change the way we do things across government, implementing 3 radical shifts:

1. From national to local

Decisions and delivery must be made as close to communities as possible so that policies respond directly to young people's needs in their area. We will rebuild the role, capability, and leadership of local authorities in the youth sector and take a place-based approach to funding to empower local communities in delivering their local youth offers. Funding will flow more strategically to local areas and increased place-based decision-making, with renewed support for local organisations.

2. From fragmented to collaborative

We will build government around and with young people and strive to work as one team, within and outside government, to give young people what they need. This means that you will see different government departments as well as statutory and non-statutory services working together – sharing information, data, and best practice – to benefit the lives of young people. You will also see a new, stronger relationship between government and civil society organisations, through our [Civil Society Covenant](#).

3. From excluded to empowered

Our goal is to put young people back in the driving seat of their own lives. Young people's views will be at the core of what we do, ensuring that they have the power and agency to drive change in their local community. This means that you will see more local and national policies being co-produced with young people, new ways for young people to be decision-makers in their area, as well as tools and resources for young people to engage in their communities.

What is the plan?

Securing the foundations

Before anything else, young people need stable and loving homes, food on the table, welcoming and safe communities, world-class healthcare, and high-quality formal education. This includes:

- tackling the underlying causes of child poverty, including through expanding free school meals eligibility, introducing free breakfast clubs in every primary school in England, and setting up the world's largest social outcomes fund to support those affected by or at risk of child poverty, including improving outcomes for youth homelessness. We are taking action to cut the cost of living and have taken the historic decision to remove the two-child limit in full from April 2026 which will lift 450,000 children out of poverty.
- delivering on a long-term housing strategy to support the delivery of 1.5 million homes within this Parliament as well as a homelessness strategy to prevent young people from entering the homelessness system
- giving children the [Best Start in Life](#) with better access to early education, parenting support, and improved community services as well as rebalancing the Children's Social Care system toward earlier intervention
- delivering on our [10 Year Health Plan](#) and improving young people's access to healthcare services
- ensuring every child can achieve and thrive at school, enjoying an education that is academically challenging and rich in opportunity
- introducing the first multi-year local government funding settlement in over a decade and delivering up to £5 billion of funding and support to the most in-need neighbourhoods through the Pride in Place programme

Chapter 1: People Who Care

All young people deserve a trusted adult. However, as many as 1-in-5 don't have one outside of their home. This chapter focuses on better supporting the adults young people rely on and creating more chances for young people to build safe, trusting relationships. We want, by 2035, for half a million more young people to have access to a trusted adult outside of their home.

Action 1: Trusted adults

Supporting more trusted adults to engage with and guide young people when and where they need it most. This includes:

- helping adults spot early signs of loneliness and intervene using evidence and best practice
- expanding training in mental health, safeguarding, communication, and online wellbeing for adults who support young people
- creating and expanding programmes with the sports sector to boost wellbeing, tackle loneliness, and build positive relationships
- placing youth workers and professionals providing targeted support in Young Futures Hubs so that young people have the advice and support they need on their doorstep
- partnering with the private sector to increase mentors for disadvantaged young people and improve their engagement with their education and community

Action 2: Strengthening the workforce

Developing and growing a skilled and sustainable paid and volunteer youth sector workforce, with the highest standards to meet young people's needs. This includes:

- investing £15 million over 3 years in youth workers, volunteers, and trusted adults, including helping organisations to recruit, train, and keep more fantastic people to support young people
- ensuring the youth sector workforce has access to high-quality training and resources to engage safely with young people
- improving youth work qualifications and access to youth work apprenticeships
- spending nearly £70 million over the next 3 years to help local areas better support young people and develop a network of up to 50 Young Futures Hubs by March 2029
- working with infrastructure bodies, youth organisations, and young people, as well as statutory bodies and funders, to co-design our approach to sector funding
- running a Local Covenant Partnerships programme to support civil society to work with local authorities and providers to better deliver for young people
- unlocking match-funding and encouraging place-based philanthropy to support more sustainable funding for youth services

Action 3: Friends and relationships

Helping young people to develop positive social connections in schools and colleges, in their communities, and online. This includes:

- embedding and delivering the Online Safety Act to keep young people safe online

- providing young people with digital and media literacy skills to better prepare them for life and work in a more digital world
- supporting schools to better understand pupils' experiences and address behaviour and bullying
- continue to support the work of the Schools Linking programme to help young people build long-lasting friendships
- supporting young men to access support for their mental health and funding innovative pathfinder programmes to help boys and young men build connections and supportive networks
- delivering the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy to educate young people about respectful relationships and consent and shape healthy attitudes and behaviours

Chapter 2: Places to go and things to do

Young people have fewer places to go and less enriching things to do. This chapter focuses on investing in youth clubs and providing richer lives inside and outside of school. By 2035, we want to have halved the participation gap in enriching activities between disadvantaged young people and their peers.

Action 4: Richer lives

Providing enriching and meaningful activities for young people in and outside of education. This includes:

- providing more than £60 million over the next 3 years for a new Richer Young Lives Fund, creating more high-quality fun activities and youth work opportunities in areas that need it most
- investing £22.5 million over 3 years to create a better enrichment offer in up to 400 schools
- delivering £132.5 million of funding as part of our Every Child Can programme, to ensure that children and young people have access to a wide range of enriching activities inside and outside of school
- supporting access to activities during school holidays, by investing £600 million over the next 3 years in the Holiday Activities and Food programme
- ensuring that young people can participate fully in high-quality sport and physical activity, supported by new School Sport Partnerships and £250 million of funding over 5 years from Sport England into local sport and physical activity

Action 5: Good work

Providing better education, guidance, training, and support for young people to get a

great job. This includes:

- delivering a broad, ambitious, and inclusive curriculum so every young person can develop the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to thrive throughout life
- investing £15 million to expand our attendance mentoring programme
- raising the bar on careers education and introducing two weeks of work experience for every young person across the course of their secondary education
- simplifying and enhancing the post-16 qualification landscape in England so that it is easier for young people to find the right training and opportunities
- investing £820 million over the next 3 years to deliver an expanded Youth Guarantee across Great Britain, supporting every 16 to 24 year-old into learning, jobs, or apprenticeships with tailored help, expanded opportunities, over 360 employment Youth Hubs, and guaranteed paid work for 18 to 21 year-olds on Universal Credit and looking for work for 18 months
- spending £187 million over 4 years to prepare people for careers across the digital and tech sectors, bringing digital skills and AI learning into classrooms and communities through the TechFirst programme

Action 6: Keeping young people safe

Intervening earlier to increase young people's safety in communities. This includes:

- increasing the safety of our streets by restoring neighbourhood policing
- putting a dedicated lead officer for anti-social behaviour in every force, working with communities to develop a local anti-social behaviour action plan
- piloting Young Futures Panels in local areas to identify young people vulnerable to being drawn into crime and providing them support at the right time
- introducing mandatory training for bus staff to recognise and respond to criminal and anti-social behaviour to help young people feel safer on the bus

Action 7: Providing more places to go to

Creating a new generation of welcoming youth spaces. This includes:

- spending nearly £350 million over the next 4 years on existing and new youth facilities with the expansion of our Better Youth Spaces programme and working with communities and partners to make better use of underused spaces
- spending over £400 million on new and upgraded grassroots community sport facilities which promote health and wellbeing

- increasing access to outdoor spaces and publishing an Access to Nature Green Paper to set out our plans
- improving local transport networks with over £18 billion of investment for Local Transport Authorities and the new Bus Services Act 2025 to improve bus services

Action 8: Health and wellbeing

Supporting young people's physical and mental health to allow all young people to take up opportunities and live richer lives. This includes:

- exploring options to improve access to accurate health information, co-locate health and youth services and prioritise young people in research
- rolling out mental health support teams in schools and colleges to reach full national coverage by 2029 -embedding wellbeing support within Young Futures Hubs with 'no wrong front door' approach, supporting access to National Health Service (NHS) mental health services for young people who need more specialist support
- ensuring mainstream schools and colleges are better equipped to support young people with SEN/D and complex health needs, with a stronger focus on early intervention
- encourage young people to make healthy choices by passing the Tobacco and Vapes Bill and restricting junk food advertising.

Chapter 3: Seen and heard

Young people should be much more involved in decisions that affect them. This chapter focuses on putting young people in the driving seat of their own lives and allowing them to hold the government to account for delivering on our promises.

Action 9: Delivering with young people

Putting young people in the driving seat of their own lives. This includes:

- lowering the voting age to 16 for all elections
- investing in tools, resources, and innovative approaches to ensure young people have the opportunity and power to share their views at a national and local level
- creating ways for young people to be involved in national and local funding decisions regarding services for young people

Action 10: Holding us to account

Meeting our promise to young people. This includes:

- developing a range of methods, including digital, for young people to access

updates on progress made against our 10 action areas

- inviting young people to run an annual national hearing on our delivery
- publishing an interim delivery report in 2027 outlining progress on our delivery and impact
- evaluating the overall impact of the strategy on young people and those supporting them to understand the change created and improve our approach in the future

We are ambitious in terms of what we can achieve together in the next 10 years. As a consequence of ‘Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy’, we expect things to feel and be different for young people, their parents and carers, schools and colleges, organisations working with young people, local authorities, funders and businesses, and many others. This will start with clear, funded actions that tackle what matters most to young people right now, and allow us to keep building bigger changes over the next decade.

Chapter 1: People who care

All young people deserve to have a safe, respectful adult who is chosen by them as a trusted figure and listens to and supports them.

Those supportive relationships can empower young people, nurture confidence and resilience, and protect young people from harm. For most young people, we know that this trusted relationship will come from within their home – a parent, carer, or family member. For many others, teachers and staff in schools and colleges will also be adults that they can turn to, providing a daily, reliable presence in a place where young people spend a lot of their time. However, our evidence suggests that as many as 1-in-5 young people do not have a trusted adult outside of home to talk to. This is particularly true among teenagers, those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and those from certain ethnic groups. Even where trusted adults do exist, many do not have the training and support they need. This needs to change.

‘Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy’ will better recognise the crucial work that adults working with young people do, from parents to youth workers, and give them the tools and resources to help them provide the right support to young people. It will also give young people more opportunities to connect with trusted adults in different spaces.

Action 1: Trusted adults

Supporting more trusted adults to engage with and guide young people when and where they need it most.

What we will do

We will increase the opportunities available for young people to connect with a trusted adult in their community and we want, by 2035, for half a million more young people to have access to a trusted adult outside of their home. This includes supporting those trusted adults to adhere to safeguarding standards and to have the right understanding of the challenges young people are facing today, such as exposure to violence and misogyny online or mental health issues.

All young people should have an adult they feel comfortable sharing their hopes and fears with, but we are acutely aware that some young people need this even more than others. That is why we will take a strategic approach to embedding trusted adults, in particular youth workers, in places when and where young people need them the most. We will:

- support adults working with young people to better spot the signs of loneliness and to intervene earlier through evidence and best practice. The Tackling Loneliness Hub provides an online platform supporting a community of over 1,000 cross-sector members working to reduce loneliness and isolation. Through the Hub, we will host events for youth workers and trusted adults to raise awareness and understanding of youth loneliness and isolation.
- expand training on key areas including mental health, safeguarding, communication and online wellbeing to other adults who support young people, from sports coaches to pastoral support workers or volunteer mentors
- develop and expand programmes with the sports sector - from high profile role models to grassroots clubs - to improve mental health and wellbeing, tackle loneliness, and nurture positive relationships
- place youth workers and professionals providing targeted support, in new Young Futures Hubs so that young people have the advice and support they need on their doorstep
- work with the private sector to fund and expand the number of mentors for disadvantaged and vulnerable young people to support and sustain them, and improve their engagement with their education and community

Action 2: Strengthening the workforce

Developing and growing a skilled and sustainable paid and volunteer youth sector workforce, with the highest standards to meet young people's needs.

The most devastating consequence of cuts to youth services over the last decade were the relationships that were broken and lifelines lost.

Youth services work because of the incredible people who work in them, whether they are paid or volunteer youth workers, mentors, sport coaches, faith leaders, community leaders, outdoor educators, and many more. Over the past decade, the youth sector workforce has faced significant challenges, with thousands of roles lost due to funding cuts, a lack of job stability and career progression, and difficulties in delivering support in a coordinated way across services. This needs to change.

'Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy' will deliver better recognition for paid and volunteer youth workers as well as more fit-for-purpose training, qualifications, and employment routes into the youth sector.

What we will do

To ensure that the adults supporting young people have the right skills and that organisations have the support they need to invest in their paid and volunteer staff, we will:

- invest £15 million over the next 3 years in youth workers, volunteers, and other trusted adults to up-skill the existing youth sector workforce and increase the number of trusted adults providing safe support to young people. This will provide funding over the next 3 years to youth organisations to help them get and keep the staff and volunteers they need, covering training and qualification bursaries, volunteer support, safeguarding, and new ways to help adults navigate the benefits and challenges of the digital world for young people.
- support more diverse pathways and career progression into the youth sector workforce with the right standards. We will implement new levels of qualifications and modular learning to have a clearer, more flexible pathway of qualifications. We will support access to youth work apprenticeships, which could include providing funding to allow youth organisations to take on apprentices as well as guidance and advice to support the use of the apprenticeship levy funds.

The employees and volunteers who work with young people are the backbone of this strategy. They provide valuable, sometimes life-altering, guidance and support to

young people, in particular the most disadvantaged and vulnerable. This means we need to ensure that those working with young people are known, understood, supported, and challenged in the right way and with the right standards. We will therefore continue to fund the National Youth Agency (NYA) to:

- provide support and coordination across the youth sector at the national level to plan for future workforce needs and raise the status of youth workers
- support youth work to be safe for everyone through its online safeguarding and risk management hub. We will also implement the outcomes of our call for evidence on safeguarding to ensure adults working with young people are properly trained and able to engage safely with them, no matter where they are.
- ensure youth work qualifications, standards, and youth work curriculum respond better to the needs of the young people and explore ways to champion and share best practice. We will also consider ways to recognise high performing youth services.
- roll out the Youth Work Census to a greater number of organisations and youth workers across the country. This helps us understand the landscape across organisations and the challenges that the youth workforce face.
- maintain and expand a register for professional youth workers to record their learning and ongoing professional development

We recognise that a significant proportion of the youth sector workforce are volunteers who give their time to guide young people and ensure they have access to opportunities. They fill a variety of roles, from front-line support in youth clubs, to governance functions like being a trustee or managing finances. Without volunteers, many youth services would simply not be possible. We will therefore:

- encourage more Honours nominations for volunteers, recognising the vital contributions they make every day to young people's lives
- improve the online process for how people find and apply for volunteering opportunities with youth organisations, by making it simpler and more accessible, so that more people volunteer
- support youth organisations to develop their approach to volunteering to make volunteer roles more accessible and attractive, especially by creating more flexible opportunities that better fit around people's lives

Local authorities are uniquely positioned to join up youth services, health providers, youth justice, transport, and vital voluntary sector organisations. Young people need a strong local offer, but provision and coordination is too often inconsistent.

We will therefore launch a significant programme of local service transformation, spending close to £70 million over the next 3 years to rebuild and improve local youth services and establish a network of 50 Young Futures Hubs by March 2029. We will:

- support local authorities to invest in areas such as securing and publicising youth activities and facilities, improving mapping and coordination of services, training and professional development, and developing strong partnerships with local organisations
- help local authorities rebuild their capability and leadership in the youth sector, where those have been lost due to funding reductions
- coordinate local services through a network of Young Futures Hubs to improve opportunities, support young people's wellbeing, and reduce their risk of being a victim of or drawn into crime
- deliver universal provision in the Young Futures Hubs, led by trained, trusted adults in a safe and inclusive space, and targeted support for career guidance, wellbeing advice and violence prevention

We will work with youth organisations to support them in collaborating and providing strong organisational support at the local and regional level, with a budget of over £5 million to spend over 3 years. This will help us:

- understand what youth services exist and what is missing and share information on how to improve the quality, effectiveness, and safeguarding of services
- support the creation of strong local partnerships, including with civil society organisations and education services, and encourage collaboration at the regional and sub-regional level
- deliver the changes needed to the digital and data infrastructure to improve information sharing between services, safeguarding, and impact measurement

Partnerships, from voluntary organisations to local authorities, education settings, statutory services, and businesses, help move beyond isolated efforts and reach more young people, particularly those who are more vulnerable and disadvantaged. We will:

- launch a Local Covenant Partnerships programme, which will support civil society organisations to work collaboratively and in innovative ways with local authorities and public service providers. We will provide place-based funding in priority places as well as embed the Civil Society Covenant, resetting the relationship between the government and civil society.

- encourage schools and other education settings to work with local partners in their communities and build partnerships that benefit young people's learning and belonging, learning from the best schools and trusts across the country
- work across government to strengthen existing multi-agency partnerships and build new ones where needed to coordinate services, particularly for more vulnerable young people.
- develop partnerships within the sports, arts, and culture sectors to encourage young people's understanding and access to those sectors.
- work with Young Futures Panels to identify, assess, and refer young people at risk of being drawn into crime to appropriate support. More than 50 pilots are already being launched across the country and we will learn from them to inform future development.

We know that youth services want the certainty of longer-term funding to ensure they can develop robust relationships with the young people they support. We will:

- simplify grant funding for local authorities and consolidate local funding for young people and their families where possible to provide local authorities with more flexibility and sustainability. This builds on our publication of the Fair Funding Review 2.0, through which we consulted on proposals to redirect around £2 billion of existing local funding to the places and communities that need it most.
- unlock match funding to extend our delivery, working with philanthropists, social impact investors, and businesses on key programmes
- encourage place-based philanthropy and build on best practice from impactful local networks and partnerships to make the funding go further

We will embed accountability mechanisms to check young people are getting the levels and quality of service they deserve within the youth sector and local government. We will:

- highlight, in the Outcomes Framework for local government, the importance of young people achieving and thriving and the role that local authorities and youth services play in supporting positive outcomes and preventing young people from going down the wrong path. The Outcomes Framework is a new approach to accountability for local authorities in England, outlining the outcomes that we expect to deliver in partnership with local authorities and the measures we will use to track progress. We will support local authorities to improve their delivery and take firm action where provision for young people is not meeting our expectations.
- explore reviewing the current local authorities' statutory duty for youth services as

part of a wider review of local statutory duties. This will look at whether the current duty is working as it should and at how to empower local authorities to better deliver on their responsibilities for youth services. We will also consider the appropriate regulation of youth services.

- consider further ways to co-design a clearer accountability process with local authorities and the youth organisations they work with to increase consistency and quality of delivery across local areas

Action 3: Friends and relationships

Helping young people to develop positive social connections in schools and colleges, in their communities, and online.

Young people need help and support to maintain positive, supportive relationships with friends and others - especially online.

What we will do

The online world presents a range of transformative opportunities for young people that were unimaginable to previous generations, seeing unprecedented access to global communities, tools for learning, and diverse social and professional groups. However, as young people spend a significant amount of time online, it is crucial we develop an ambitious, coordinated system so they can do so safely. As a first step, we will embed the Online Safety Act which:

- requires relevant services to take steps to protect young people from illegal content and criminal behaviour online, including implementing ways for victims of abuse, harassment, and other illegality to easily report illegal content
- implements child safety duties so that companies such as social media platforms have to put measures in place to prevent young people from seeing the most harmful legal content online, including pornography and content that promotes or encourages suicide, self-harm, and eating disorders
- enables Ofcom to enforce the Act and use its powers against platforms who fail to fulfil their duties

We have made it clear that we will not hesitate to build on the Online Safety Act if needed to protect young people. But laws alone are not enough. Some online spaces can pose particular risks to vulnerable young people in search for a community to belong to, in particular boys and young men, and exposure to radical

content can result in fractured and polarised communities and misogynistic views.

This generation of young people is the first to grow up entirely in a world saturated with digital media. Media literacy can help young people to critically evaluate information, analyse the curated and often unrealistic content they see online, and give them the tools to combat online bullying. The Online Safety Act updated Ofcom's duties to promote media literacy, which now include specific responsibilities to raise awareness of mis- and disinformation and improve understanding of harmful online content. To meet its duties, Ofcom will deliver a range of projects, including training for teachers. We will support and complement those efforts by:

- ensuring young people have the essential digital and media literacy skills they need, preparing them for life and work in a digital society. We have already expanded the content in the Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) statutory guidance to include sextortion, AI, deepfakes, fake social media accounts, and how social media can escalate conflicts. We will embed critical media literacy into the curriculum and refresh the computing curriculum to build digital confidence from an early age.
- developing an awareness campaign to support parents and carers to build their children's resilience to misleading and polarising online content

In England, nearly half of young people aged 11 to 18 spend most of their free time in their bedroom. Positive, in-person relationships are at the centre of young people's resilience and mental and physical health and wellbeing, particularly for those who are more disadvantaged and vulnerable. These relationships create a sense of belonging and social cohesion and help combat feelings of loneliness and isolation, whilst also reducing the risk of young people being impacted by harmful influences or anti-social networks. Whilst young people are the most connected generation on record, they also report they are the loneliest. In addition, the proportion of young adults with just one or no close friends has more than tripled in the last decade. This needs to change.

Chapter 2 of this strategy focuses on creating more opportunities for young people to connect with their peers, trusted adults, and communities in a variety of ways, whether it is in a community space, through a sports club, a cultural activity or volunteering.

But we know that for most young people, friendships start at school, where they meet, play, and forge relationships with peers. That's why we will create schools where young people feel they belong, and have the support they need to build positive relationships. We will:

- improve young people's sense of belonging by providing schools with a new framework to help improve pupil experience and sense of belonging and make schools and colleges more inclusive spaces - particularly for those who have additional needs
- continue to support the work of the Schools Linking programme which brings together young people from different nationalities, faiths and beliefs, ages, and backgrounds to share experiences and make long-lasting friends

We will also pay particular attention to the young people who face unique challenges when it comes to isolation and cohesion, and the different impacts and experiences of some young people compared to others. Young people recognise that boys and girls are facing real, but different pressures. For instance, boys and young men are more than twice as likely to take their own lives, are less likely to have an adult that they trust in their life, and less likely to be in education, employment and training. Girls and young women are more likely to feel unsafe in their local area than young men, and are nearly twice as likely as boys to be sent explicit images or videos that they don't want to see - with 90% of girls reporting this as a problem in their own lives.

To better protect girls and young women, the government's upcoming Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy will include:

- educating young people about respectful relationships and consent
- providing support outside of school to shape healthy attitudes and behaviours
- ensuring they know what to do and where to go if they come across VAWG online
- intervening early to support those who exhibit early harmful behaviours

To better support boys' and young men's wellbeing and connections, we will focus on:

- delivering our Men's Health Strategy with a multi-million programme to support men, including boys and young men, to build social connections and direct them to local support
- launching two pathfinder programmes with Rugby League Cares to use the power of sport to help boys and young men build connections and supportive networks, tackle negative emotions associated with loneliness, and improve wellbeing. We will take the learnings from these pilots to different sports, arts, culture, media and creative sectors, testing new forms of intensive support in community spaces.

Chapter 2: Places to go and things to do

Since 2010, many areas have cut back their enrichment offers, with access to them becoming more dependent on ability to pay. The number of council-run youth centres has more than halved and most young people say they aren't happy with the provision of services and clubs in their local area. This needs to change. This government believes that every young person should have access to places to go, things to do, and activities that enrich their lives.

We have already reformed the curriculum to put arts, music, and sports back at its heart and support young people to develop essential skills and knowledge. In addition, we've created new funds - Arts Everywhere and Every Child Can - to increase access to enrichment in local communities across the country.

'Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy' will invest in youth clubs, create a new network of Young Futures Hubs, and allow young people, in particular those who do not usually participate in youth services, to know about and see more things to do in their local area. We will encourage and support disadvantaged young people to get involved in activities by breaking down the barriers to access, embedding them in their education or in their communities. As a result, by 2035, we want to have halved the participation gap in enriching activities between disadvantaged young people and their peers.

Action 4: Richer lives

Providing enriching and meaningful activities for young people in and outside of education.

What we will do

Through this strategy, we will:

- invest over £60 million over the next 3 years through a new Richer Young Lives Fund to allow grassroots organisations to deliver high-quality youth work and activities. The Fund will be targeted at underserved areas and focus on making activities easier to access for disadvantaged young people. Young people will design the Fund and decide how it is spent. We will align this funding with enrichment support and build a better understanding of which activities young people are participating in and how often they are attending - recognising that narrowing the gap in sustained participation is vital for delivering the benefits of

enriching activities for disadvantaged young people.

- commit more than £600 million over the next 3 years to the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme to provide healthy meals, activities, and free childcare places to young people from low-income families during school holidays. We will encourage local authorities to offer suitable activities for teenagers in HAF and consider how teenagers can play an active role in shaping, leading, and supporting sessions for their peers or younger children.
- expand in-school and community-based Cadet Forces by 30% by 2030, in particular in areas of highest deprivation and with the highest number of young people not in education, employment, or training
- fund cultural education programmes to increase access to arts, culture, and heritage, such as the British Film Institute Film Academy which supports young people from underrepresented backgrounds to enter the film industry, the Museums and Schools Programme, the Heritage Schools programme, or the Art & Design National Saturday Club
- task Public Bodies, including Sport England and Arts Council England, with reducing the gap in access to opportunities and focus on giving thousands of young people in-person connections through enriching sport, art, music, and creative activities near them

We are committed to ensuring that all young people can participate fully in high-quality sport and physical activity by:

- ensuring the Physical Education curriculum has a clear purpose so that education settings protect two hours of PE time for all pupils throughout their time in education
- introducing the new Physical Education and School Sport Partnerships and the Enrichment Framework for schools and colleges to ensure that every young person has access to high-quality physical education, sport, and extracurricular opportunities. This includes a clear commitment to access for girls and young people with SEN/D so that no one is left behind. We will also develop a national network to strengthen partnerships between education, local clubs, and National Governing Bodies, identifying and breaking down barriers for those who are less active or face disadvantage.
- investing £250 million over 5 years in 100 places through Sport England to understand and overcome the specific local barriers around sport and physical activity for young people. This collaborative, locally responsive approach will ensure that opportunities are tailored to the needs of different communities.
- running a public-facing campaign supported by national and local partnerships and

key ambassadors to increase awareness of the importance of physical activity for young people and inspire them to play and move more

Enrichment activities should be a vital part of the education experience. They provide opportunities for young people to develop skills and interests that complement formal learning and introduce young people to enriching activities they may continue beyond school and college. We will:

- publish a new Enrichment Framework, setting out a core enrichment offer that every school and college should provide for young people. This will cover access to civic engagement, arts and culture, nature, outdoor and adventure, sport, and wider life skills. Ofsted will consider how schools and colleges are meeting enrichment expectations when judging the personal development grade within their new inspection framework. Our ambition is that all schools and colleges provide an enrichment offer that aligns with these benchmarks.
- spend £22.5 million over 3 years to enable up to 400 schools in the most deprived areas of England to meet these benchmarks. This will give pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, access to good extra-curricular activities aligned with the benchmarks and that support wellbeing, personal development, and essential life skills around the school day.

‘Every Child Can’ is a £132.5 million programme to support the provision of services, facilities or opportunities between 2024 and 2028 to meet the needs of young people. This funding will increase disadvantaged young people’s access to enrichment opportunities in the culture, sport, and wider youth sectors. We will work with the National Lottery Community Fund and young people and youth organisations to decide how this fund is spent.

The allocation of this funding will reflect the priorities of young people, creating new spaces to foster a culture of reading for pleasure, boosting opportunities to make, perform and produce music, and increasing access to sport, art, creativity, culture, and outdoor spaces for disadvantaged young people, including those in care and care leavers.

Action 5: Good work

Providing better education, guidance, training, and support for young people to get a great job.

Talent is everywhere, but opportunity is not. Almost a million young people aged 16 to 24 are not in education, employment, or training (NEET). This needs to change.

Young people do not feel prepared for the realities of life outside of education and for their transition to adulthood, wanting more support to develop basic life skills. They need practical support to develop skills such as financial literacy, CV writing, job interviews, and applications.

‘Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy’ will enable young people to have an education that helps them get a good job, with the right information to make good choices. For those who need additional help, we will provide it.

What we will do

We know the national curriculum needs to change to not only deliver strong foundations but also prioritise the development of essential skills and knowledge for life and work. We will refresh the programmes of study for each curriculum subject in line with the independent Curriculum and Assessment Review’s recommendations and publish a revised national curriculum in 2027 for first teaching in 2028.

In addition, we will:

- establish up to 90 new RISE Attendance and Behaviour Hubs which will focus on supporting schools to develop safe, supportive school cultures. This will create structured, respectful, and inclusive environments but will also support schools to respond to absences and poor behaviour.
- invest £15 million in the current expansion of our mentoring programme into 10 new areas over the next 3 years. This programme will provide 10,000 more young people and their families with intensive support to address underlying reasons for non-attendance and prevent long-term disengagement from education.
- deliver initiatives to improve inclusivity within mainstream schools. This includes ensuring mainstream schools and colleges are better equipped to support young people with SEN/D and complex health needs to achieve and thrive. We are investing £1 billion more in SEN/D this year and £740 million to deliver more specialist places where they are most needed.

We will ensure young people have the information and the skills they need to know about, take on, and thrive in different training and career paths. We will transform the education skills system so that young people can benefit from great further education and career preparation - with a target of two-thirds of young people participating in higher-level learning by age 25. We will:

- simplify and strengthen careers guidance across the education system, by

bringing updated Gatsby Benchmarks for Good Career Guidance into statutory guidance and bringing together expertise within a new Jobs and Careers Service. This will provide enhanced, data-driven information and advice on the full range of pathways available to young people, including apprenticeships, technical routes, direct employment, and university.

- introduce two weeks' work experience for every young person across the course of their secondary education to ensure that work experience builds up over time
- simplify the post-16 qualification landscape so that it is easier for young people to find training and opportunities for further education. As outlined in the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper, we will build on the strengths in the existing suite of post-16 qualifications and set up new, rigorous qualifications in colleges so that all young people can access high-quality study pathways which clearly lead to a job or further study.
- work closely with Skills England to transform the skills system and work with local partners to ensure that young people, regardless of their background, can be connected with key opportunities and jobs in their area
- transform the apprenticeships offer into a new growth and skills offer, which will offer greater flexibility to employers and learners. This includes up to 30,000 new foundation apprenticeships for 16-21 year-olds and new short courses in areas such as digital, artificial intelligence, and engineering. This will help more people learn new high-quality skills at work and fuel innovation in businesses across the country.

Building on the existing skill and employment support for young people, we are going further to prevent young people from falling out of education, training, or employment altogether.

We will deliver an expanded Youth Guarantee with the ambition to give 16 to 24 year-olds across Great Britain extra support to access high-quality learning or earning opportunities. Backed by £820 million investment over the next 3 years, the Youth Guarantee will:

- support young people to transition effectively from school into post-16 education and training in England and then stay on and succeed until at least age 18. This means a clearer role for schools – alongside local authorities – to ensure the necessary transition support is in place and piloting a new 'enrolment by default' backstop so that no young person is left without a place in post-16 education or training.
- create more opportunities to earn and learn through additional work experience placements and extra Sector-based Work Academy Programme places.

- expand our network of employment Youth Hubs to over 360 locations across Great Britain. Those Hubs will bring together Jobcentre services and local partners, such as health, housing, and wellbeing support in accessible community settings and act as a single point of contact to provide tailored, joined-up support.
- guarantee paid work and wraparound support for over 55,000 young people aged 18 to 21 who have been on Universal Credit and looking for work for 18 months

We will also deepen our partnerships with employers to expand apprenticeships, internships, and work experience opportunities, particularly in priority sectors. We will provide incentives for employers to support young people at the start of their careers and develop sector skills packages and Technical Excellence Colleges to ensure that training is closely linked to real job opportunities in England. We will collaborate with partners and employers to design and deliver 150,000 additional work experience placements over the next 3 years for young people on Universal Credit, particularly those aged 16 to 24.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and automation are reshaping the world of work, presenting both challenges and opportunities. In a time of rapid shifting economic priorities, it is vital we equip young people with the right skills to take advantage of this change.

- Skills England will identify and tackle skills shortage in key sectors, such as digital or green skills, and create more opportunities for young people to access careers in those spaces.
- We have launched a £187 million TechFirst programme to prepare people for careers across the digital and tech sector over the next 4 years. The TechYouth strand of the programme will bring digital skills and AI learning into classrooms for 1 million secondary school students, giving them the chance to learn about technology and be inspired to pursue an exciting career in tech.

Action 6: Keeping young people safe

Intervening earlier to increase young people's safety in communities.

If we want young people to connect more in person they have to feel safe to travel to places where they can safely interact with their peers and trusted adults. Protecting young people from engaging in or being victims of harm is the role of every single one of us – ensuring they can get out of their comfort zone and create their own relationships with risk, in a safe way. Concerns about safety consistently rank among the top issues for young people, particularly for girls, young women, and vulnerable

young people. This needs to change.

Young people are more likely to be victims of violence and harassment, with young women particularly worried about safety on transport. They also highlight concerns around how social media and influencers contribute to this.

Their priority is safer communities and improved education on knife crime, consent, misogyny and violence against women and girls, bullying, drugs and alcohol, and online safety.

What we will do

Young people deserve to have confidence in how they are protected and who they are protected by. We know that young people are concerned about knife crime and that the small number who do carry a knife often do so out of fear rather than intent to commit violence. We hear this and have an ambition to halve knife crime within a decade and will tackle the root causes of serious violence.

We will:

- restore neighbourhood policing starting with up to 3,000 additional officers into neighbourhood policing teams across England and Wales by March 2026. Every neighbourhood now has named and contactable officers dedicated to addressing the issues that matter most to their communities. This community-focused policing will have more foot patrols, stronger relationships with people, and proactively address local issues such as antisocial behaviour or drug dealing.
- put a dedicated lead officer for anti-social behaviour in every force, working with communities to develop a local anti-social behaviour action plan. This aims to increase young people's feelings of safety and belonging in public spaces where anti-social behaviour is high.
- structure our Young Futures Hubs to allow staff to get to know young people and to be there to provide extra support and guidance if they need it. The hubs will also be able to provide and signpost to specialist services if a young person needs more help to avoid becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence.
- implement the new content in the RSHE statutory guidance focused on staying safe from all forms of violence and on skills to help young people avoid involvement in conflict and violence, such as knife crime
- continue to work with local drugs partnerships to identify and support vulnerable young people and collaborate with schools on their drug and alcohol policies and education
- ensure that every young person found in possession of a knife is referred to a

Youth Offending Team and is given a meaningful plan and interventions to divert them away from crime

For those who are in the youth justice system, we will continue to take an approach focused on the needs of young people to deliver better outcomes.

Too many young women cannot travel to places, or access enrichment activities, because of safety concerns on public transport. A survey by Girlguiding reported that nearly 1-in-3 girls and young women avoid taking public transport alone because of safety concerns. Alongside delivering the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, we will introduce mandatory training for bus staff to recognise and respond to criminal and anti-social behaviour to help young people feel safer on the bus. We are also making sure bus drivers are better informed of the needs and experiences of disabled young people by requiring them to undertake specific training.

Action 7: Places to go to

Creating a new generation of welcoming youth spaces.

If we want young people to connect more in person, we need to have a range of spaces they can safely go to outside school or their home. These could be spaces such as community centres, libraries, parks, or youth clubs – places where young people can be themselves, stay active, make friends, and have fun whilst learning new skills in a new environment. A well-designed, attractive space signals to young people that their presence is valued and that their needs are being considered. But these spaces do not exist everywhere and, where they do, they are not always accessible or fit-for-purpose. This needs to change.

‘Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy’ will create better or new youth spaces in local areas where young people can go to take up activities, access additional targeted support, or simply spend time with friends in a safe way. We will empower local leaders to develop shared spaces, indoors and outdoors.

What we will do

We will:

- spend £350 million over the next 4 years to refurbish or build up to 250 youth facilities in areas that need it most through our Better Youth Spaces programme. We will fund equipment so facilities can reach more young people and offer a wider variety of activities. We will also fund refurbishments so those facilities are

tailor-made for young people and, in some cases, we may build new youth spaces to address inequalities across the country. We will fund spaces that are safe and welcoming for young people and that meet safeguarding standards.

- spend over £400 million over the next 4 years on new and upgraded local community sport facilities, supporting young people's health and wellbeing and providing more ways to connect in person. This funding will have a particular focus on providing access to sport for under-represented groups, such as women and girls, young people with SEN/D, and those living in disadvantaged areas.
- invest £150 million in 95 places through the Pride in Place Impact Fund to support the development of shared spaces, such as green spaces or play areas, revitalise local high streets, and improve public spaces.
- bring youth services together where young people are, including through the Young Futures Hubs and by working with communities and partners, to make better use of existing, and sometimes underutilised, spaces for young people. These include libraries, religious spaces, shopping centres, and school spaces outside of school times.
- work with local authorities and community-based providers, as part of our programme of local transformation, to secure and publicise youth facilities in line with local needs.

We also need to make it feel safe and welcoming for young people to be outside and in nature – benefiting from the positive impacts this can have on their physical and mental health. We will:

- develop our commitment to ensure that everyone has access to a green or blue space within walking distance from home. This will mean that every young person has the opportunity to access natural spaces and connect with nature.
- launch our Access to Nature Green Paper and work with partners to encourage and support outdoor learning through youth friendly parks, outdoor spaces, play, and residential

Finally, young people have told us that one of the key barriers to accessing spaces is physically getting there. In addition to the measures to improve transport safety, we will improve local transport networks and affordability by:

- investing £15.6 billion by 2031/32 in 9 major city regions through the Transport for City Regions settlements and £2.3 billion for smaller cities, towns and rural areas through the Local Transport Grant
- maintaining and improving bus services, providing over £1 billion this year, and

further funding in future years, to Local Transport Authorities to support local services and facilitate reduced fares

- extending the £3 bus fare cap until March 2027 to ensure buses remain affordable and accessible to all
- implementing the Bus Services Act 2025, which will require local authorities to identify which of their bus services are socially necessary, such as those serving places of education, training, or those which serve places that offer cultural and social enrichment for young people. The Bus Act will also provide greater protection for these services if an operator chooses to change or cancel provided services.
- transforming youth spaces funding so that it meets local need. This means that communities where transport is a barrier to access could apply for funding to ensure young people can travel to youth facilities, for example through grants for mini-buses, and resources to take youth services to young people.
- using guidance to encourage local places to think about the transport needs of young people when making decisions on local services. This includes considering providing discounted bus fares to specific groups, such as care leavers.

Action 8: Health and wellbeing

Supporting young people's physical and mental health to allow all young people to take up opportunities and live richer lives.

Too many young people struggle with their mental and physical health. 1-in-3 young people surveyed as part of our State of the Nation report rated mental health as among their biggest worries. Supporting young people's physical and mental health will be critical to meeting the ambitions of this strategy.

More generally, young people say health services are hard to find and not always welcoming. For some young people these challenges are more acute.

What we will do

We will reform the delivery of mental health support to reduce waits and intervene much earlier. This will ensure that every young person who needs it will have access to mental health support at school, college or in their community. In particular we will:

- conduct an updated Mental Health of Children and Young People Survey to better understand and address young people's challenges when it comes to their mental

health and wellbeing

- roll out NHS Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in schools and colleges by the end of 2029. This means that young people who need it will be able to access support through their school or college, delivered by trained professionals. We will also pilot improvements to training for those staff to help young people with more complex needs, including experience of trauma, neurodivergence, and eating or body image challenges.
- ensure young people have access to early wellbeing advice and can be signposted to mental health support in the Young Futures Hubs without young people needing a referral or to meet a clinical threshold
- take steps to reduce unacceptably long waiting times for community mental health services by improving productivity and by reducing local inequalities and differences in access

More broadly, to ensure that we provide health support to the right groups at the right time and support young people to make healthy choices, we will:

- ensure that Neighbourhood Health Services work in partnership with schools and colleges as well as with youth services to offer better support to young people, including those with SEN/D
- improve access to accurate health information and explore ways to co-locate health and youth services to reduce long waiting times
- make support more readily available in mainstream settings to ensure young people with SEN/D can achieve and thrive with a stronger focus on early intervention
- consider what changes are needed to ensure that children in care and care leavers receive the health and wellbeing support that they need, including updating the statutory guidance on 'Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of Looked-after Children' to extend it to care leavers
- work with social care, health and justice to ensure that young people in complex situations in residential care who are at risk of or deprived of their liberty, get the right treatment and support
- pass the Tobacco and Vapes Bill which will create the first smokefree generation and tackle the drivers of youth vaping
- restrict junk food advertising and ban the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks to under-16s

In the longer term, we will explore further options to improve access to accurate

health information for young people, both in the real world and online. Learning from best practice, we will also explore the feasibility of co-locating health and youth services to provide holistic support for young people. We will prioritise young people in future research to further improve their access to health services and support, including through exploring options for how we can integrate social prescribing into community youth care.

Chapter 3: Seen and heard

Involving young people in decisions that affect them is not just fair, it makes those decisions better. It is not young people's sole responsibility to provide solutions to the challenges they face, but they have a right to actively shape those solutions. However, too many young people feel like their voice does not matter. This needs to change.

'Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy' will put young people from all backgrounds, in particular those who are disadvantaged or vulnerable and have the least control over decision-making, in the driving seat when it comes to decisions that affect their own lives.

Action 9: Delivering with young people

Putting young people in the driving seat of their own lives.

What we will do

We will:

- lower the voting age to 16 for all elections ahead of the next UK Parliamentary General Election, increasing young people's engagement in our democracy
- ensure young people have the information and support they need to fully participate in the democratic process, including through civic and political education
- make citizenship compulsory at key stages 1 and 2 and strengthen secondary citizenship content, to ensure that all pupils are introduced to key content on media literacy, financial literacy, law and rights, democracy and government, and climate education from an early age

We have already begun to change the way we govern, putting those affected by decisions at the heart of government. For example, a Youth Advisory Panel is working closely with the government on the development and implementation of the Youth Guarantee while Youth Sustainability Champions are shaping the implementation of our Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy.

However, we know that we need to go further and take ambitious steps to work with young people every step of the way. We will:

- create a new Youth Policy Network in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) of specialist organisations to ensure that whichever part of government is making decisions, if they affect young people, a diverse range of young people can take part. We will also make it a requirement of DCMS youth funding for programmes to be co-designed with young people unless there is a good reason why not.
- empower young people to create change. Through funding for the #iwill movement, we will set up a network of young ambassadors in areas which are most in need. We will also fund local organisations working directly with young people to deliver social action projects in their communities. Examples could be campaigning for change in how local services are run, leading a community event, or fundraising for a cause.

Many decisions that directly affect young people are made at the local level. We want local authorities to go further in creating policy for young people, with young people. We will:

- introduce a new, clear expectation that local areas in receipt of youth funding should be able to clearly demonstrate strong partnership working with young people and that young people have driven and support the decisions that are made about them. Where this expectation is not met, we will seek alternative local delivery partners.
- provide tools, guidance, and funding for local authorities to assess and improve the services currently available to young people, guided by young people's views
- establish new Youth Councils across England, so that representative groups of young people can influence local decision-making on issues that affect them
- start a 'test and learn' project to understand the best ways young people can influence funding decisions at a local level. We will look at where best practice already exists, what interventions have the greatest impact, and what support is needed to make it work well. We will then work with key organisations and councils to implement this more widely.

Action 10: Holding us to account

Meeting our promise to young people.

‘Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy’ is this government’s promise to young people and responds to what they have asked for. To be successful, we will need a clear way to understand, track, and report on its delivery and we will build a process to do so collaboratively and effectively across the government.

What we will do

We have set out our ambition to provide young people with a safe place to go, someone who cares for them, and a community they feel a part of.

We have outlined clear choices in how we will deliver for young people. In particular, we will shift how we will deliver those outcomes; from national to local, from fragmented to collaborative, and from excluded to empowered.

We will prioritise our 10 actions areas to respond to the priorities young people have set out and create real change.

‘Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy’ has been led by young people and they will continue to take the lead as we deliver and evaluate its success. We will also ensure that young people, their parents or carers, our partners, and society overall can hold us to account on what we are doing. This will include:

- measuring our outcomes across the government through a shared framework and metrics. We will ensure that this framework builds on existing reporting and accountability processes so we can paint a clear picture of how services are being delivered. This will allow us to establish a common way to track our impact across those outcomes. This framework will complement the Outcomes Framework for local government, which will clarify the role that local authorities play in ensuring young people have access to youth activities and facilities and will be used to measure the performance and success of local authorities’ work.
- building on existing engagement processes across government to manage a website for young people which will contain updates on the delivery of the strategy as well as opportunities for them to take part in policy or programme development. We will ensure that vulnerable and disadvantaged young people have the opportunity to participate and understand what progress is being made against key policies which benefit them in particular.

- every year, we will invite a diverse group of young people to run a national hearing on the delivery of the strategy – a process we will co-design with young people. This will allow us to provide updates on the actions taken across government and discuss priorities with young people.
- in addition, we will publish an interim delivery report in 2027. This report will collect data through existing processes across government and gather views from young people, paying particular attention to the impact the strategy is having on disadvantaged and vulnerable young people.

Call to action

This is our call to action. For too long the challenges facing this generation have gone unheard and unaddressed.

The stark picture this strategy prevents - in loneliness and isolation, safety, health and wellbeing, and opportunity is not inevitable.

Nor is it normal.

The UK performs significantly worse on a number of these measures than other comparable countries:

- Young people in the UK are less likely to report feeling they belong at school than the OECD average.
- UNICEF ranks the United Kingdom 21st out of 36 for child wellbeing. This is lower than many European neighbours.
- 15-year-olds in the UK spend more time on their digital devices than the average OECD country.
- When compared to 26 countries in Europe, the UK has the lowest average overall life satisfaction among 15-year-olds, with a uniquely large gap between the most advantaged and disadvantaged young people.

There is no single quick fix to these problems, but by acting now and taking a radical new approach, led by young people, we can turn this around.

For all of the challenges, this generation is as ambitious as any other. Today's youth are tomorrow's nation.

Change begins now.

Technical annex

Summary of key policies and programmes

Action	Lead department
Action 1: Trusted adults	
Support adults working with young people to better spot the signs of loneliness and to intervene earlier	DCMS
Expand training on key areas including mental health, safeguarding, communication and online wellbeing to adults who support young people	DCMS/ Cross-government
Develop and expand programmes with the sports sector to improve mental health and wellbeing, tackle loneliness, and nurture positive relationships	DCMS
Base youth workers and professionals providing targeted support in new Young Futures Hubs	DCMS/ Cross-government
Work with the private sector to fund and expand the number of mentors for disadvantaged and vulnerable young people	DCMS
Action 2: Strengthening the workforce	
Invest £15 million over the next 3 years in youth workers, volunteers, and other trusted adults	DCMS
Implement new levels of qualifications and modular learning for youth work and support youth work apprenticeships	DCMS

Support youth work to be safe through proper training and safeguarding standards	DCMS/ Cross- government
Roll out the Youth Work Census to a greater number of organisations to help us understand the sector better	DCMS
Ensure youth work qualifications, standards, and youth work curriculum respond better to the needs of the young people	DCMS
Maintain and expand a register for professional youth workers to record their learning and professional development	DCMS
Encourage more Honours nominations for volunteers	DCMS
Improve the online process for how people find and apply for volunteering opportunities with youth organisations	DCMS
Spend nearly £70 million over the next 3 years to rebuild and improve local youth services and establish a network of 50 Young Futures Hubs	DCMS
Support the youth infrastructure at the local and regional level with a budget of over £5 million to spend over 3 years	DCMS
Develop partnerships within the sports, arts and culture sectors	DCMS
Encourage schools and other education settings to work with local partners in their communities and build partnerships	DfE
Launch a Local Covenant Partnerships programme	DCMS
Work with Young Futures Panels to identify, assess, and refer young people at risk of being drawn into crime to appropriate support	HO
Simplify grant funding for local authorities and consolidate local funding where possible	MHCLG
Unlock match funding to extend our delivery and encourage place-based philanthropy	DCMS/ Cross- government
Highlight, in the Outcomes Framework for local government, the	MHCLG

importance of young people achieving and thriving

Explore reviewing the current local authorities' statutory duty for youth services as part of a wider review of local statutory duties and consider the appropriate regulation of youth services	DCMS/ MHCLG
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Action 3: Friends and relationships

Embed the Online Safety Act and build on it, if needed, to better protect young people online.	DSIT
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Implement Ofcom's responsibilities to promote media literacy	DSIT/Ofcom
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Embed critical media literacy into the curriculum and refresh the computing curriculum to build digital confidence from an early age	DfE
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Develop an awareness campaign to support parents and carers to build their children's media literacy	DSIT
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Improve young people's sense of belonging by providing schools and colleges with a new framework to help improve pupil experience and sense of belonging	DfE
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Continue to support the work of the Schools Linking programme	DfE
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Deliver our Men's Health Strategy with a multi-million pound programme to support men, including boys and young men, to build social connections and direct them to local support	DHSC
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Launching two pathfinder programmes with Rugby League Cares to use the power of sport to help boys and young men build connections and supportive networks	DCMS
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Deliver on our Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy	HO
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Action 4: Richer lives

Embed enrichment activities in the school and college experience and publish new enrichment benchmarks	DfE
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Spend £22.5 million over 3 years through a new programme to create brilliant enrichment offers in up to 400 schools	DCMS/ DfE
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Invest over £60 million over the next 3 years on a new Richer Young Lives Fund to improve access to enriching activities and youth work	DCMS
Fund the Holiday Activities and Food programme with £600m over the next 3 years	DfE
Expand in-school and community-based Cadet Forces by 30% by 2030	MoD
Fund cultural education programmes to increase access to arts, culture, and heritage	DCMS
Task Public Bodies, including Sport England and Arts Council England, with reducing the gap in access to opportunities	DCMS
Introduce the new PE and School Sport Partnerships	DfE/ DCMS
Invest £250 million over 5 years in 100 places, through Sport England	DCMS
Run a public campaign to increase awareness of the importance of physical activity for young people	DCMS/ DHSC
£132.5 million of dormant assets funding to support the provision of opportunities for young people	DCMS
Action 5: Good work	
Establish up to 90 new RISE Attendance and Behaviour Hubs	DfE
Invest £15 million in the current expansion of our attendance mentoring programme	DfE
Deliver initiatives to improve inclusivity of children with SEN/D within mainstream schools	DfE
Simplify and strengthen careers guidance across the education system	DfE
Introduce two weeks' work experience for every young person	DfE
Simplify the post-16 qualification landscape as outlined in the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper	DfE/ DWP

Transform the apprenticeships offer into a new growth and skills offer	DWP
Develop and deliver a Youth Guarantee	DfE/ DWP
Expand our network of employment Youth Hubs to over 360 locations across Great Britain	DWP
Guarantee paid work for every 18 to 21 year-old who has been on universal credit and looking for work for 18 months	DWP
Launch a £187 million TechFirst programme to prepare people for careers across the digital and tech sector over the next 4 years	DSIT
Action 6: Keeping young people safe	
Restore neighbourhood policing	HO
Put a dedicated lead officer for anti-social behaviour in every force	HO
Structure our Young Futures Hubs to allow staff to get to know young people and to be there to provide or signpost to extra support and guidance if they need it	DCMS
Implement the new content in the RSHE statutory guidance focused on staying safe from all forms of violence	DfE
Continue to work with local drugs partnerships to identify and support vulnerable young people	HO
Ensure that every young person found in possession of a knife is referred to a Youth Offending Team and is given a meaningful plan and interventions to divert them away from crime.	MoJ
Introduce mandatory training for bus staff to recognise and respond to criminal and anti-social behaviour to help young people feel safer on the bus	DfT
Action 7: Places to go to	
Spend £350 million over the next 4 years to refurbish or build up to 250 youth facilities through our Better Youth Spaces programme.	DCMS

Spend over £400 million over the next 4 years into new and upgraded local community sport facilities,	DCMS
Invest £150 million in 95 places through the Pride in Place Impact Fund	MHCLG
Work with local authorities and community-based providers, as part of our programme of local transformation, to secure and publicise youth facilities	DCMS
Develop our commitment to ensure that everyone has access to a green or blue space within walking distance from home.	DEFRA
Improve bus services with over £1 billion this year and further funding in future years to support local services and facilitate reduced fares	DfT
Extend the £3 bus fare cap until March 2027	DfT
Implement the Bus Services Act 2025	DfT
Action 8: Health and wellbeing	
Conduct an updated Mental Health of Children and Young People Survey	DHSC
Roll out NHS Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in schools and colleges the end of 2029	DHSC
Ensure young people have access to early wellbeing advice and can be signposted to mental health support in the Young Futures Hubs	DCMS/DHSC
Ensure that Neighbourhood Health Services work in partnership with schools and colleges and youth services	DHSC
Make support more readily available in mainstream settings to ensure young people with SEN/D can achieve and thrive with a stronger focus on early intervention	DfE
Explore options to improve access to accurate health information, both offline and online, and ways to co-locate health and youth services	DHSC

Prioritise young people in future research to further improve their access to health services and support, including through exploring options around social prescribing	DHSC
Pass the Tobacco and Vapes Bill which will create the first smokefree generation and tackle the drivers of youth vaping	DHSC
Restrict junk food advertising and ban the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks to under-16s	DHSC
Action 9: Delivering with young people	
Lower the voting age to 16	MHCLG
Ensure young people have the information and support they need to fully participate in the democratic process	Cross-government
Make citizenship compulsory at key stages 1 and 2 and strengthen secondary citizenship content	DfE
Create a new 'Youth Policy Network' to co-produce policies	DCMS
Fund the #iwill movement to empower young people to be change makers in their local area	DCMS
Fund place-based youth social action, ensuring those opportunities are available for young people from diverse backgrounds	DCMS
Introduce a new, clear expectation that local areas in receipt of youth funding should be able to clearly demonstrate strong partnership working with young people	DCMS
Work with local areas to establish new Youth Councils across England	MHCLG/ DCMS
Start a 'test and learn' project to understand how young people can influence local funding decisions	DCMS
Action 10: Holding us to account	
Measure our outcomes across the government through a shared framework and metrics	Cross-government

Manage a website for young people which will contain updates on the delivery of the strategy	DCMS
Invite a diverse group of young people to run an annual national hearing on the delivery of the strategy	DCMS
Publish an interim delivery report in 2027	DCMS

Equality, environmental and growth considerations

Equality considerations

‘Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy’ is likely to have positive impacts on individuals with a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. It should be noted that certain groups of young people might still face barriers – such as reduced mobility, caring responsibilities and existing distrust of government from certain protected groups – which could limit potential participation and opportunities. However, the strategy has an explicit focus on breaking down those barriers and providing particular support to disadvantaged and vulnerable young people. We are committed to ensuring that the delivery of the National Youth Strategy does not cause any disproportionate negative equality impacts on individuals with protected characteristics and that it unlocks positive equality impacts wherever possible. We will work closely with partners to ensure that plans for funding and delivery reflect and have the support of young people and the wider community.

Environmental considerations

This strategy is likely to have a neutral or net positive climate impact.

We will consider the Environmental Principles in policy development and embed them into policy design of all programmes under the National Youth Strategy, in particular regarding refurbishments/ renovations and constructions of facilities to reduce future greenhouse emissions and prevent environmental loss where applicable. We are committed to ensuring that the delivery of the National Youth Strategy does not cause disproportionate negative environmental impacts and will use relevant policies to help organisations to become more environmentally friendly.

Growth considerations

This strategy will have a positive impact on growth through increasing opportunities for young people to develop skills needed for work and life, as well as the positive impact youth services have on a young person’s mental and physical health and

wellbeing. Youth services also play a role in diverting young people away from costly negative behaviours, such as involvement in the criminal justice system.

Scope and development

‘Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy’ (the strategy) was developed by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Youth Strategy Team, working with Other Government Departments (OGDs) between November 2024 and November 2025. It is underpinned by extensive engagement with young people, youth sector experts and OGDs, as well as literature reviews and qualitative and quantitative evidence analysis.

The strategy’s primary focus is on youth policy, provision and support at a local, regional and national level across England for 10 to 21 year olds (up to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities). The policy scope includes both fiscal and non-fiscal policies affecting young people and targeting one or more of the key outcomes identified:

- 1 Safety - Feel safe, online and offline.
- 2 Connection and Empowerment - Feel connected to people and engaged in their communities.
- 3 Opportunities - Build skills and opportunities for life and work.
- 4 Health - Have better physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Policies include those that are planned or confirmed for the next Spending Review (2026/27 - 2028/2029) as well as policies that departments are intending to explore over the next decade. Youth policy is devolved and therefore the vast majority of policies included in the strategy are focused on England. However, a small number of UK-wide policies have been included if aspects fall within the scope as set out above.

The development of the strategy is broadly split into two periods of activity. The first covered the period of November 2024 to April 2025 and included:

- a rapid evidence review to understand challenges faced by young people and potential solutions, with particular focus on the youth sector, workforce and infrastructure
- a National Youth Strategy survey which drew together the voices of over 14,000 young people of the ages 10 to 21 and up to 25 for those with SEN/D
- insights collated through policy engagement, qualitative data collection and wider evidence collation
- engagement with over 1,400 experts from the youth sector, including representatives from small, medium and large charities, delivery bodies, What Works centres, arms-length bodies and specialist organisations
- targeted engagement with key stakeholders on the key themes of the research report
- establishment of the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) and Expert Advisory Group (EAG)
- focused feedback sessions on the drafting of the research report

The second period covers between April 2025 and November 2025 as the DCMS Youth Strategy Team developed, drafted and finalised the strategy with OGDs in direct response to the themes and challenges identified during the first period of engagement and literature analysis. During this period, activities included:

- continued engagement with the YAG and EAG
- targeted feedback sessions with key stakeholders on the draft and development of the strategy
- extensive work with OGDs at both official and ministerial level on policy development and drafting for the strategy

The National Youth Strategy responds directly to the themes and challenges identified during our engagements. For completion, and given the interplay between both documents, this technical annex includes details of the research report's methodology. Further details of the development of the research report can be found in its [technical annex](#).

Rapid Evidence Assessment

The Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) explored:

1. What challenges do young people face and what challenges are they expected to face over the coming decade?
2. How do these challenges differ by demographics/certain groups?
3. What are the potential solutions to the challenges identified?

The desk research drew on sources, including national surveys, academic studies, policy reports, and youth-led research, to provide a comprehensive understanding of young people's experiences, perspectives, aspirations, and challenges across the United Kingdom. This research aimed to address several critical questions to inform an effective youth strategy, specifically focusing on priority issues such as the cost of living, education, mental health, and social inequalities that permeate all aspects of life for young people.

The study examined how these challenges vary by demographics, including age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geographic location. It also investigated the root causes and identified potential solutions through successful case studies, expert recommendations, and innovative youth-led initiatives.

In total, 53 pieces of evidence were reviewed based on robustness, relevance, and youth perspectives, with higher-quality findings prioritised to construct a coherent narrative on young people's experiences and needs. To maintain rigour and efficiency, each document was reviewed by a researcher who completed an objective scoring system. A selected number of documents were then independently assessed by a second researcher, and scores were compared and validated by a third researcher to confirm accuracy of scoring.

Youth Engagement

Youth Advisory Group

The Youth Advisory Group (YAG) was created in December 2024 and met on a monthly basis throughout the course of the National Youth Strategy development period. The YAG is a group of 14 young people who represent different

organisations, interests and experiences who were selected for their impressive contributions in the public space.

Topics discussed in the group include:

- ensuring we reach a wide and diverse section of young people, meeting them where they are, with our survey and accessible engagement opportunities
- vision statement, priorities and objectives for the strategy
- youth empowerment objectives and policy options
- policy options and solutions related to young people's priorities
- feedback on research report draft
- feedback on strategy draft

All sessions were minuted and the findings were discussed and refined during dedicated internal DCMS thinking sessions and at subsequent YAG meetings. Once this process was completed and comments were inputted into the strategy, this was shared with YAG participants to review to ensure accuracy.

Democracy cafés and online focus groups

Between 17 February and 12 March 2025, the Democracy cafés and online focus groups explored:

1. Your priorities and what's important to you
2. What makes you happy and why
3. The activities, clubs and spaces you engage with
4. Changes and transitions you've experienced recently
5. Difficulties and challenges in your life
6. Looking to the future

National survey

Savanta ran an online survey between 3 March and 23 April 2025 among n=14,134 young people in England aged 10 to 21 (and up to age 25 for SEN/D respondents). Respondents over 16 years of age were recruited directly and, for those under 16 years of age, they were recruited via parents/guardians. A mixture of internal research panels and a separate open link to the general public were used to maximise the breadth of the research. A total of n=8,838 completes were achieved

via research panels, and n=5,296 were achieved via the open link.

Quotas and weighting were applied to be representative of the population aged 10 to 21 in England by age, gender, region, ethnicity, SEN/D status and socio-economic status. It should be noted that whilst weighting has been applied, results for the 'Other' ethnicity group should be treated with caution due to low response rates and therefore sample size among this audience. The survey findings included are statistically significant at a 95% confidence interval.

The survey was designed and routed for two separate age groups of 10 to 15-year-olds and 16 to 21-year-olds (up to age 25 for SEN/D participants), to ensure maximum engagement and comprehension. While adjustments to design and accessibility were made throughout the research process, it is important to acknowledge potential limitations of online research. This includes requiring the consent of a responsible adult for those aged 10 to 15, as well as access to the internet and a computer or mobile device to complete the online survey.

Savanta is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.

DCMS policy engagement

DCMS policy engagement which fed into this report include:

- Regional Youth Work Units commissioned activity. Between January and early March 2025, the eight Regional Youth Work Units carried out a minimum of one focus group with young people and one with experts as part of our initial engagement phase with the youth sector.
- ministerial and official engagements with young people, including #iWill Ambassadors, National Citizen Service Youth Advisory Board, the UK Youth Parliament representatives and others at a local level
- official engagements with youth sector experts, including the NYSAB and local councillors and heads of services
- initial feedback (up until 28 March 2025) from those who have hosted conversations with young people using the session plan DCMS developed and circulated.

Insight from these engagements was collated and added to our research. For the work carried out by the RYWUs, an initial paper focusing purely on the feedback received through this avenue was drafted, and this work fed into the development of the research report. All notes from official engagement with young people and officials were recorded and considered.

Sector engagement

Expert Advisory Group

To provide continued expert advice, the Expert Advisory Group was established in December 2024. The group consists of a range of individuals including CEOs, campaigners, entrepreneurs, and academics. Members are experts in a range of different fields including: youth work, music, creative skills industries, funding, policy development, and sport. It is made up of people who have been noticed for their impressive work and experience in relation to services and issues for young people, and several members of the Group also sit on other forums whereby large numbers of organisations working with young people are represented.

The primary function of the expert advisory group was to offer challenge and advice during the development and drafting of both the research report and strategy, as well as on the ground experience and knowledge of operating in their respective sectors.

The group met monthly between January 2025 and September 2025 and were engaged on topics including:

- ensuring we reach a wide and diverse section of young people, meeting them where they are, with our survey and accessible engagement opportunities
- survey questions and design
- vision statement, priorities, and objectives for the strategy
- policy options and solutions related to young people's priorities
- prioritisation of resources
- metrics of success
- feedback on research report draft
- feedback on strategy draft

As with the YAG, all sessions were minuted and the findings were discussed and refined during dedicated internal DCMS thinking sessions and at subsequent EAG meetings. Members of the EAG were given the opportunity to review wording for the strategy to ensure accuracy and their feedback was incorporated into the drafting.

Webinars and discussions

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) hosted webinars and held discussions with a broad range of stakeholders and professional groups. The invitations were sent out through the DCMS Youth Team Newsletter. These were attended by a wide range of attendees from youth sector organisations, DCMS sectors that work with young people (arts, sports, film), and local authorities.

- 6 February 2025 - to provide an overview of the National Youth Strategy timelines, process and engagement opportunities with a Q&A session. c.150 attendees.
- 10 March 2025 - to provide an update on the National Youth Strategy engagement, including the survey launch, and guidance on how to use the new engagement toolkit. c.150 attendees
- 19 August 2025 - to update on recent funding announcements and to provide a brief update on the National Youth Strategy. c.250 attendees.

Attendees were given the opportunity to ask questions or give any feedback via a Slido. Questions were answered on the call, and those not answered were taken away and reflected upon by the team. The recording and slides from the webinar were shared after the session.

Focus groups and workshops delivered in collaboration with expert organisations

Experts and youth practitioners were invited to participate in specific focus groups and workshops, often in parallel with the young people's consultation events.

Between January and early March 2025, the eight Regional Youth Work Units carried out a minimum of one focus group with sector experts. As with the youth engagement carried out by the RYWUs, feedback was collated into a paper which fed into the development of the research report.

Engagement with OGDs

DCMS engaged with Other Government Departments (OGDs) throughout the development of the National Youth Strategy to ensure cohesion across policy areas and that the themes of the research report are being responded to across a wide range of remits. Significant engagement was carried out between January and November 2025, including commissions for fiscal and non-fiscal policies, 10 cross-government working meetings, deep dive workshops, ministerial meetings and

opportunities to review and provide feedback on drafting. In total, 12 departments were engaged:

- Department for Education (DfE)
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Areas (DEFRA)
- Department for Transport (DfT)
- Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and local Government (MHCLG)
- Home Office (HO)
- Ministry of Justice (MoJ)
- Cabinet Office (CO)
- Ministry of Defence (MoD)
- HM Treasury (HMT)

Key terms: Glossary and acronyms

A&E	Accident and Emergency
Anti-social behaviour	Any behaviour that causes distress, alarm, or harassment to others. It can include both criminal and non-criminal actions, such as vandalism, graffiti, fly-tipping and littering, noisy neighbours, and threatening, harassing or inconsiderate behaviour
Educational attainment	‘Educational attainment’ is defined as the highest level of education an individual has successfully completed
Blue space	Blue spaces are outdoor environments—either natural or manmade—that prominently feature water and are accessible to

people. It is the collective term for rivers, lakes or the sea

CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
Care Experienced Young People	‘Care experienced’ includes both ‘looked after’ children and ‘care leavers’, which have legal definitions across the UK
Civil Society	Civil society includes charities, social enterprises, co-operatives, trade unions, faith organisations, informal community groups, philanthropists, and social investors
Disadvantaged young people	Children who face multiple potential barriers to success. This could be young people with SEN/D, young carers or from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds
Enrichment	Enrichment in schools and colleges encompasses a wide range of activities which exist beyond the curriculum, either linked directly to the curriculum (co-curricular), or covering skills, knowledge and activities that work in addition to it (extra-curricular). Enrichment may include a range of activities, like engaging with the wider community, being creative, engaging with the outdoors, being active, and developing wider life skills. Enrichment may be delivered within timetabled lesson time or outside of it (e.g. lunchtime, before or after-school/college, weekend events). Enrichment activities may be delivered by school/college staff, external providers, and can include peer leadership – with support and guidance from staff
Expert Advisory Group	The Expert Advisory Group was established by DCMS in December 2024. The group consists of CEOs, campaigners, entrepreneurs, an academic and more. Members are experts in a range of different fields including: youth work, music, creative skills industries, funding, policy development and sport
Green space	Any area of vegetated land, urban or rural. This includes both public and private spaces such as parks, gardens, playing fields, children’s play areas, woods and other natural areas, grassed areas, cemeteries and allotments, green corridors, disused railway lines, rivers and canals, derelict, vacant and contaminated land which has the potential to be transformed

LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning. The “+” is used to include a wide range of other sexualities and gender identities which aren’t included in these letters
Local Government Finance Settlement	The local government finance settlement is the annual determination of funding to local government
Multi-agency	Collaboration between professionals from different services to improve outcomes for the children and young people and to work towards a shared goal
Media Literacy	Media literacy means understanding that online actions have real-world consequences, critically evaluating online information, and contributing to a respectful online environment. It is a key skill in helping people to be protected from harm online.
MHST	Mental Health Support Teams
NEET	Not in employment, education, or training
Outcomes	Changes for an individual as the result of a service or intervention
PCSO	Police Community Support Officers
RSHE	Relationships, Sex, and Health Education
SEN/D	Special educational needs and disabilities
Shifts	The fundamental changes to ways of working we want to see which span across all of our actions
Social Action	Activities undertaken in the services of others, to benefit the wider community, such as volunteering, fundraising, and campaigning
Socio-emotional skills	The mental and behavioural skills that help young people develop their resilience and manage their thoughts, feelings, and behaviour
Trusted Adults	Different organisations have different ways of defining a trusted adult. For the purposes of the NYS, a trusted adult is a safe, respectful adult that is chosen by a young person as a trusted

figure that listens to them and supports them. This could be an adult within a young person's family and home, an adult they interact with at school or in an education setting, or an adult that works with them outside of school, for example a youth worker, mentor or sports coach

Underserved areas	Areas which face a lack of social infrastructure and community, civic, educational, and cultural assets, and services. These can include but are not limited to: healthcare services, education, youth provision, libraries, green spaces, and community centres
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
Vulnerable Young People	Defined as any children at greater risk of experiencing physical or emotional harm and/or experiencing poor outcomes because of one or more factors in their lives
Wellbeing	The Office of National Statistics describes wellbeing as “how we are doing” as individuals, as communities and as a nation, and how sustainable this is for the future’. This is assessed using four measures (life satisfaction, worthwhile, happiness and anxiety), which asks people to evaluate three aspects of their own well-being - how satisfied they are with their lives overall, whether they feel they have meaning and purpose in their lives and their emotions during a particular period (both positive and negative)
Youth Advisory Group	The Youth Advisory Group was created in December 2024 and met on a monthly basis throughout the course of the National Youth Strategy development period, completing in September 2025. The Youth Advisory Group is a group of 14 young people who represent different organisations, interests and experiences who were selected for their impressive contributions in the public space
Youth Empowerment	Youth empowerment provides young people with the skills, confidence, support, and opportunities to take control of their lives, make their own choices, be part of decisions that affect them, and make positive changes in their communities
Young Carers	Someone under the age of 18 who provides or has provided regular physical or emotional support for a relative or friend
Young People/	In this strategy, it refers to those aged 10 to 21 in England (up to

Youth	25 with special educational needs or disabilities), unless specified otherwise
Youth Sector Workforce	People who work in youth services (e.g. youth workers, trained trusted adults or volunteers). This does not include education providers like teachers
Youth Workers	People who work in youth services or with young people using a youth work approach

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