

York VCSE Assembly – Health and Care

2 July 2025



Please use this space to capture your table's discussions. This information will be collated and shared following the meeting.

Children and Young People in York Pillar 1: Feedback on themes

1. Expand Mental Health Support:

- Need to understand the importance of low level, early intervention. We need to get relationships right and we need places for CYP to go when they are feeling well too.
- It's important to work with those services that people already know and trust.
- This is needed and this is where the VCSE sector can make a big impact.
- Challenges around engaging with schools – it's difficult to get in the door but would benefit hugely from having that interaction and connection with the VCSE. We can learn from other – The Place has good relations with schools.
- Understanding that for some children and young people school will never be the right place for them – could be other issues rather than mental health – Schools are very structured and ridged. This presents challenges as difficult it is without school buy-in in term of school avoidance. A lot of it is wrapped up in attendance marks – you hit a wall when introducing interventions that go against school processes.

2. Promote Healthy Lifestyle Education

- Currently CYP are shamed rather than supported e.g. vaping. We need a deeper understanding as to why CYP vape – many use it as a coping strategy. CYP need support to identify alternative coping strategies.
- Health messages – before we start any health messaging campaigns, we need to get to the root cause of the challenges e.g. difficult to have a healthy lifestyle whilst living in poverty.
- The VCSE sector and CYP are best placed to know communities and work with them.
- Emphasis on education and not lecturing young people – learn how to communicate with CYP. Co-production - young people led communications around lifestyle messages.
- This is not just about messaging but about underlying causes – access to bed/food/technology etc.

3. Create a Central Youth Services Navigator

- York Youth Network are already doing this work.
- A directory of services / service guide takes a lot of capacity to manage and keep updated.
- Issue of potential duplication without good collaboration – how does it fit with what's already happening?

4. Increase Inclusive Services

- Time challenge – challenge to engage with other partners, including schools.
- Can current offers of support be added too?
- If offering support, we need to create connections with other organisations as funding often stops and people get comfortable and trust services so don't want to access other services – need to ensure these CYP don't fall through the gap when funding ends.

5. Afterschool Clubs, Activities, and Safe Spaces

- Afters school / safe spaces – Value of open spaces for everyone – something that Big Futures Foundation are already looking to develop.
- Building trust with Children and Young People – many CYP have complex lives and have a lot of mistrust so it takes intensive work to support CYP. It could take a year to get a child to attend a youth club. So, a lot of work is needed for a smaller numbers of children.

Challenges

- Capacity of small organisations to be able to collaborate – have to do the work to collaborate without the guarantee for the money – it takes time and capacity that they don't have.
- Co-production and co-design are so important – being transparent and aware of the challenges of co-production and collaboration which require a lot of time and resource for organisations before you even know whether you will be funded. Co-design as part of the ongoing work – working with partners who can bring this element to the role.