

STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL OF VOLUNTARY YOUTH SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

Supporting the children and young people's voluntary sector in Staffordshire to be safe, strong and sustainable

Executive Summary

The SCVYS team continued to focus on celebration during this year, taking every opportunity to identify and value when things go well. This focus was key in building resilience to overcome the considerable challenges of the current operating environment for voluntary and community organisations.

Our highlights this year include:

- The resilience of the local sector as evidenced via our <u>annual census</u> of members and <u>State of the Sector report</u>.
- Jane's visit to a garden party at **Buckingham Palace** with her mum.
- Phil being awarded an MBE for services to young people and communities across Staffordshire.
- Additional 4 years of funding secured for the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education Service for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.
- 5 year funding for Know Your Place, our Young Community Researchers project involving a Young People's Steering Group, the University of Staffordshire and Staffordshire County Council.
- One year extension to our Strategic Partner contract with Staffordshire County Council until July 2026.
- SCVYS contribution to a **sufficiency report** mapping need against provision across Staffordshire's diverse localities highlighted in a <u>Local Government Association Case Study</u> published in May 2025.
- Successful delivery of a Virtual Reality pilot project supporting 1,150 young people around positive decision-making.
- 4 Members of Youth Parliament attending the Annual Sitting at the House of Commons with 3 of them making verbal contributions to debates.
- 11 new elected members of **Staffordshire Youth Union**
- The Staff team evolving and welcoming Rhia, Cathryn and Ellie to the SCVYS team, and saying fond farewell to Nic and Kurt.













A year in figures



Response rate to our annual census



Children & Young People accessed positive activity or support during 2023-24 (SCVYS Census)



Was secured by the local Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) voluntary sector, helped in many cases by SCVYS promotion of and signposting to available funds.



3,404

Young People achieved awards linked to their involvement with SCVYS member groups



Training places relating to their roles were completed by staff and volunteers, enhancing the skills and knowledge of Staffordshire's VCSE workforce.



of SCVYS members considered themselves to be Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) inclusive in their practice. Evidenced by the fact that 12% of the total participants (3,795) were SEND children and young people.



Organisations within SCVYS membership focused purely on supporting those with SEND, learning disabilities or difficulties (LDD) or other complex needs...



of SCVYS members were confident about the future of their organisation, the same as last year, which is encouraging in the context of the many challenges of running a voluntary organisation in 2025.



Active volunteer roles supporting provision for Children & Young People. 13% higher than last year. 1,619 of these are filled by volunteers under the age of 18, almost 80% higher than last year.

(SCVYS Census)



of SCVYS members rated the support they receive from us at 8 or above, with 10 being excellent.

A Sector that is Safe

Although our representative role within the local Safeguarding Children's Partnership is yet to be reestablished following changes proposed in Working Together 2023, SCVYS continues to chair the Early Help work stream which provides central **support and information to eight place based Family Improvement Boards** and has been active in feeding in to the review of Safeguarding Partnership arrangements. We have remained committed to supporting our member organisations to operate safely and compliantly when delivering activities and support to children, young people and families.

During 2024-25, our development team supported **17 new organisations** to meet our minimum standards for membership, including establishing robust governance arrangements and relevant operational policies & procedures. This was supplemented by advice on safer recruitment including DBS checks for appropriate staff/volunteers and access to free training such as Safeguarding, First Aid, Food Safety, Introduction to Youth Work and much more.

Members also receive our **twice yearly Safeguarding update**, poster/card resources for their venue/workforce and access to our helpline should they have any safeguarding concerns.

SCVYS, utilising both Development and PSHE Education team knowledge, provided extensive guidance following the Southport incident last summer on keeping your venue safe as well as how to have difficult conversations with children and young people on the challenging subjects that arose such as hate, racism, terror and many more.

SCVYS has noted a rise in the number of concerns raised either by members or by partners/commissioners, and we are working with the safeguarding partners to understand why and ensure the appropriate support is available for the local voluntary youth and children's sector.



Outcome 3

Staff and volunteers working with children, young people and families have increased skills and confidence



A thriving Children, Young People and Family's voluntary sector that is strong safe and sustainable

Strategic Objective 1

Support the growth of a safe, strong and sustainable children, young people and family's voluntary sector through a high-quality offer

This Year:



SCVYS processed **353 DBS checks** for staff/volunteers, of which 88% were volunteers new to the role.



204 individuals in member groups successfully completed the SSCB Level 1: Safeguarding Children Awareness Course.



Safeguarding support provided to members on an individual level in response to incidents, in partnership with Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and Staffordshire County Council.



SCVYS supported reviews by the Safeguarding Partnership of both the partnership thresholds document and guidance, as well as the template policy for private, voluntary and community organisations



208 additional training places

were accessed by volunteers/staff via SCVYS self-funded training offer, including Trauma Informed Practice and Managing Challenging Behaviour and First Aid.



Sector Strength & Sustainability

One of SCVYS unique selling points is our relational approach. One impact is that member organisations get a bespoke and responsive service based on need, not an off-the-shelf one size fits all solution. The importance of this cannot be overestimated as the sector faces a significantly challenging operating environment. **Support has included**:

"The successful outcome of our bid to the Lottery Fund means that @21, The Leek Town Centre Youth Project is able to provide a diverse and exciting range of services for the young people who attend our drop-in centre. We are grateful to SCVYS, for the guidance and support we received prior to submitting the bid." Chair and Trustee

Conducting 49 organisational health checks to identify members short to medium term development needs. Linking members organisations to the new 0-19 Family Hub offer to strengthen their offer, utilise partnership working

Tailored 34
Grantfinder funding
searches for member
organisations

Production of and proofreading of funding applications and tenders

Distributing a monthly funding update as well as the annual Funding Fayre to support connect member organisations to funders

Direct bespoke 1-2-1 development support provided to 139 unique organisations

£1200 in start-up and crisis grants awarded

15 training workshops funded by SCVYS to support member organisations Promotion of member activities via our online <u>activities</u> <u>map</u>

Case Study

SCVYS played a pivotal role in supporting the 1st Great Wyrley Scouts as they transitioned to a more sustainable and community-focused model. Previously managed by an informal committee, the group faced challenges in governance and income generation. With a new committee and leader in place, SCVYS provided tailored support. A Development Worker collaborated with the team to create an action plan focused on funding opportunities and promoting the Scout Hall as a hireable venue. This led to a partnership with another SCVYS member developing a youth club, bringing new energy and income to the space. Additionally, SCVYS identified a local need for childcare provision and facilitated a connection between the Scouts and Staffordshire County Council's Early Years team. This resulted in plans to adapt the hall for use by a local childminder, supported by capital funding. The collaboration promises long-term benefits, including affordable rent for the new business and deeper community ties. SCVYS continues to offer follow-up support through venue promotion, funding searches, and partnership opportunities, demonstrating the value of creative thinking and strong local networks in building resilient youth organisations.



Now into a 4th year of delivery, SCVYS continues to host the above service for Staffordshire (funded by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner), and welcomed the Stoke-on-Trent coordinator, Ellie Chesterton, to the team in November. Hosting the whole service in a single organisation has been positive, and we remain committed to maintaining an excellent service for all partners and stakeholders.

"Thank you very much for your support with the PSHE curriculum. OFSTED at the start of the week were incredibly impressed by our approach to this, and how it enhanced our developmental offer. Your support and guidance made this possible, thank you".



Consistent, high-quality support available for children, young, people and families in Staffordshire

Strategic Objective 2

Further establish our role as the specialist children and young people capacity building organisation in Staffordshire

There is a renewed focus on supporting education settings, particularly schools, but also informal education settings such as alternative education providers and youth clubs where high quality preventative education can help keep children and young people safe and healthy in their decision-making. This year has included:

- A highly successful first PSHE Education Service conference held in November attended by over 200 people who reported a significant increase in knowledge and confidence to deliver best practice in relation to PSHE.
- Ongoing improvement and maintenance of the dedicated website including a comprehensive resource library to which over 500 people now have access. This includes 63% of education settings. You can sign up here: http://www.pshestaffs.com
- Production of an additional 16 PSHE packs on a range of topics linked to current education and partnership priorities, meaning there are now over 30 subject specific packs available to support education settings and partners.
- Production of a further 8 best practice guidance documents to support education settings with the development of both quality and consistency in their practice and delivery.
- Publication of the PSHE Digest giving information about resources, training opportunities, updates from local and national partners currently received by 1035 people each month.
- Increased numbers of school visits (12 in the last term) offering bespoke support and guidance.

Virtual Reality (VR) Project

The SCVYS team have delivered virtual reality experiences to children and young people as part of an innovative project funded by the Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Violence Reduction Alliance.

Wearing VR headsets, participants face a number of scenarios, allowing them to make their own decisions and explore potential consequences in a safe environment. Following the experience, there is the opportunity to discuss the experience to help share and embed the learning. Schools were also provided with resources to extend the opportunity to explore the issues raised with young people over the following weeks.

87 sessions have been delivered across 40 different settings covering all areas of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, to 1,150 young people aged 10-25 in an average group size of 12.

The Virtual Reality pilot project has now concluded and a learning report has been submitted to guide commissioners on decisions relating to the next steps.









Local Knowledge

This year the Development Team have been working closely with some of the local Family Hub Managers, as well as County Council colleagues, to support them to get to know some of the amazing voluntary organisations in their areas. It has also helped ensure the local offer is broadened out to cover the 0-25 age range.

I spent a couple of days with the SCVYS

Development Worker in the Spring term visiting a number of SCVYS members. I was able to talk to the Partners about the Family Hub and how they can be part of the service, it was great to make links with the leads and we've had a number of services requesting to deliver from the Hub itself following the visits which is great

Family Hub Manager

Outcome 2 Strengthened communication, trust

Strengthened communication, trust and influence across strategic and operational partnerships

Strategic Objective 2 cont....

Further establish our role
as the specialist childrer
and young people
capacity building
organisation in
Staffordshire



Staffordshire's Co-production Promise

The task of supporting the embedding of co-production as an approach across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, funded by NHS England via the local Integrated Care Board, has steadily built momentum through the year.

Many work areas have adopted the approach using tools such as Staffordshire's Co-production Promise, Whose Shoes or the SEND Charter developed in Stoke-on-Trent, and those receiving support services are noticing the difference.

To use an analogy, a sub-culture has been introduced and is steadily influencing the prevalent mainstream culture. The early adopters are on board, and we are testing wider workforce awareness, understanding and confidence, whilst continually raising the profile of co-production and the tools that have been created. These are all freely available on our dedicated webpage.

There will be further local awareness raising during National Co-production Week and we are keen to ensure co-production is part of mandatory training across all partners to support the embedding process.

Young People's Foundation Trust (YPFT)

SCVYS remains committed to the YPFT network nationally finding it a place we easily belong and connect to similar organisations around the country. Phil has been invited to join their Board of Trustees, and the insights we gain into national policy and strategy development will help us stay ahead of the curve in terms of potential challenges and opportunities.

The new CEO, Chris Murray visited us in Stafford and was impressed with the breadth of our partnerships across the children and young people's system, as well as our ability to collect and communicate impact data and stories.

Staffordshire Youth Union (SYU)

Over the past year, Staffordshire Youth Union (SYU) has actively championed youth voice and engagement across the county through a wide range of impactful initiatives. They raised funds for SNAP Cannock, supported the Trussell Trust food drive, and played a key role in shaping Staffordshire's Local Transport Plan by gathering and presenting young people's views. SYU also contributed to the development of the county's Cultural Strategy, reviewed the PSHE curriculum, and collaborated with the Integrated Care Board on youth health priorities, creating artwork and presenting at key events. Their by-election process in November expanded membership to 26 young people from all districts, and they responded swiftly to local issues like the closure of Cannock's theatre and museum. SYU contributed to the "Where Will It End?" anti-violence campaign, engaged with senior leaders in education at the inaugural Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent PSHE Conference, and supported the launch of the Staffordshire Health App Finder for young people. Their efforts were recognised with a Special Recognition award from the ICS, and they continue to influence regional and national youth policy through ongoing consultation and advocacy.







Know Your Place (KYP) is a five year project that will build a young people's community research network across Staffordshire. We were notified in October 2024 we were successful in our bid to deliver Phase 2 of this programme following a successful phase 1 pilot. This project, for which we are partnering with University of Staffordshire and Staffordshire County Council, has hit the ground running this year. This started with a two day launch event in London, led by the The Young Foundation who are administering the grant on behalf of UKRI, which also involved meeting the other Community Research networks across the UK.

The start of 2025 has seen the staff team assemble to get this ambitious project off the ground including re- establishing a Young People's Steering Group to sit at the heart of decision making.

For more information contact rhia@staffscvys.org.uk



Strategic Objective 3

Promote and encourage a person-centred approach across the children and family's system that values the voice of Children, Young People and Families in improving support and services.



Outcome 5

Strategic decision-making and service development is increasingly improved by good utilisation of the voice of Children, Young People and Families.





UK Youth Parliament

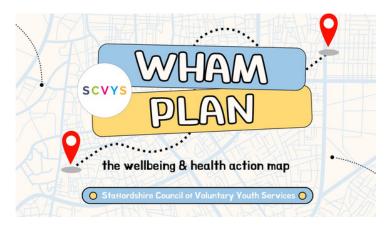
Over the past year, Staffordshire's Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs) have demonstrated exceptional commitment to representing young people's voices locally, regionally, and nationally. Despite the closure of the British Youth Council, they remained active and engaged, attending an unofficial regional induction, participating in the Youth Con event, and contributing to national discussions on mentoring and youth empowerment at Westminster. They developed policy submissions for the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) manifesto, attended the Annual Conference, and took part in regional meetings on ethical leadership and climate action. Their involvement culminated in a strong showing at the UKYP Annual Sitting in the House of Commons, where three Staffordshire MYPs spoke, marking their most successful participation to date. Their advocacy helped shape national campaigns on votes at 16 and period dignity, and one MYP contributed directly to the UKYP manifesto, Shaping Our Future, Today Not Tomorrow. Looking ahead, they are preparing to attend the 2025 Annual Conference, continuing their impactful work with the support of SCVYS. 8

WHAM plan

The Wellbeing and Health Action Map (WHAM) Plan is a series of emotional wellbeing sessions designed and delivered by young people, for young people aged 11-18 (with scope for up to 25) which originated in 2019 in a partnership with CAMHS (MPFT) and Staffordshire Youth Union. This year has seen a revamp of the Wham Plan project focussing on:

- Co-production with young people to refresh existing materials and design new, accessible resources.
- Development of a User Delivery Agreement to ensure consistent and principled use of the WHAM Plan.
- Multi-agency collaboration led by SCVYS, involving key partners including MPFT, NSCHT, Changes, and Action for Children to shape the WHAM Plan model and resources
- Robust impact measurement methodology created, including a bespoke tool co-designed with young people.

We are excited to relaunch the Wham Plan resources in 2025 for professionals supporting youth-led wellbeing sessions.



Summer War Graves Project 2024

This summer, young people from Germany and Staffordshire united for the Cannock Chase Summer War Graves residential camp—an enduring partnership between the German War Graves Commission (Volksbund), SCVYS, and Staffordshire County Council. Over 12 nights, participants aged 16–18 helped maintain the UK's only German Military Cemetery, home to nearly 5,000 war graves.



Now in its 62nd year, the camp continues to foster international understanding, historical reflection, and personal development. Highlights included visits to the National Memorial Arboretum, guided cemetery tours, a poetry workshop, and a welcome lunch with veterans. Recreational activities such as canoeing, historical site visits, and a glow-stick disco added to the experience!

With an average rating of 8.82/10, participants praised the camp for its educational value, cultural exchange, and lasting friendships. The programme remains a powerful example of youth engagement, remembrance, and reconciliation.



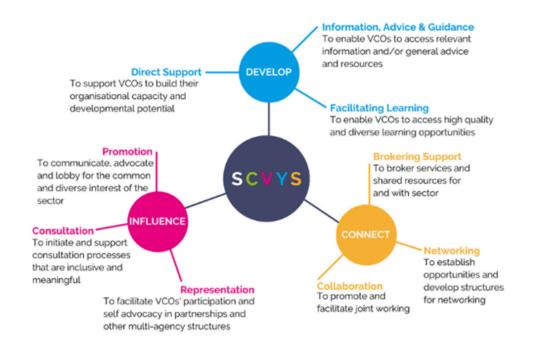
Looking forward to 2025-26

Having secured long-term funding for both the PSHE Education Service and Know Your Place, our focus is clearly on securing the core Strategic Partner contract with the County Council which enters its final year in August.

SCVYS is also keen to strengthen our Board of Trustees, and are currently undertaking a process to recruit some apprentice trustees to ensure youth voice is present in our decision-making processes. We await any impact from the change in political leadership at the County Council as a result of the recent elections, as well as the ongoing local government review process which requires a local business case to be submitted in November 2025 and implementation to begin by April 2027.

We are keen to maximise any potential local benefit arising from the upcoming National Youth Strategy and are lobbying hard for investment in the local sector utilising learning from programmes like Turnaround which tapped into the skills and connections of the local voluntary sector saving the public purse significant sums of money as well as providing sustained positive outcomes for local young people.

As soon as the Strategic Partner contract with the County Council is secured and there is a clear national direction of travel in relation to young people, we will refresh our Strategic Plan in readiness for 2026 and beyond.





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We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our partners and funders for their support during the year, and our member organisations for their dedicated support of local children, young people and families.