

Freedom of Information Request 009/2025 Youth Club

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This concerns the Castle Cary Youth Club which is understood has been contracted out to Youth Connect South West. In relation to this I would be grateful if you could you provide the following information:

- **The total amount of money spent to date by Castle Cary Town Council on establishing and operating this programme.**

CCTC have spent £15,170 (net) to date since the youth provision started in April 2024.

- **The forecasted cost of the programme for the next two financial years**

The three year contract between South East Somerset LCN and Youth Connect South West (YCSW) ends in April 2027. The cost of the programme for Castle Cary is £10,000 per year. Each Council (Castle Cary, Bruton, Milborne Port and Wincanton) agreed to pay £10,000 per year for a three year period. It should be noted that a grant of £35,000 was awarded to the project from Somerset Association of Local Councils (£17,500 in year 1 and £17,500 in year 2). YCSW have also obtained funding to enhance the offer to the young people by being able to subsidise day trips etc.

- **An estimate of the number of staff hours spent on work relating to this project.**

Approximately 10 hours spent by the Town Clerk attending meetings and processing invoices etc. Approximately 2 hours spent by the Marketing and Communications Administrator promoting the youth club and activities.

- **A copy of the Business Case or equivalent documentation that demonstrates the compelling need for public funds to be allocated to this initiative.**

Please see Appendix 1 (feasibility study completed by YCSW in 2022 – details for other parishes have been removed), Appendix 2 (report presented to APC in September 2023) and Appendix 3 (report from LCN contract review meeting in July 2025).

- **Whether consideration was given to instead supporting existing youth programmes (such as Scouts, Guides, ACF etc). If so, please provide any relevant assessments or documentation.**

CCTC support existing groups through grants and the use of the Market House to hold Coffee mornings. The youth provision offer through YCSW provides an additional opportunity for young people in Castle Cary and Ansford and the neighbouring parishes.

- **Whether attendance records are kept for each event. If so, please provide a copy of these records dating back to the start of the programme (redacted if needed).**

Youth Connect Southwest keep attendance records for each session / activity but they cannot be shared due to GDPR.

A summary of the most recent data (report not yet available) is below

Young people registered	30
Attendance July – September 25	139
Average session attendance	10
Age group	11 – 19
Number of sessions delivered	14

- **Whether the contractor's performance is assessed against any agreed metrics or regular reporting requirements. If so, please provide copies of any performance and regular reports produced since the programme began (redacted if needed).**

Quarterly reports are provided to each Council and joint contract review meetings are held. There is regular communication between staff and Town Councillors and YCSW, via email, phone and in person.

Appendix 4 – quarterly reports

South East Somerset Youth Work Feasibility Study

SAM PLUMMER, MBA, BA (HONS)

DAISY CHURCH. YOUNG PERSON

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Objectives of the feasibility study.....	6
Definitions for the study	6
Method	7
Stage 1-Opting in for councils	7
Stage 2- Data Gathering.....	8
Numbers of young people in defined area	10
Community profiles.....	13
Profile: Ansford	13
Profile: Bruton.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Profile: Castle Cary	15
Profile: Ditcheat	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Profile: Henstridge	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Profile: Milborne Port	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Profile: Shepton Montague.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Profile: South Cadbury and Sutton Montis	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Profile: Sparkford	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Profile: Wincanton	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Youth Work sector in Somerset.....	19
Somerset Youth Work Alliance	20
North Dorset	21
Feedback Youth Work Providers and connected stakeholders	21
Funding	22
Potential models	23
How to operate the Youth Work	24
Grouping of councils	25
How to engage Youth Work provider:	26
Indicative Costs for Youth Work Delivery	27
Recommendations	30
Conclusion.....	32
About the Authors	33
Appendix 1	34

Introduction

This study was Commissioned on behalf of the South East Somerset (SES) Local Community Network (LCN), by Castle Cary Town Council through consultation with the project steering group (see Method). This study follows on from local work in many parish and town councils who have aspirations of doing more for their young people.

The history of Universal Youth Work in Somerset leading up to the present day, has left the SES area with little in the way of a Universal Youth Work offer for young people. There is however a really strong Youth Work sector in Somerset in some areas, Somerset's geography and its dispersed settlements means that the SES does not have a large local provider.

Focusing on Universal Youth Work this study attempts to understand the need for this type of work in some of the parish and town council areas in SES. The study undertook to understand these key communities and their need for Youth Work for their young people. Through engagement with stakeholders such as Youth Work providers and funders, this study attempts to assess the viability and sustainability of developing a Youth Work service in SES.

Structured using community profiles, with direct input from young people (where possible) and other community stakeholders, each identified area is considered in terms of their aspirations and need for Youth Work. The later part of this report looks at the Youth Work sector in Somerset, including its history and then potential funding opportunities.

Lastly the report looks at potential models to move forward with increasing the delivery of Youth Work in SES. Centrally to the report local councils are considered to be the natural leaders to this initiative and undoubtedly best placed to do so. Critically in order to move on from this report to a state of Youth Work delivery local councils will need to match aspiration, with funding and development work from elected members and officers.

Objectives of the feasibility study

The feasibility study objectives were co-produced with the research team and the steering group (See methods section) and cover 4 key aspects:

- 1) Understand the current availability and gaps in Universal Youth Work Provision in the defined area
- 2) Understand key communities in the defined area in terms of their aspirations and their needs of Youth Work support for their young people
- 3) Assess the viability and options for increasing Universal Youth Provision in the defined area, including options for funding and sustainability
- 4) Create recommendations on how to develop sustainable universal youth work offers in the SES LCN area

Definitions for the study

Defined area: is made up of parish and Town council areas the opted into the study. These areas are:

Ansford
Bruton
Castle Cary
Ditchat
Henstridge
Milborne Port
Shepton Montague
South Cadbury and Sutton Montis
Sparkford
Wincanton

Youth Work: a **distinct educational process** adapted across a variety of settings to support a young person's personal, social and educational development (NYA 2022). In practice it is curriculum informed work with young people, that uses activities as a basis for building relationships and uses those relationships to support and enable personal development for young people.

Universal Youth Work: Youth Work that is openly available to all young people (as opposed to targeted intervention) and where the stated purpose is not pre-determined or aimed at addressing specific issues or problems.

Young People: For the purposes of this study, we are using the age range 13–17 years old. However, it was accepted that if during data gathering, the research

team came across 12 year olds or 18-19 year olds their views could be gathered and included.

Method

This study was commissioned by the steering group on behalf of the South East Somerset (SES) Local Community Network (LCN). This steering group consisted of:

Judi Morison	Chair of Castle Cary Town Council
Ewan Jones	Chair of Bruton Town Council
Tim Carty	Chair of Milborne Port Parish Council
Tim Cook	Mendip District Council
Lisa Davis	Castle Cary Town Clerk
Howard Ellard	Wincanton Town Council

Before the commencement of this study two initial meetings were held within the SES LCN. The first meeting was the LCN launch event, the second was focused on Youth Work provision in the LCN area. Both meetings included workshops discussing needs and wants in relation to Youth Work and other children/young people positive activities. These meetings comprised of council members and professionals from third sector organisations, this work informed the formation of the study objectives.

Following these meetings, the steering group co-produced the study objectives, the scope, and the project timeline with Sam Plummer the project Lead. At this stage the steering group decided that Parish and Town Councils should opt into involvement in the study.

Stage 1-Opting in for councils

An information email and link was sent to all local councils involved in SES LCN which enabled them to opt into the study with a 3-week window. The councils were given a project overview and by signing up all committed to:

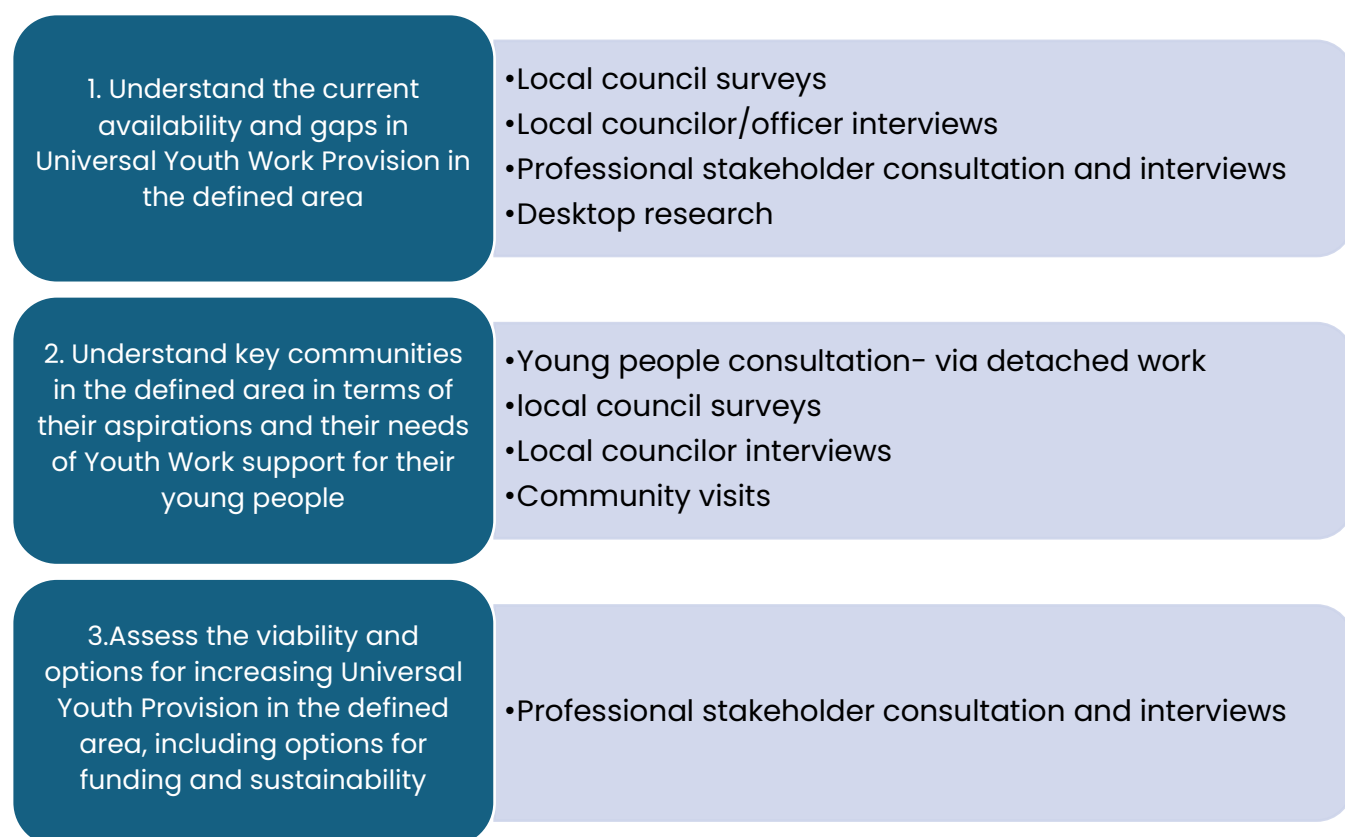
- Their area being included in the report, including the information they share with the research team.
- Agreeing to being interviewed or setting up the interview with the relevant councillors or officers.
- Filling in the parish/town council survey.

- Supporting visits or outreach from the team where possible.

At the end of the window 10 councils had opted in, which became the defined area for the study.

Stage 2- Data Gathering

The approach to data gathering was to use different methods to engage different stakeholders, with a view of getting input to satisfy the first 3 objectives of the study.



Local council surveys: These online surveys were completely qualitative and focused on known community resources, existing activity relevant to the study, community strengths and community concerns. These surveys also aimed to gather each council's aspiration for Youth Work provision, budget availability/priority and appetite for collaborative working with other councils. List of survey respondents can be found in appendix 1.

Local Councillor/officer interviews: Conducted after the surveys, these semi-formal interviews were conducted digitally and explored the answer to the surveys deeper and encouraged participants to lead the discussion to

information they thought important for their area. List of interviewees can be found in appendix 1.

Professional stakeholder consultation and interviews: Consultation here is to be considered in the broadest sense. Through the duration of the project the project lead had contact with a range of professional stakeholders (employed or volunteer) via informal face to face conversation, emails and telephone calls. These stakeholders include police officers, third sector organisations, uniformed groups and church representatives. These interactions will be used to inform the study.

In terms of the Somerset Youth Work Sector, information was sent out about the project via the Somerset Youth Alliance and it was requested for organisations to either arrange an interview or to supply information via email. In addition to this the project leader attended a Youth Work alliance meeting to discuss the project and gain feedback.

Professional stakeholder interviews were semi-formal and consisted of both online and face to face interviews. The interviews were aimed at Somerset youth sector organisations (primarily Youth Work Alliance members), funders, commissioners and Somerset County Council authority officers. List of interviewees can be found in appendix 1.

Desktop research: Consisted of internet search and considering available quantitative data relevant to the area.

Young people consultation- via detached work: A detached team consisting of the project lead, another professionally qualified worker and on some occasions our young person researcher Daisy Church conducted 40+ hours of detached work across the defined area.

Care was taken to not raise expectation of young people, by being clear that we are just idea gathering and explaining the process of the study. We also pointed these young people to the YCSW website as when the report is published it will be made available there for young people.

Young people were asked if they would be happy to take part, if they were they were given markers and a bit of card, they put their age and if they wanted their gender (we asked them not to write their names or anybody else's). Then we asked 3 questions:

- 1) What they liked about their area?
- 2) What could be better about their area?

3) What they would like to see for young people in their area

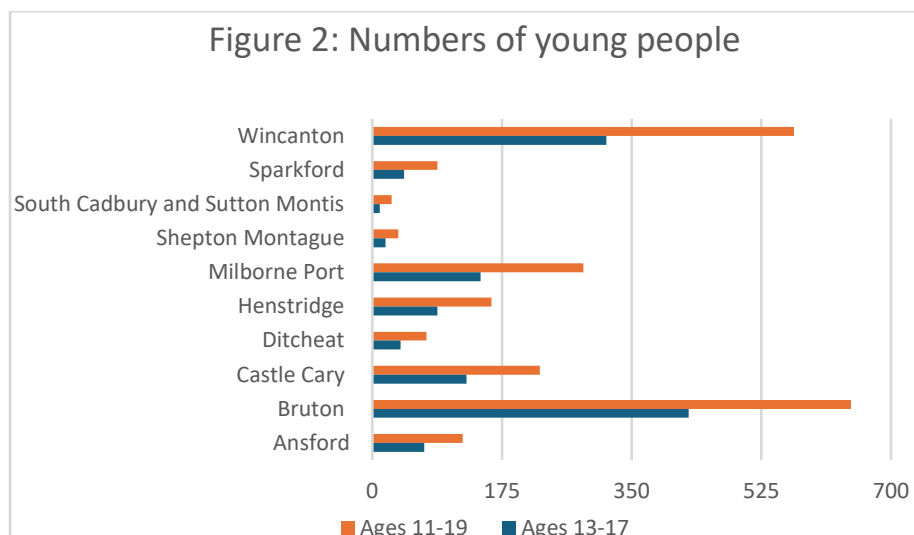
As they did this we also talked about their answers and tried to have deeper conversations. Where young people didn't want to write (or it was too wet), the youth workers recorded the comments from young people in relation to the questions and following conversation.

Community visits: Visits were conducted to the area looking at the available resources for young people such as parks, playing fields and community facilities. Areas in the community were visited where there were concerns about young people's behaviour or places where they were known to congregate. The project lead also used these visits to talk to shop staff, members of the public and parents.

Numbers of young people in defined area

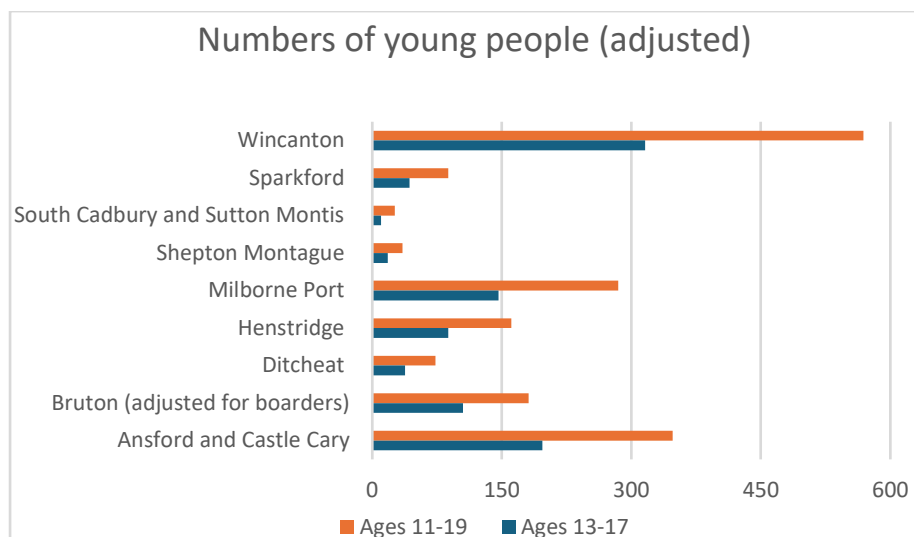
Data of estimated numbers of young people were supplied from Somerset County Council.

	Ages 13-17	Ages 11-19
Ansford	70	122
Bruton	427	646
Castle Cary	127	226
Ditchheat	38	73
Henstridge	88	161
Milborne Port	146	285
Shepton Montague	18	35
South Cadbury and Sutton Montis	10	26
Sparkford	43	88
Wincanton	316	569



From this data shown in Table 2 and Figure 2 we can see that Bruton has the largest population of young people from the defined areas, followed by Wincanton and then Milborne Port. However, this data is affected by the boarding schools present in Bruton. Also, Ansford and Castle Cary are connected areas physically and there is argument to view them together. In Table 3 and Figure 3 the data for Bruton has been adjusted by removing the 3 census output areas to the boarding accommodations; in addition, Ansford and Cary data has been combined.

	Ages 13-17	Ages 11-19
Ansford and Castle Cary	197	348
Bruton (adjusted for boarders)	105	181
Ditchheat	38	73
Henstridge	88	161
Milborne Port	146	285
Shepton Montague	18	35
South Cadbury and Sutton Montis	10	26
Sparkford	43	88
Wincanton	316	569



When considered with these adjustments Wincanton has the most young people, followed by the combined Ansford and Castle Cary area, then Milborne Port.

Community profiles

Profile: Ansford

Resources and current activity:

Caryford Hall is a key asset in Ansford for the community but doesn't current have an offer for young people. There are playing fields next to the Caryford hall with goal posts. Caryford Hall used to have a Youth Club operating there which was funded by the council, it stopped as staff and volunteers

Fairfield is also in the Ansford parish it has an outdoor gym, pump track and a lot of open space.

Community concerns (from APC and other stakeholders):

The parish council would like to work much closer with Ansford secondary school, the council think a higher level of partnership working is important. The parish council is concerned about drug dealing which they believe is happening close to the school.

There is concern about ASB particularly around the Caryford Hall, there is a significant size group of young people who congregate there. They are interfering with users at the hall, there is also incidents of damage and some break-ins. The Council feel like they are spending too much time dealing with issues of ASB, that could be spent on delivery more for their community.

Parish Council's perspectives on developing Youth Work:

Would want to work with Castle Cary to develop services because they are interconnected by geography. The parish council would like to do more positive things for young people.

What Young people is good about Ansford?

"I really enjoy the bike track" male 14

*Please see Castle Cary profile. Young people in both areas did not identify whether they were from Ansford or Castle Cary.

What young people say is not so good about Ansford?

*Please see Castle Cary profile.

What young people say they would you like to see for young people?

*Please see Castle Cary profile.

Additional observations from the outreach team:

As with the Castle Cary profile the lines drawn by the council boundaries are meaningless to young people, young people freely move between Ansford and Castle Cary, being where they think is best for them. Most young people didn't know if they were from Castle Cary or Ansford.

Conclusion:

Many of the conclusions for Cary Cary apply to Ansford but it is important that Ansford is considered in its own right. The ASB issues present in Ansford are concerning as is the potentially very public drug dealing. Engaging those young people most at risk of being involved with ASB seems important to the council, who are having to deal with the fallout from these behaviours. Focusing work in or around Caryford Hall seems like a very viable option. Some of the older young people have fond memories of the Caryford hall Youth Club, this could be a positive thing.

As with Castle Cary, young people living and hanging out in Ansford said that they would like more activity. Importantly, in Ansford's case co-developing it with Castle Cary is vitally important as young people will move across the areas and identify themselves with where they want to be rather than whether the council boundaries are.

Profile: Castle Cary

Resources and current activity: Castle Cary have an established range of activities, spaces, and equipment for young people. These include Donald Pither Memorial Field (football and cricket pitch, basketball court) and Fairfield (outdoor gym equipment, pump track, open space). Activities available include Scouts, Brownies and a number of sports clubs. Castle Cary Town Council (CCTC) have awarded grants to these groups and other organisations to delivery opportunities for young people. CCTC have led initiatives such as Food Hygiene Level 2 courses offered to school leavers and working with Somerset Skills and Learning to provide traineeships. The council already support young people events such as a Skate Jam and Fun on the Field.

The Pavilion and the market house both have suitable space that could be used in the future for the provision of Youth activity. In addition, CCTC are considering constructing a Youth Shelter.

Community concerns (from CCTC and other stakeholders): Anti-social behaviour has been raised by various stakeholders different parts of Cary. The All Saints Church has been a significant concern with issues including entering the church without permission, damaging signs and be aggressive to church personnel. The site of the closed Conservative Club also shows significant level of damage, graffiti, and drug use. However, young people have raised that they are victimised by Castle Cary residents on social media [Castle Cary Real News] and shouted at while hanging out in parks.

The police raised concerns of possible drug dealing and connections to county lines. Castle Cary young people were negatively mentioned when reaching other areas, in connection with drug dealing and a knife crime incident although neither of these claims were verified.

Other concerns raised included:

- Poor transport links were cited as a concern re assessing opportunities and employment.
- Cost of living increases are making it more difficult for families to afford activities/clubs

- Full time education opportunities after Year 11 being limited meaning that young people have more spare time to occupy themselves

Town Councils perspectives on developing Youth Work: CCTC think that supporting young people is a priority, they have already budgeted for some activity and have provided grants to providers, previously they did commission a Youth Work provider.

What Young people think is good about Castle Cary?

"Going out with mates is good, there's a lot of us" (male 16) he went on to say that young people travel in from near by villages.

"Conservative club is a good place to hang out as it had a pool table" (male 15) I believe he meant when it was open rather than currently.

"I like the football club" (14 male)

"We have a fair, it's really good I wish it happened more often" (15 Female)

"Co-op is good, we like skating and scooting"

"the community Pantry is very good, im proud we have it" (16) for info there is a cupboard in Ansford Academy for person hygiene items and food for students to take. This is run by Cary Cares supported by the TC

What young people say is not so good about castle Cary?

"The new estate has brought more rough people" (13 male)

"There are dodgy people [adults and other teens], where every we sit, we get problems from people" (male 14)

"My name was put of facebook and people were saying horrible things about me, it wasn't me that did what they said I did" (male 16)

"Some young people cause a lot of problems; they scorched the floor of the church" (Female 15)

"new estate park is rubbish" (female 13)

"when we sat in the park, a lady shouted at us because we were playing with the swings" (undisclosed 14)

"I used to go to the woods near the church, but there's a homeless man who lives in the bush, so I'm too scared to go now" (female 12) I don't think that's true!!

"Nothing to do"

"other Young people smoking weed"

"people in Cary are dickheads, the dodgy adults are the ones profiling us as dodgy" (16)

"Old people make young people move on, there's nowhere for us to be; Cary is a shithole, it's got nice buildings, but horrible people inside them" (undisclosed 16)

"We were told that we would get a Youth Shelter, but they [CCTC] haven't done it" (Male 15)- this was checked, and CCTC say no promises were made directly, but young people were consulted about the possibility of the shelter. For info TC has the funding and needs advice from the Police as to where to site it ...a Police officer has been out to survey the area

What young people say they would like to see for young people?

Young people would like to see improvements to the pump track and/or a skate park facility. "The pump track is not so good; I would like an adult style skate park with ramps and stuff" (male 13). Others compared what other areas had such as Wincanton and feel they would like something similar.

A new Youth Shelter was mentioned several times and generally considered by young people as something they would want, favourite sites were the pump track or moat garden. The group met by the church says that part of the reason they stay by the church is that there's is cover from the rain.

In terms of possible youth activities young people said: "a young person's party {disco/rave}", "free food is good, I would go for that", "I would go to activities at the cricket pavilion [like a youth club]", "cooking activities would be good, also I would do art or music". Generally young people said that if there were general activities, they would be interested in going. They did mention that there are different groups and mixing them would not be easy. One young person fondly remembered a Youth Club at the Swainson building and said "I used to enjoy going, I think others would too". Young people from all the different groups spoken to feel that there's enough young people that would use universal youth work activities.

Additional observations from the outreach team: Almost all of the young people we spoke to didn't know what a youth worker was or does, however we were treated wonderfully and welcomed by all of them. They were a pleasure to work with. Many of the young people didn't know if they were from Ansford or Cary. With

one group they were clearly smoking cannabis fairly heavily, but other than that there were limited signs of substance use. The damage at the church that was seen, indicates that some young people have been carrying blades.

Conclusion: A clear theme that came out is community cohesion, through; the discussion about new people coming in from new developments and the perceived (by young people) dislike of young people by the older community and behaviour issues at the church. Cary Real News posts about young people also indicate community frustrations about young people and how they are using community assets and their behaviour. Universal Youth Work could play a role improving community cohesion through getting young people to engage in positive community activities and projects- for example volunteer litter picks or gardening. Using CC real news as a platform we could show the great things that young people are doing in the town.

ASB was a concern raised by stake holders particularly around All Saints Church, people have tried to engage with the young people involved and try to stop it from happening. From meeting the group, I think this work could be built on and through building longer consistent relationship and working on more suitable congregation areas this situation could be completely resolved. Here a more targeted approach with the group would work through building trust and proving that engagement has rewards. Detached work in this area would defiantly need to be part of the picture. This approach will be key to challenging other issues that are apparent such as involvement with substance use and potentially county lines.

Young people who were met were very happy to share their views and although a traditional youth council may not be appealing to them, a link with the council through a universal provision would be great for young people to have their voice heard directly by the council. The development of a skate park and a youth shelter would be really key issues but also really good for developing a sense of ownership and community from young people in the town. For info it's an aspiration to reconvene a Youth Council

Generally, the young people who were met would try activities that were offered, there is scope for detached, open access provision and project work. The key in Castle Cary will be to develop the relationships first and then develop an offer based on the young people that want to engage, while actively targeted those young people that we want to engage (the church group).

Youth Work sector in Somerset

There are some real strengths in the Somerset Youth Work provider sector, not least the development of the Somerset Youth Work Alliance which has enhanced collaborative working across providers and built much needed infrastructure such as training provision for Youth Work.

With resource (funding and staffing) levels low, need high and such a large area, competition for the limited resources available is a real concern to providers. Coupled with impact of covid, limited availability of trained staff and lacklustre funding opportunities nationally some providers are having a really hard time. All providers have fought hard to sustain youth provision in their area, this can be understood through the history of Somerset provision as it stands now. Providers would like to see growth for their organisations, leading to increased benefit to young people, but also creating economies of scale to build their organisational infrastructures.

Somerset County Council Childrens Services

The County Council provides and commissions a range of early help services, including Young Carers Youth Clubs, Youth Offending service and the Family intervention Service (FIS). Some of these services are county-wide and will support young people from SES if they meet the service requirements but aren't based there. The threshold for support for FIS, means that young people would need to have a significant level of need to be picked up, this means that for most young people that schools are their primary option for support on issues that affect them that are perceived as a lower level.

Somerset County Council don't fund Youth Work anymore but do value the work and do try to support them in other ways such as supporting funding bids. Recently, Louise Palmer Strategic Commissioner for Somerset is working with Somerset Youth Work Alliance on Youth Investment bid, which is for developing Youth Work (mainly capital) in levelling up areas, SES has none of these areas.

Currently, there is work happening on the development of Family or Community Hubs, which will become focal points for services and support, including young people. This will like aim to work with existing provision rather than funding new ones. There is not any fixed plan on where these hubs in terms of location yet, although in SES Wincanton maybe a likely place. Developing Youth Work around the Hubs would be desirable, so that parents and teenagers can be supported around the Hubs.

Potted history of Somerset Youth Provision

Somerset County Council had a Youth Service, which delivered youth work, supported the third sector, and held together the necessary infrastructure such as ensuring training provision for Youth Workers. Over the period between 2012 and 2018 Somerset Council reduced and reduced its service provision. In 2014/15 the service stopped being a direct delivery service and moved to become an arm's length supporting youth and community service. Almost all the professionally trained operational staff were let go and the service changed into providing resources, support, information, and guidance for others delivering Youth Work. The service also provided grant aid and that reduced over the period until the service ended around 2018-2019.

During the period of reduction Somerset Youth Service (SYS) did lot of work with the third sector and town/parish councils to try and enable Youth provision at a local level. This included supporting the development of new organisations such Community Youth Project around Martock and Active Learning and Skills around Chard. A number of ex Somerset professional Youth Workers moved over into the third sector into existing organisations or establishing new organisations around their old "patches".

Through this enablement work SYS tried many different approaches to developing sustainable Youth provision. In some areas where SYS was delivering before it's withdrawal, the links with Town/Parish Councils were strong and thus in was easier for the provision to take root through the voluntary sector. Jeff Brown in his interview stated "This only worked well where councils provided not only moral support (which is important), but significant and sustained financial support. Another key aspect noticed I where provision was sustained is that real accountability was held on providers by commissioners and funders, not just setting something up but monitoring the quality and level of the provision". Of all the models of enablement tried by SYS there was not a single outstanding way of doing it to ensure that the provision became rooted and sustainable, different things worked in some places but not in others.

Somerset Youth Work Alliance

Facilitated by SPARK Somerset and supported by the Somerset Community Foundation, the Somerset Youth Alliance brings together Youth Work providers from across Somerset. Penny Schofield (SPARK) defined it as "a group of about 12 key providers in Somerset who really want to work together, who want to be working cooperatively rather than competitively with each other, who want to be supporting each other with shared ideas". In practice the alliance forms a larger

network of Youth Work organisations held together through Spark ranging from very small volunteer providers to large providers like Young Somerset. The Alliance idea dates back to 2018, but traction for the idea really took hold in February 2021 where organisations started working together on projects most notably provision of Youth Work training which was a shared issue for the Youth Work providers. To an extent the Alliance could replace the infrastructure and support functions offered by SYS, by focusing on shared issues such as training or accreditation.

The importance of the Alliance is not to be underestimated as it provides a focus point for Youth Sector leadership in Somerset and collaboration, this is attractive and useful to funders and commissioners. The Alliance provides a great platform for consultation and co-working with the Youth Work sector. An example of this is how Somerset County Council are working with key members of the alliance to access a government fund (YIF).

The Alliance is still developing itself, though the shared purpose and common cause is clear enough. The reduction of competition is an area that is still not well defined, organisations have their own “patches” and there seems to be tacit agreement around sticking to them and not encroaching into other organisations “patches” or specific types of delivery. In Wincanton, the Balsam Centre is delivering Youth Work and there for this would need to be considered.

North Dorset

Though not the primary purpose of the study, it should be noted that Henstridge and Milborne Port are very close to the boarder of Dorset. There are some existing gaps in provision in Dorset in, Stalbridge for example. This does present a opportunity to work closely across the border and possibly mean that services could work across. Not all Youth Work providers are constrained by authority boarders. This could mean that Dorset providers might be better placed geographically to support Henstridge for example.

Dorset Youth Association is looking to develop more provision in North Dorset and these developments should be considered alongside any development in SES.

Feedback Youth Work Providers and connected stakeholders

One of the most repeated points that came from conversation with providers and stakeholders was that while they wanted to deliver more youth work, they need to focus on work that can offer sustainability and capacity. They would be limited interest from providers for involvement in projects that are pilots, of short contract

term or do not cover full cost of the work, such as management capacity. This is because of the investment needed in management and organisational changes needed to make extra work possible. As a minimum many providers said they would be looking for minimum 3-5 years commitment to develop new work with parish/town councils.

Management capacity was an issue for a number of those that were consulted, the reduction of funding during covid-19 has had an impact in this area. This means that some organisations are treading water with the work that they have rather than actively looking to expand. However, if there was an opportunity of new work that was able to build capacity for the organisations, they would be interested.

Of those providers spoken to, 4 said that they would be willing to tender for work in the defined area. They would generally be looking for blocks of work rather than individual sessions.

YMCA

Community and Youth Project

Active Learning and Skills

Youth Connect South West (on the basis of ensuring Henstridge Youth Provision)

In addition to this Young Somerset would be interested in working in partnership with other providers to deliver detached work, that would support its alternative education work.

Funding

As LCN's move on from the pilots and become imbedded, there may be a level of funding available. Within this study a clear plan how this would work was not found. There is some expectation that there may be a system of grants.

Somerset Community Foundation have a range of funding programmes, some of these programmes may be suitable to apply to support the development of youth work services. Engaging with Somerset Community foundation at the earliest possible opportunity will be very important. If there is any funding available this would be match funding and would not underwrite any service in full. There could be opportunity to gain funding here to jump start provision as councils raise their precepts. The foundation believes that sustainability is key, longer-term investment needs to be seen (5years +) and proof of sustainability of any plan would be needed to gain any additional funding.

The National Lottery is a possible funding stream. In terms of applications to either Reaching Communities (over £10,000) or Awards for All (under £10,000) it is important that any applications show a good fit with the Fund's priorities and can demonstrate that they:

- build strong relationships in and across communities, and/or
- improve the places and spaces that matter to communities, and/or
- help more people to reach their potential, by supporting them at the earliest possible stage.

They also need to be able to demonstrate how they are community-led, strengths based and connected. This latter point is especially important as the Fund will expect them to be working with other young people developments that are happening in the county. In order to be successful in any lottery bid it is likely to be important that an infrastructure with funding already exists and the lottery bid would be an extension to services.

While there are the above options for funding, the key is sustainability and thus through the study, the need for councils to core fund any services from their precept was seen as the most important funding. Councils buy in through funding will really help to evidence community support beyond moral support, and it's important to remember that funding often attracts funding.

Potential models

Given that the backbone of funding would need to come from parish/town councils any model that could work for the SES area needs to start from the parish/town councils taking ownership and leadership of its development.

Within the study all parish and town Councils are in slightly different places in their journey towards regular universal Youth provision. Henstridge already has an operating provision but needs to ensure a permanent provider. Wincanton said that they see it as a longer-term project over a couple of years. Some of the parish and town councils have some funds set aside and others don't. Some of the parish councils would never have enough funds to operate a provision but would like access to services for their young people.

In terms of possible models there are several points to consider, how to group councils together, where to use a Youth Work organisation for delivery or for parishes to directly employ and if using a Youth Work organisation how to engage and monitor them.

How to operate the Youth Work

The first point to consider is who would deliver the Youth work.

Option 1a: Use an established Youth Work Provider

Strength: Established compliance and safeguarding systems, processes, and practicalities such as insurance and recording databases. Access to wide pool of resources, experience, and professional development. Independent management structure use to dealing with practice issues and challenges. Access to wider professional networks. Larger capacity outside of delivery to develop more work, including new funding streams. Access to pool of staff to increase continuity of service delivery- like in cases of staff sickness

Weaknesses: May want to parachute in and out to deliver services, rather than embracing those communities as its own and developing a larger offer. Likely to be more expensive than directly employing via council.

Option 1b: Directly employ a Youth Worker

Strengths: Potentially cheaper, thus potentially more sustainable. Could more directly input councils' aspirations/priorities into the work. More locally lead (this model is more commonly used by single councils rather than collations). The Youth Work Alliance and Spark Somerset would add value to this model.

Weaknesses: If there is not the right support or infrastructure from host council it can be restricting to the delivery, compliance and professional development. In some areas this model has seen a very high turnover of staff, because of organisational/professional culture incompatibility. When sharing the host council might be perceived to get more from the arrangement. This option relies heavily on the host council, who would be responsible for all safeguarding and compliance, not to mention organisational cost in time and funding. This model can be at higher risk of closure, when councils are re-elected, and Youth Work is lowered in priority.

Option 1c: Council support and develop fully Volunteer led Youth Work

Strengths: Generally low cost. Can be very community focused. Spark Somerset could help with compliance and significant resources are already available around setting up via the historic work of Somerset Youth Service (like their handbook).

Weaknesses: Need to find very rare people that are skilled, committed and willing to give their time up for free. Need to establish a management committee who

can ensure compliance and safeguarding. This model can be really great but is at risk if you lose key volunteers, so a lot of the initial work can be wasted.

Option 1d: Create a new provider just for SES

Strengths: The provider would naturally be rooted in the community and could be built from a governance perspective to be directly influenced by the councils and the communities. Shaped as a professional Youth Work org and properly managed this could create a lasting solution to the provider gap.

Weaknesses: It is ALOT of work. There is no established base so everything would need to be built from scratch. Would need a significant amount of skilled support and councils' effort to establish. Even with a lot of support this model could fail before its established.

Grouping of councils

The Second point of consideration for a model is how to group parish councils together to build up the right level of funding and need to run and warrant provision.

Option 2a: Councils work alone as individual areas.

Strength: High level of autonomy for council. Quick to implement (potentially). Works well with 1b and 1c.

Weaknesses: Unless the council has access to a larger amount of funding (£30-40k p.a.), any post or contract will not be very attractive to a Youth Organisation or to a Youth Worker looking for a role. This model also doesn't capitalise on the fact that young people move between areas, thus lowering the intelligence that can be beneficial to supporting young people.

Option 2b: Councils work in small groups (2-4 areas)

Strengths: Creates a larger funding pot, making it more attractive to providers, or as a role hosted by one of the councils. If using a provider, once established this model can be low maintenance for councils as the provider does the work and in practice councils do not require a high degree co-operation as this is managed by the provider. Works well with 1a, 1b. Smaller areas may feel more comfortable working together than working with the larger ones, potentially offers a greater sense of control.

Weaknesses: While this level of coalition could create a good level of capacity, this is dependant on how much funding is on offer. This model can work well for the areas involved. However, model will only help and support the councils in the

coalition who are fee paying. With a provider they may be willing to add other areas later as their capacity builds, but they may not. The same applies to a role if other areas want to pay the host council. Sometimes this model can lack a level of scrutiny as councils become confident in providers, this can lead to quality issues.

Option 2C: Councils work in larger group/ create a SES Youth Partnership (this is not for delivery rather for overseeing and commissioning delivery.

Strengths: has the potential to have the largest funding pot, making a potentially very attractive offer for a provider or a strong offer for an employed worker in a host council. This model could be shaped to grow, could be established with a small number of councils and as more become interested they could join, this means it better for the wider area. Councils like Milborne Port, who are currently not thinking of having delivery could still contribute to access professional support, similarly Ditchheat could join and only require some activity as and when such as during holiday periods. Could be shaped so that member councils/communities have a strong level of influence on the development and operation of delivery. This partnership might also attract wider professional support from funders, commissioners and other professionals- this could mean that independent scrutiny on the delivery is supported which would be very preferable. Systems like quality assurance could be developed. If using a provider could be open to using more than one.

Weaknesses: Depending on governance structure this could be complex to operate, such as should it need its own bank account, policies, etc. Councils would need to commit to level of engagement to make it work well, possibly through having a Councillor or clerk on the management board. This could take some time to set up effectively.

How to engage Youth Work provider:

Option 3a: Tender Process

*Please note that based on sector engagement, the minimum contract that should be consider is 3 years to ensure that providers engage with this, the longer the contract term the higher likely-hood of strong pool of providers to select.

Strengths: there are pre-existing resources around tendering available and some support maybe available through Somerset Childrens services commissioning. Tendering means that providers will all get a fair shot at the work on offer this is better for sector. Tendering will require councils to state its requirements, most

importantly it should set out the aspirations and the key performance indicators expected such as the numbers of young people to engage. This method should ensure you get the best provider (including providers partnering with each other) for the job.

Weaknesses: This does require a level of focused work and if as a coalition a level of cooperation and agreement. As these areas are mostly underdeveloped setting the key performance indicators may be tricky. Providers should be open and honest in their tendering; however, they will need to be held to account on delivering what they promised, therefore contract management is important.

Option 3b: Framework contract

This could either be a different way to contract for the tender or used as instead of a tender process. This would set up an agreement, so councils could set up terms such as a payment for providers to sign up to. This allows councils to add services as things change and develop. In theory multiple suppliers could sign up to this and express an interest as offers come up from councils.

Strengths: High level of flexibility.

Weaknesses: could create unnecessary competition rather than increase co-operation. Needs more oversight and management.

Option 3C: Strategic partnership

Rather than develop a purely contractual relationship with the provider/s. Develop a relationship as partnership, where funding is granted to the provider. This would need a formal agreement.

Strengths: Closer ties and a stronger sense of shared purpose. Selection of strategic partner could take a similar approach as a tender. This level of cooperation means that providers

Weaknesses: Could create unclear accountability (unless agreement is well written)

Indicative Costs for Youth Work Delivery

Providers will have their own cost, models, and ways of working the below, is an example. This does not take into account how the session will be delivered detached, café, project or youth club, rather offer the basic level in terms of capacity. The below figures use JNC which is the nationally agreed pay rate for Youth Workers.

Based on providing 1 session (2 hours) there are likely to be the following costs:

- 1) A lead member of staff (senior Youth Support worker or above). This role would be in charge during the session and do pre and post work, such as recording reporting, safeguarding and planning activities. For a 2 hour session this post would need 6 hours a week. (this is assuming that they are based in the area, and are not getting paid to travel long distance.

This post would also do development like funding bids and partnership work, this aspect would also be enhanced through management in the provider model.
- 2) An Assistant (more assistants maybe needed if the numbers of young people are larger). An assistant would be needed for 3 hours a week, this includes setting up and packing up, as well as banking time for supervision with their manager. Assistants can be replaced or supplemented with volunteers; this does make it cheaper but comes with challenges.
- 3) Resource budget, for buying resources for activities or refreshments
- 4) Room hire, if in a building. (Often this is negotiated for cheap or free)
- 5) Organisational and management cost. The cost of operating the service to the organisation or council.

The below approximation is based on 52 weeks a year, which includes holiday and training, in this model delivery is 44 weeks.

	Cost per year	Notes
Lead member of staff (senior youth support worker)- 6 hours	£5056	Based on JNC point 13, with NI and min pension contributions
Assistant- 3 hours	£1960.50 (this will increase as you increase the number needed)	Based on JNC point 6, with NI and min pension contributions
Resource budget	£500	This works out to approximately £11 per session. For larger groups you may wish to supplement this.

Organisational cost	£1879.12	Based on 25% of sub total cost of delivery.
Total cost of session	£9395.62	*please note this is a approximation and inflation and wage increases, will over time increase cost.

This costing however is generally impractical as you are unlikely to employ a staff member for 3 or 6 hours. Thus, grouping more sessions together will make it more likely to employ. For example, grouping 3 sessions will cost: £28,186.88, then you would be able to offer an 18.5-hour post for the senior youth support worker which is more attractive and a 9-hour assistant post. If you could group 6 sessions together at a total of £56, 373.75, you could employ a full time senior and several assistants, making a more attractive post and more contingency for cover with the assistants. There are challenges with this because of not all 6 sessions can be in the evenings, so after school and weekend delivery would need to be used.

Additionally, the senior post could be upgraded to a professionally qualified youth worker, this would cost an approximately additional £6,426 pa, (£62800 total in the 6 session model). This would hopefully mean a more experienced and qualified member of staff, who could do a significant amount of development. With this example councils would by share of the service delivery at £10,466 per session.

	Cost per session for councils (Share)	Total Cost
Senior Youth Support worker lead (full time) 6 sessions	£9395.62	£56, 373.75 via 6 shares
Senior Youth Support worker lead (half time) 3 sessions	£9395.62	£28,186.88 via 3 shares
Professionally qualified worker (fulltime)6 sessions	£10466.68	£62,800 via 6 shares

Professionally qualified worker (Half time) 3 sessions	£10466.68	£31,400 via 3 shares
--	-----------	----------------------

This model could benefit from additional funding which could be bolted on to raise capacity, particularly for development, professional support, or holiday work. This would well with the partnership model proposed in 2c.

Recommendations

If it is the intention of councils to consider the wider area not just their own, then the recommendation would be to start and operate a SES Youth Partnership of councils (2c). This model could include any council that wished to be involved not just those who can afford to pay for sessions. In addition to councils buying session shares, this could include some basic level of financial buy in to access support such as for engaging young people in consultation and to be included in funding bids. As shown in the costing section the more money put into delivery increases flexibility/contingency and scope for high quality staff to be recruited. If councils were pursuing this model, then either using a host council to employ a team or engage a youth work provider are the strongest delivery models. If this partnership model is pursued the study would recommend engaging a provider (1a) as these organisations are built for purpose, while a council hosting a team at scale would create strain on a council. In terms of how to engage a provider a tender process is probably fairest way to approach this and should be for a minimum of 3-5years. The process is likely to lead to a strong result, however this depends how councils but into the partnership and how further work would be engaged. Following the lead from the Somerset Youth Alliance once a provider is established, other providers would not actively compete with them it that area, so further tenders might not be as important, and that provider could be moved to the position of a strategic partner within the SES Youth Partnership.

If, however Council would prefer to focus on the immediate needs for delivery then creating a smaller grouping of councils (all who wish to pay for delivery) is the quickest and most effective way forward. Delivery either through hosting a team in a council or engaging a provider are the best way to do the delivery. Hosting a team would only work if a council was willing to do, it is a significant amount of work compared to monitoring a contract with a provider. In the event

of this model being chosen and the decision to engage a provider, a tender process is likely the strongest route for this.

Whichever approach is taken, if a provider is involved it is important, they are based in SES and they are committing to developing this area beyond just what is contracted.

Conclusion

There are several areas where there is a clear aspiration for more services for young people, need for Youth Work and are sizable enough to raise funds, particularly Ansford, Castle Cary, Bruton and Henstridge. Wincanton already has some limited provision and there is a clear aspiration to expand this, but this is seen as a longer-term project. In Wincanton the Balsam centre should be considered as existing Youth Work provider and therefore under the tacit agreement of the Somerset Youth Alliance be not competed against. Sparkford and Ditchheat have smaller numbers of young people and as smaller areas less potential funding, but they would benefit from a young person's offer. The smaller areas such as Shepton Montague could not fund provision and does not have the numbers of young people to justify such an investment if they did. Milborne port is undoubtedly a bit of an anomaly in so much as it has a high number of young people, but limited evidence of need and council aspirations are more focused on understanding the need rather than instigating delivery.

As in the community profiles what is important isn't how young people are engaged (type of delivery), but rather that there is capacity to engage and develop ways of working appropriate to each area. The recommendations offer 2 ways forward, which offer the real opportunity for capacity to be developed in a sustainable way.

Councils need to decide how they want to proceed, and it is on the councils to take a lead on this to push the agenda forward. All councils stated that young people are a priority, therefore developing a plan to move this forward from the back of this study should also be priority.

There are a number of key individuals who would be willing to help move this plan forward (marked in appendix 1) who were involved as stakeholders in this study and any plan should try to engage them. Additionally, whatever the way forward engaging with the Somerset Youth Work Alliance is very important and it will be even more important as delivery is started.

About the Authors

Sam Plummer is a JNC qualified Youth Worker, qualified at University of Gloucestershire in 2013 with first class honours. Sam also holds a Masters of Business Administration with Distinction from Bath Business School, alongside a Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership. Currently, Sam is undertaking a PHD at Bath Business School with a focus on non-profit financial sustainability. Sam started his Youth Work career as a volunteer in 2007 with Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) council Youth Service, staying with the Youth Service (at that time called Youth Connect) until its spinning-out in 2019. Sam worked significantly on the feasibility study and business planning leading to the creation of Youth Connect South West (YCSW), a charity and public service mutual. Sam is currently Senior Operational Manager at YCSW.

Daisy Church is a qualified young person. Aged 17 and at the start of this project she was NEET. Daisy has been engaged on and off with youth services since she was 11. Daisy has lots of interests including making music, attending festivals, and having good friends. Daisy in general finds Youth Workers annoying but sees Youth Work as an important support for young people. Since September Daisy has started to study a level 3 in Health and Social care at Bath College.

Appendix 1

Local council surveys: who submitted them	
Ansford	Chris Edwards
Bruton	Ewan Jones
Castle Cary	Lisa Davis
Ditcheat	Charles Evans
Henstridge	Jane Rose
Milborne Port	Tim Carty
Shepton Montague	Alison Willasey-Wilsey
South Cadbury and Sutton Montis	
Sparkford	Lisa Davis
Wincanton	Not submitted

Local councillor/officer interviews:		
Ansford	Chris Edwards Barbara Peter Clark Angela (Parish Clerk)	Note: All were present at same interview
Bruton	Ewan Jones	Note: Informal meetings held before commencement of research.
Castle Cary	Lisa Davis	Note: Informal meetings held before commencement of research.
Ditcheat	Charles Evans	

Henstridge	Jane Rose	Note: Informal meetings held before commencement of research.
Milborne Port	Tim Carty	
Shepton Montague	Alison Willasey-Wilsey	
South Cadbury and Sutton Montis		
Sparkford	Lisa Davis	
Wincanton	Emma Hix	

Professional stakeholder consultation and interviews:		
SPARK Somerset (Somerset Youth Work Alliance)	Penny Schofield	
Balsam Centre	Sue Palace + Balsam centre Youth Worker	Note: Informal meeting held before commencement of research.
YMCA Mendip	Mark Wilcox	Note: Informal meeting in Frome
Young Somerset	Alex Walker	
Community Youth Project	Elaine Harris	Via email
Active Learning and Skills	Pete May	Informal chat after Somerset Youth Alliance meeting.
Somerset Youth Alliance	Various members	During a Somerset Youth Alliance meeting.
Dorset Youth Association	Mike Bennet	

Somerset Community Foundation	Val Bishop	*Val would be willing to support the development of a plan to move this forward.
National Lottery	Sarah Dummer-Wade MBE	
Former Volunteer Youth Worker- Bruton	Tim Cook	
Former Principle Youth Officer for Somerset/ Service Manager, Stronger Communities	Jeff Brown	*Jeff would be willing to support the development of a plan to move this forward.
Somerset Strategic Commissioner	Louise Palmer	* Louise would be willing to support the development of a plan to move this forward.
Somerset Violence Reduction Unit	Claire Maidment	Via Telephone

APPENDIX 2

Youth update

Following the decision of the South East Somerset LCN to go out to tender for youth provision in our area, representatives from stakeholders (Milborne Port, Wincanton Bruton and Cary & Ansford) interviewed Youth Connect from Bath. The result was unanimous that we should accept their proposal to deliver youth work in our LCN area.

Further discussions with Youth Connect established that the contract will cost £50k annually for three years to employ a full time worker shared across the stakeholders. This has been reduced by £10k. Ansford Parish Council has historically contributed to youth work and as joint Councils we will need to contribute £10k. Our partner Councils from Bruton & Wincanton will also contribute £10k. Milborne Port Parish Council will, in the first instance, contribute £5k and it is hoped that this will be increased to £10k once successful delivery has been established. As a LCN we will also approach smaller councils once delivery is established.

Youth Connect will provide quarterly reports and individual plans for delivery. This will be based on the feasibility study conducted and the local outreach and information received once in place.

It was agreed by the LCN that CCTC will be the lead for a grant submission to the SALC Health & Wellbeing fund for £35k payable over two years as we have received positive initial feedback from them. We also plan to apply to the new CONNECT family partnership through their champion at the Balsam Centre. Memorandums of understanding will be issued to Bruton, Wincanton and Milborne Port regarding payment schedules and delivery arrangements. Should we be unhappy with delivery or have a funding issue there is a break clause for each side with a notice period of three months.

Once appointed we will support bids by the provider for smaller pots of money which we have identified for specific work such as drugs and alcohol misuse workshops and financial management workshops. We have received very positive feedback from grant makers. Some grants cannot be accessed by Councils, therefore, the provider will need to submit them.

It is hoped that we can start the contract in October 23 however, Youth Connect need to appoint a local person.

Following discussions with CCTC, Chris Edwards has agreed to propose that APC will contribute 36% of £10k annually for the next three years (£3600)

Thank you for your support

Best wishes

Judi

September 2023

APPENDIX 3

LCN Youth Contract review Thursday 17th July 2025

Numbers per session

Milborne Port very positive re: numbers in their building based youth club despite them looking quite low. The positiveness came after the Chair of Council visited the club and talked to the young people.

Milborne Port is receiving additional support from a senior manager and staff to scope solutions to a specific local issue. They are closely liaising with the Police. This work is at no cost to MP.

Wincanton delivery is a detached service where the numbers fluctuate. The young people tend to be ones who are hanging around the skate park or the park and the youth workers have been addressing non-attendance at school and young people attending pupil referral units. This was YCSW's brief from the initial survey. YCSW have monthly meetings with the youth worker teams. There is a regular youth club in Wincanton run through the Balsam Centre.

Bruton Very happy with numbers and the provision. The building is quite tight in the winter but they hope to address better facilities in the future. Young people playing lots of activities outside in the summer term. The Chair of Council visits regularly and wrote a report for the Dove.

Castle Cary regular numbers around 15 with outside activities and cooking. Atmosphere is very friendly and I witnessed in depth chats with young people. They were all very happy with the club. There is an issue with the TV which they have been told they can't use as it belongs to the football club.

There was an understanding that this past year has started with small numbers and now it is building up. Lots of networking with primary schools to promote to yr6 for September when they will be yr 7. Maximum 20 young people to 2 staff

All the young people have the opportunity to sign up to 2 subsidised trips at £10 per trip. One to Tower Park and the other to Brean in the holidays. Funding was gained from the Rotary Club.

Clubs will be closed for 2 weeks after the trips.

Networking with partners - home school networks, PRUs, PCSOs, all schools have been visited

Focus for the future

More promotion, articles in newsletters, flyers, they will look at encouraging Youth Councils (Cary had one years ago and it collapsed before COVID) This will be good prep for democracy in view of the voting age to 16 proposal
Recruitment & training of volunteers to support delivery.

Training

Safeguarding ongoing and Child in Need plans

Other YCSW delivery is in Henstridge and Stalbridge. Numbers are high in both of these venues. All Councils precept for £10k+ each year

Judi Morison July 25

APPENDIX 4



Confidential

Castle Cary Youth Session Feedback

Total young people meet during mapping: 61

Age group: 11-19

What happened so far

We have had a meeting with the Clerk and Judy from the parish council this was useful to get working knowledge of the area alongside this we also had a meeting with Amanda the manager for the PCSO in the area giving us even more insight into the area.

We then started doing videos letting people know we were walking around the area and a little bit about who we were with links to our website. We then started on the ground handing out flyer's posters and information to anyone who will talk to us we did this on different days and times each week to maximize the contact we were making with the community. We met several young people moving around the village at different times and different locations during the weeks this was posted on our social media and local pages we talked with them, and the feedback was that an after-school youth club would be good. We were very fortunate that we could use the pavilion to deliver sessions this was set up and promoted, during this time we had a meeting with the local secondary school they agreed to put any information we send them in their news latter. The mapping has now finished, and the sessions have started

What is going well:

Sessions have started with young people attending and participating in the activities provided.

Future plans:

We will be developing a program that will encourage healthy eating, physical activities and informal learning opportunities for this work

Confidential

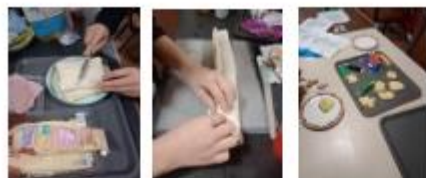
Castle Cary Youth Session Feedback Sept – Dec 24

Attendance	
Total Individual Young People Registered	15
Total Attendance Sept – Dec	79
Average Session Attendance	8
Age Group	11 – 18
Anonymous attendance	26

This quarter the young people have been engaged in sporting activities, football, tennis, basketball table tennis and flying the kites. They have enjoyed a variety of craft activities, bracelets, seasonal earring making, air dry clay models, melting bead designs, Halloween lolly spiders and a variety of Christmas crafts.



Snacks and drinks are provided during each session and this group enjoy the opportunity to make their own. We have made wraps, toasted sandwiches, pizza, hot dogs, decorated biscuits and made very tasty seasonal sausage rolls.



The sessions include topics and themes to encourage discussion and awareness. We have talked about mental health, bullying, healthy eating, friendships, the importance of sleep as well as personal and road safety.



The young people have commented that they enjoy the activities, the food, music, the relaxed atmosphere, the opportunity to talk and being listened to and some youngsters who have expressed issues with friendships have said they have felt welcome and included on a Tuesday evening.



Feedback from Young People:

"I like all of it, lots of activities!! 😊"

"I like it because it is something fun after school and it has games (friends too)"

"I like youth club because it feels safe, I get to see my friends and the people are really nice"

What's going well:

- Regular attendance and engagement from a core of young people despite the weather.
- Positive feedback from the young people.
- The young people like the informal nature of the group and the activities provided.
- Delivery of informal education – mental health, relationships, general health and wellbeing.
- Staff and young people are building meaningful professional relationships which allow staff to support them as best as possible.

What's not going so well?



- The weather has certainly impacted the number attending the sessions.
- Some parents do not want their young people to venture to the park in the dark, cold and wet.
- It would be great to be able to use the TV in the building on occasion.

Future plans:

Penny has attended the first session of the C-Card training and will be undertaking the second session to enable us to deliver the C-card service. A training session on youth vaping is also planned.

We are hoping to go into the secondary schools to make more young people aware of the sessions that we run.

Partnerships additional funding and developments

- Somerset Classic Car Fund Grant
A grant of £3,800 has been awarded to us to support trip activities and sports coaching. This funding will be distributed across all projects in Somerset, with careful consideration given to how it can be allocated to maximise impact for each project.
- Spark Somerset Partnership
Through our partnership with Spark Somerset, we benefit from access to local agencies, staff training, and development opportunities. This collaboration also facilitates potential links to other support services for young people, fostering a holistic approach to youth development across the region. Safeguarding and School Partnerships
We are actively engaging with safeguarding leads and pastoral care teams within schools to ensure a collaborative approach to supporting young people. These connections strengthen our ability to safeguard and offer tailored support to students in need.
- Turning Point Somerset
Our newly developed relationship with Turning Point Somerset allows us to offer targeted support services focused on harm reduction for young people affected by drug and alcohol misuse. This partnership ensures that we are delivering informed and appropriate signposting opportunities for young people
- Community Events Engagement
We have attended a variety of community events throughout the



year, including fêtes, music festivals, and arts events. These engagements allow us to directly connect with the community and raise awareness of the services we offer. If you have or know of any events coming up let us know and we will endeavour to support

- C-Card Somerset
staff training around Somerset the C-Card scheme, which provides sexual health services through a click-and-collect service, will be rolled out once staff training is completed. This initiative ensures that young people have access to essential sexual health resources in a confidential and supportive manner.
- Balsam Centre Partnership
Through our partnership with the Balsam Centre, we are able to provide access to targeted support and workshops for young people, particularly those requiring additional support beyond the sessions. These workshops are designed to offer practical advice and guidance to young people facing specific challenges

Confidential

Castle Cary Youth Session Feedback Jan – Mar 25

Registered	19
Total Attendance Jan – March	75
Average Session Attendance	7
Age Group	11 - 19

This quarter the young people have been engaged in sporting activities, football, tennis, basketball table tennis frisbee and archery. They have enjoyed a variety of craft activities for Valentines Day and Mothering Sunday, as well as decorating pencil cases for school.



They are continuing to enjoy the snacks, we have made toasted sandwiches, pancakes, had scones, biscuits, cake and a selection of fruit. Squash, tea coffee hot chocolate, with marshmallows is also on offer.

We have covered a variety of topics using mindfulness colouring and wordsearches to encourage conversations. These have included disability and accessibility awareness, LGBTQ, anti-bullying and black history month.

The young people often instigate topics that interest or are concerning them such as vaping, school attendance and friendships.



We provided a selection of materials for the young people to create a personalised card and gift for a significant female in their lives and some made something for themselves too.

It was lovely to hear from an adult who had received one of these a few days later.



Feedback from Young People:

"I like the activities and the food"

"It is nice to meet friends from other schools"

"Free food!"



What's going well:

- Positive feedback from young people.
- A core regular attendance from a variety of schools as well as some visiting friends and family.
- The weather is enabling more outdoor activities.
- Positive relationships continuing to grow between staff and young people
- Good engagement in activities that are on offer.
- The use of the toilet block for storage has been very helpful, thank you.
- We have met with the Methodist Church youth group to collaborate.

What's not going so well?

- The darker nights certainly impacted the number attending the sessions, although we are now seeing a range of new faces, some are reluctant to register initially.

Future plans:

- A summer trip.
- Sports coaching sessions.
- We are visiting Ansford School in May
- We are planning to visit the year 6 classes in primary schools in the area after half term to increase the awareness of the sessions for rising year 7s



Confidential

Castle Cary 1st quarter report. April – June 25

Attendance	
Total Individual Young People Registered	18
Total Attendance April – June	106
Average Session Attendance	9
Age Group	11 – 19
Anonymous attendance	4

This quarter at Castle Cary Youth Club has been full of fun activities, new skills, and important conversations. Along with the usual sports, arts, and games, we also took time to talk about key topics affecting young people today. Through open discussions, workshops, and support, we've addressed drugs, vaping, smoking, relationships, and bullying, aiming to help everyone make informed and healthy choices.

We kept everyone active and engaged with a variety of fun activities:

- **Football & Basketball** – Team games, tournaments, and fun matches.
- **Tennis & Darts** – Learning new skills and having fun in a relaxed environment.
- **Kite Flying** – An exciting outdoor activity that everyone enjoyed on the windy days.
- **Creative Workshops** – Badge making, art projects, and decorating personal items.



As always, the food was a highlight:

- **Hot dogs and chips** – Perfect for refuelling after an active session.
- **Ice cream cornets** – A summer favourite.
- **Toasted sandwiches** – Cheese, ham, or veggie options to choose from.
- **Crumpets and hot crossed buns** – with a variety of toppings.



We know that young people face pressure from many sides, including peers, social media, and sometimes even family members.

- **Drug Awareness:** We talked about the dangers of using drugs, how they can affect your body and mind, and how to say "no" when faced with peer pressure.
- **Vaping:** We discussed the rise of vaping and its potential health risks, especially for young people. We emphasized the importance of making healthy choices and understanding the long-term effects.
- **Smoking:** We talked about the harm smoking can cause, and how it's never too late to say no or quit if someone has already started.

Through group discussions, we encouraged everyone to ask questions and seek support if needed.

We also focused on healthy relationships and bullying:

- **Healthy Relationships:** We discussed what makes a good friendship and what a healthy romantic relationship looks like. Topics included respect, trust, and communication.
- **Bullying Awareness:** We had open discussions about what bullying is, how to spot it, and most importantly, how to stand up for yourself and others. We emphasised that bullying, whether online or in-person, is never acceptable, and it's important to speak up if you see or experience it.

Feedback from Young People:

"It is a friendly group and I am looking forward to the Brean trip"

"I like playing games outside with my friends"

"Love the food and the crafts"



What's going well:

- Growing number of young people.
- Good support from the council and community.
- Great weather

What's not going so well?

Our current sessions tend to attract more young men, likely due to the activities – but we're now exploring ways to make the environment more appealing to young women

Future plans:

- A summer trip.
- To raise awareness by attending the picnic in the park on 4th August.
- Attract more young women to your youth group, offer activities that feel empowering, creative, and socially engaging to them