

CHANGING THE ODDS

2022 - 2025
Strategic plan

Why we are needed now more than ever

After the most challenging of times during the pandemic, there has been a huge increase in the numbers of children and young people needing our support; from 1 in 9 in 2017 to 1 in 6 identified as having a probable mental health problem in July 2021 (children 5-16 years)¹.

Current waiting times are increasing across many different services. Waiting is so hard when life doesn't feel worth living, when you wake up so anxious that getting into school is impossible, when the only way to release your feelings is to lash out at others or cut yourself. What was challenging becomes more difficult or a crisis the longer you wait, sometimes getting pushed between services.

Good mental health begins in childhood.

50% of mental health problems are established by age 14 and 75% by age 24². Yet 70% of children and adolescents who experience mental health problems have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age.

Behind the statistics are our Island children, our students, our neighbours, friends, family and peers.

There are many factors affecting youth mental health (4-25 years) — all of which we see at Youth Trust: trauma, a difficult home life, relationships with their peers, discrimination or exclusion, social media, poverty, and anxiety over the future, including climate change and war.



Jo Dare BEM
Isle of Wight Youth Trust CEO

Many have problems accessing quality support and services as quickly as needed. Transition to adult services, if needed, is challenging. Waiting lists are long.

There are also practical problems, outside a young person's control, that have an impact on their mental health – 1 in 5 Island children are living in poverty³. Poverty causes, or results in, poor mental health. Young people with a parent struggling with their mental health are more likely to struggle themselves. Island children and young people can become more isolated than others living elsewhere, not least because transport is expensive both to get around the Island, and to get off it.

We need to find new ways of responding to the mental health needs of our Island children and young people so that we can support sooner and prevent the likelihood of crisis.

Building on the outstanding work of the Youth Trust over the past 38 years, this new strategic plan, co-produced with Island children and young people, parents, staff and trustees, as well as funders and supporters is ambitious because it needs to be. We need to make a positive difference. We need to find solutions to the problems outlined above so that they can live their best lives; looking to the future with hope.

¹ Lifestyles Team, NHS Digital (2021) Mental Health of Children and Young People in England 2021.

² Kessler et al. (2005). Lifetime Prevalence and Age-of-Onset Distributions of DSM-IV Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. Archives of General Psychiatry, 62 (6) pp. 593-602

³ DWP (2021) Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2020.

What young people have told us

2,241 Island children and young people responded to our 2021 Island Youth Mental Health Census.



Anxiety, depression, suicidal or intrusive thoughts, self-harm, disordered eating are just some of the mental health problems our Island children and young people come to us for support with. The impact of COVID-19 has been significant for children and young people, increasing social anxiety and isolation for many.

The Youth Trust are uniquely placed to develop innovative local solutions to support young Islanders. Increasing access to our services, creating new services where identified gaps exist and supporting children and young people to become more resilient, we can help and enable them to look to the future with hope.



CASE STUDY

Anakin (aged 18) reached out for support from the Youth Trust because they were experiencing anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. COVID-19 lockdowns had contributed to them becoming socially isolated, they were spending large amounts of time alone at home, and only communicating with others via video games or text messages. Although they were living with family, they had withdrawn and avoided eating with them, they had become increasingly nocturnal and were not leaving the house.

Counselling took place via Zoom, however, Anakin chose not to have the camera on as this felt safer for them. Previously a high-achiever, external events meant that things changed, and they felt they had little control over their life. They felt directionless and had no aspirations for the future.

Using a mixture of talking and creative therapies, Anakin was able to work through their feelings and get to know their anxiety and inner-critic. Helping to identify where these feelings had come from and building strategies to manage them. They became aware that they had been fixating on 'small-things' and that

their world had shrunk as a result. They worked through triggers and patterns of behaviour, helping them to recognise when they could be in danger of slipping back into less healthy behaviours, and what they can do to avoid it.

Over the course of 18 counselling sessions, Anakin began to take small steps to take control of their feelings and build resilience. They spent several weeks reconnecting with old friends and building a network of support. Working on creating a positive daily routine and with the support of their mum, and GP, they developed a plan for healthy eating, reset their body clock to sleep at night and built the confidence to take short walks outside.

Anakin was able to demonstrate that they had truly moved on through the work they had completed with their counsellor and were in a much better place physically and mentally. They felt empowered to consider university options, working through the pressures of expectations and deciding what they want to do. They applied and achieved a place for the following academic year.

No one describes the impact the Youth Trust can have better than the children, young people and families who access our counselling and wellbeing services

The Youth Trust has given my daughter the freedom to express her emotions and to learn new tools and coping mechanisms to help her with her emotions.

Youth Trust has helped me come to terms with difficult problems in the past and know what to focus on moving forward in life.

I don't get mad for three hours now I get mad for 5 minutes

Taking on the challenge

OUR ISLAND:

If 1 in 6 children and young people have a mental health problem¹, that's potentially 5 children and young people in every classroom of 30.

On the Isle of Wight, this means 5,078 children and young people aged 4-25 may be struggling with their mental health at any one time².

Research³ suggests that nearly a quarter of 16-25-year-olds nationally - approximately 3,029 young people on the Island - feel they will never recover from the emotional effects of the pandemic, 2,634 (1 in 5) think they will fail in life. As stress and anxiety have increased, children and young people's confidence in themselves and the world around them has decreased. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are significantly more likely to think their life will amount to nothing, no matter how hard they try.

With local need growing, and waiting times increasing, often young people's needs become more complex and multifactorial.

Half of all mental health problems are established by the age of 14⁴, with the right support, as early as possible, the Youth Trust stands the chance of preventing over 2500 young people on the Island developing enduring mental health needs over their lifetime.

We need to be more creative and ambitious, working harder than ever to find additional ways of delivering services, alongside counselling, psychotherapy and CBT, that helps us

build capacity within our services and ensures that children and young people feel more confident about their future and never have to wait too long for support and escalate into crisis.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES FACING YOUNG PEOPLE, HAS GIVEN US NEW PURPOSE:

To listen to, and work with, young islanders and their families so they can get the help they need, when they need it, to support their mental, and emotional wellbeing. To campaign for change that has a positive impact on young people.

THIS IS WHY WE HAVE NEW CLARITY IN OUR VISION FOR WHAT WE MUST ACHIEVE:

An Island where children and young people's mental health needs are well recognised and supported.

AND HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE IT:

Life can be hard but accessing support shouldn't be. By providing youth-led wellbeing and therapeutic support when it's needed, we empower young people to face life's challenges.

We will do this by living our values:

Trusting

in our skill, honesty, integrity, openness and mutual respect to create a safe environment

Kind

through our compassion, understanding and support for one another

Positive

about being non-judgmental, hopeful, optimistic, creative, empowering and celebrating success

Collaborative

in our approach by being inclusive, flexible, adaptable, engaging - 'no decision about us without us' and community focused

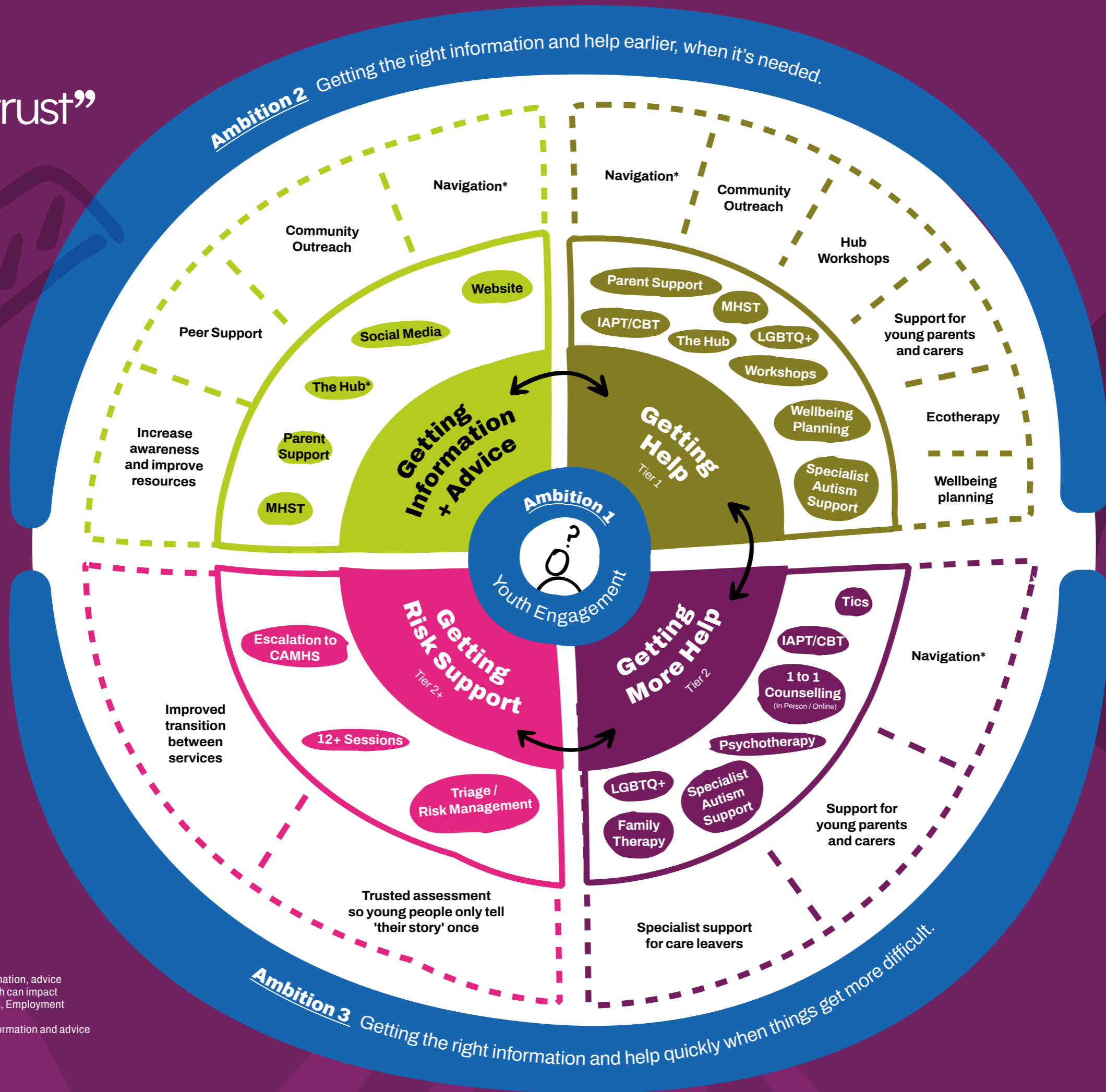
...Because how we do things is as important as what we do, whether that's our behaviours towards each other, the decisions we take, the way we work and who we work with.

1 Lifestyles Team, NHS Digital (2021) Mental Health of Children and Young People in England 2021.

2 Isle of Wight Population statistics from: ONS (2021) Lower layer Super Output Area population estimates.

3 The Prince's Trust Natwest Youth Index 2022

4 Kessler et al. (2005). Lifetime Prevalence and Age-of-Onset Distributions of DSM-IV Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication Archives of General Psychiatry, 62 (6) pp. 593-602



The difference we need to make

our new service model and ambitions

KEY

↔ = step up / step down support as required

* Navigation is the provision of information, advice and practical support on issues which can impact Mental Health e.g. Housing, Benefits, Employment

* The Hub is a space to access to information and advice on a range of topics

Our goal:

More children and young people have a say in the things that matter to them, and help shape the services they need

KEY AIMS

Increase influence within the Youth Trust

Engaging more young people in conversations about youth mental health services on the Isle of Wight

Create opportunities for young people to have a say in other things that impact their mental health, including money, employment, housing and climate change

KEY PRIORITIES

Involve young people more in leadership and decision making helping to guide the direction of the Youth Trust

Increase co-production in service design, development and delivery

Extend how young people are involved in the monitoring and evaluation of their services to influence change where needed

Develop a framework for young people to become involved in co-production

Influence policy makers and service providers to ensure young people are 'in the room' when services are discussed

Offer to support co-production activity

Collaborate with other youth organisations to increase youth voice

Undertake campaigns to raise awareness

Influence policy-makers to ensure young people's views are listened to

Improve social media engagement

HOW WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL:

Children and young people...

- Will have the confidence and skills needed to make their voices heard
- Lead in the creation of innovative new channels of communication for children and young people, to ensure their voices are heard
- Feel empowered to take independent action, locally and online, to influence national agendas
- Have access to improved mental health services for children and young people

Our goal:

Getting the right information and help earlier, when it's needed

KEY AIMS

Ensure young people are more informed about the support available

Get more people talking about mental health

KEY PRIORITIES

Additional digital resources that deliver information, advice and guidance including a new website

Develop navigator roles to give advice and where needed, offer advocacy

Develop the Hub, or a series of hubs that align with population need/locality based health and care services, becoming a safe space and 'one stop shop' for the things that make a positive impact on young people's mental health

Raise awareness of mental health through roadshows, communications via website, social media, local media, navigators, mental health ambassadors, schools, local community groups

Increase awareness and promote the 5 Ways to Wellbeing

KEY AIMS

Increase access to support, earlier

Support parents and carers to develop the skills and confidence to support children and young people experiencing mental health problems

KEY PRIORITIES

Expand support provided in schools

New services based in local communities to be more accessible

Implement additional YIACS model activities which are based in local communities to be more accessible

Increased support to children and young people most vulnerable and/or at risk of poor mental health

Development of information and advice workshops on a range of wellbeing and mental health topics

Development of resources which can be accessed through our website

Launch a parent advice line

Develop training for and network of parent peer supporters

HOW WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL:

Children and young people...

- Feel more confident managing their mental health
- Recognise when they need more support and know how to access it
- Seek support and advice for other, practical problems that could affect their mental health if left unresolved
- May not need as much support as they might have done without this help

Our goal:

Getting the right help quickly when things get more difficult

KEY AIMS

Getting the right support at the right time, first time

KEY PRIORITIES

Working to the 'No Wrong Door' Island mental health strategy

Making it easier to make a referral for help, and increasing speed of assessments

Developing partnerships with other local youth mental health providers to achieve a trusted assessment or single point of access

HOW WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL:

Children and young people...

- Feel they have more access to support when their mental health needs get greater
- Are confident that we recognise their need for, and deliver, support solutions that are as unique as they are
- Will not need to 'tell their story' more than once

Getting support sooner

Increasing the number of skilled therapists and practitioners available to support children and young people

Providing support calls while you wait for support

Introduce more groupwork where appropriate

Developing 'step up and step down'

CWP's to provide support to transition out of counselling sessions as appropriate

Groupwork and peer support

Support calls

Creating easy access back into support if required

Supporting access into CAMHS or other services if support needs get higher (transition approach)



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Youth Trust Patrons:

Lord Michael Grade, Rob & Josie da Bank

Isle of Wight Youth Trust is a registered charity
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