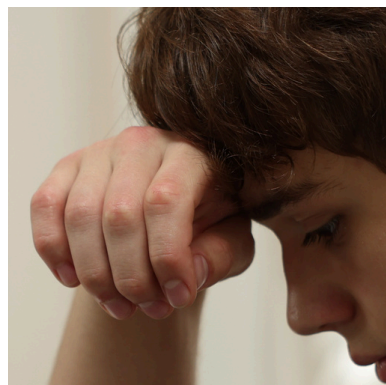




“youth trust”

Strategy 2026-2031

Healthy
Minds



Thriving
Futures

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Why the Isle of Wight Youth Trust matters

Since its foundation over 40 years ago the Isle of Wight Youth Trust (IWYT) has delivered life-changing support to thousands of island children and young people. Over the course of the previous strategy we have grown our reach, broadened our programmes, strengthened our safeguarding and governance, and built an organisation more capable of responding to the complex realities young islanders face. None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our staff and volunteers, the insight of partners, and the generosity of our funders. We offer our heartfelt thanks.

However, the issues affecting young people today are significant, particularly for those living on the Isle of Wight. IWYT serves a population with needs that are both acute and unique. Young islanders face challenges shaped not only by poverty and rising mental health pressures, but also by the island's geography and infrastructure. Barriers to transport, fewer local opportunities for education and employment, higher living costs, and limited youth provision intensify the pressures already affecting children nationwide. These forces, combined with growing concerns around sleep, smartphone use, insecure housing, and reductions in support services—mean that far too many young islanders struggle with their mental health earlier, more often, and with fewer lifelines.

In this context, our new strategy marks a deliberate shift: after rapid growth, a period of stabilisation and consolidation. This is designed to secure the foundations of an organisation that so many families now depend on. We will grow with care, protecting quality, deepening partnerships, and strengthening the pathways that help young people get support earlier and more effectively. And we will invest in telling our story more boldly, ensuring the Island understands why IWYT exists, who we reach, and what difference we make.

But this strategy is not simply about holding the line. It is about unlocking what is possible for a generation of young islanders. Over the next five years, we will expand early help, reduce waits for therapeutic support, provide smoother transitions into adulthood, and elevate youth voice so that young people shape the change they want for their own futures.



Kay Boycott

Chair of Trustees

Our ambition is clear: by 2031, more young islanders will feel hopeful, confident, and able to thrive on the Island they call home. On an island notable for its ageing population, we need to unite all islanders against the belief we all have a part to play in making this a community that can retain and attract the young people we will depend on in later life.

To realise this vision, we will need the partnership of those who believe, like we do, that geography should never limit potential, and that an island community can achieve extraordinary things when it invests in its young people. With your support, IWYT can become one of the strongest youth mental health and wellbeing charities of its kind: rooted locally, driven by evidence, and powered by the belief that every young person deserves a fair chance at a fulfilling life.

We invite you to join us in creating a positive future for every young islander.

Kay Boycott, Chair
On behalf of The Board of Trustees

Developing Our Strategy

Developing this strategy has been a collaborative and inspiring process. We have looked honestly at what has been achieved since our last strategy was launched in 2022, where the gaps remain, and what we need to do about them.

Engaging widely with young people, parents, carers, professionals and staff through surveys, focus groups, data analysis and horizon-scanning we developed insights that gave us a clear picture of the challenges facing young islanders, and compelling arguments to continue to create more opportunities for children and young people to access the services they need.

Over 3 months, starting in Feb 2025, the IW Youth Trust completed it's bi-annual census (**see page 5 for results**) to understand the mental health of the Island's children and young people aged 8-25. This directly helped us shape and inform this strategy.

Recognising the Island's unique character and challenges, the resulting outcomes and priorities are shared on the following pages.

As CEO, I am immensely proud of how our team, trustees and partners have approached this work with curiosity and ambition, restating our commitment to children and young people living on the Island by delivering quality services that will uphold our values of being kind, collaborative, positive and trusting.



Jo Dare
CEO - IOW Youth Trust

These values reflect how we want to work, and what we need to be for the Isle of Wight: a place where community matters, where relationships are everything, and where young people deserve support that is rooted in empathy, respect and inclusion.

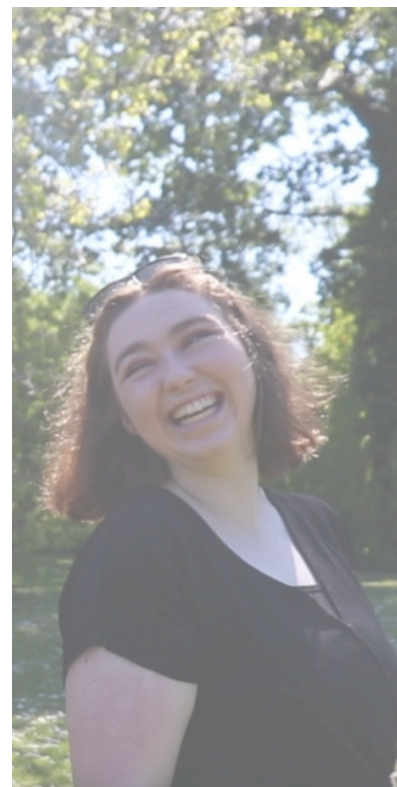
I am particularly grateful to the members of our Taskforce who ensure our work remains grounded in the views of the children and young people we serve. The voices we heard through this process were clear: young islanders want to feel hopeful about their future, connected to an Island community that values them, providing opportunities for them to grow and develop with confidence that support will be there when they need it. This strategy can deliver that, supported by strong partner collaborations.

The team and I are excited about what we can achieve together. By working alongside children and young people, our partners, funders and the wider island community we can bring this vision to life to support all young Islanders have a healthy mind and thriving future.

Jo Dare, CEO

As Chair of the Isle of Wight Youth Trust Taskforce, I am proud to have been part of developing the Youth Trust Strategy 2026–2031, with the needs of children and young people remaining central throughout. A key strength of the strategy has been its commitment to listening directly to young people through research, surveys and focus groups, ensuring priorities are shaped by lived experience rather than assumptions. The strategy recognises that listening alone is not enough. It highlights the importance of embedding youth participation more deeply, enabling young people to influence service design, decision-making, and the evaluation of quality and impact. Strengthening feedback mechanisms will help maintain accountability and continuous improvement. It is also vital to broaden participation by reaching those whose voices are less often heard, while creating pathways for young people to contribute to national discussions. Connecting local and national influence will amplify young people's voices and enhance the impact of the Youth Trust's work. I look forward to seeing these ambitions realised over the next five years and beyond.

Charlotte Chair, Youth Taskforce



Charlotte
Chair, Youth Taskforce

Why we are needed.

A generation under pressure: The Isle of Wight Challenge

Mental Health Hospital Admissions:

The Isle of Wight has the 3rd highest rate of mental-health-related hospital admissions for under-18s in England.

It is also 6th highest for self-harm admissions among 10–24 year-olds a stark marker of distress among young people.

Child Poverty:

More than a third of all children on the Isle of Wight 35.9% are growing up in poverty, the equivalent of 11 children in every classroom. This has risen sharply, increasing six percentage points in just eight years.

Vulnerable Children:

The Island has far higher levels of vulnerability than the national average:

- Children in Need: 535 per 10,000 (vs 334 nationally)
- Child Protection Plans: 65 per 10,000 (vs 42.1 nationally)
- Children in Care: 122 per 10,000 (vs 71 nationally)
- These figures reflect families under significant stress and children at much higher risk.

Education:

The Isle of Wight sits at the bottom of national league tables for GCSE and A-Level results. Children with additional needs are disproportionately affected: 5% have SEN/EHCPs, compared with 3.7% nationally.

Home education has surged a 69% increase since 2019 pointing to rising unmet needs and disengagement.

Employment:

Young adults face limited opportunity: 7.5% of 18–24 year-olds claim out-of-work benefits, compared with 4.4% across the South East. This early disadvantage can shape entire life trajectories.

Youth Crime:

First-time entrants to the Youth Justice System are more than double the national rate: 340 per 100,000, compared with 143 nationally.

Deprivation Hotspots:

The majority of Youth Trust referrals come from communities carrying the heaviest burden of deprivation—Newport, Ryde, Cowes, Sandown, and East Cowes—areas where families often have limited access to support and services.

Statistics recorded March 2026



1,760

Young Islanders (aged 8-25) responded to the Census

96%

Have one or more good friends

90%

Have one trusted adult who they can go to for support

59%

Have heard of the Youth Trust

31%

Have seen a mental health professional

FEELINGS

It is true or sometimes true that I...



68% have been worrying a lot



69% often get angry or lose their temper



71% find it hard to go to sleep or stay asleep



71% often feel unhappy, down or tearful



66% feel totally lacking in energy and enthusiasm



46% feel terribly alone and isolated

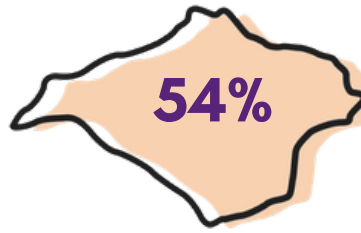


POSITIVITY

I agree or strongly agree that...

66%

I feel positive about my future



young people are viewed positively within the Island community

SELF HARM

31%

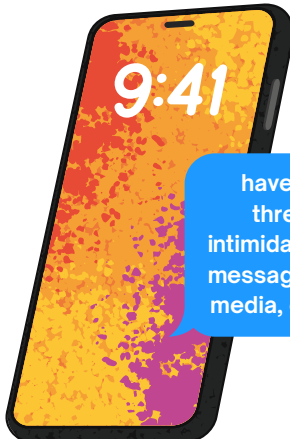
have deliberately hurt themselves without intending to end their life



BULLYING

41%

have received threatening, intimidating or nasty messages via social media, email or text



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IOW Youth Mental Health Census 2025

What we heard...

The Pressures Young People Are Facing

When experiencing poor mental health, children and young people are challenged by:

- Getting to sleep and staying asleep
- Low mood, energy and enthusiasm
- Feeling alone and isolated
- Being bullied
- Negative aspects of social media
- Struggling with education
- Nothing to do/lack of youth provision
- Uncertainties over their futures – jobs, housing, money, social pressures, discrimination, climate anxiety and global politics

In our 2025 youth mental health census more young islanders had either thought about or attempted to end their life since the 2023 census

Consolidate and continuously improve our current delivery model. Carefully evolve

Prevention and early help: meet the mental health needs of children and young people before it escalates into needing more support, including effective working with schools, Information, Advice & Guidance (**IAG**) and increase activities that provide social connections.

Get more support:

- Continuously improve our therapeutic model to increase access and reduce waiting lists.
- Personalise support, including for those most vulnerable: disadvantaged, neurodivergent and care experienced children and young people
- Evolve practical support to those aged 16-25: ensure that young people are resilient and can move more easily into adulthood, including IAG.

Youth Voice: ensure that children and young people have a voice to express what is working for them, and what isn't to enable positive change.

What Young People & Parents/Carers Want Us To Prioritise

Our Vision, Mission & Values

Our Vision

Our VISION is that every child and young person on the Isle of Wight can access mental health and practical support services they help design, so they can thrive and achieve their full potential.

Our Mission

Is to listen to and work with children and young people on the Isle of Wight, and their families, to ensure they receive the right help at the right time. We will achieve this through services that promote positive mental health, emotional wellbeing and personal development. We are committed to enabling young people to thrive and reach their full potential, while supporting them to campaign for change that improves young people's lives, guided by:

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 flexible, adaptable, engaging – 'no decision about us without us'.



This is the **PROBLEM** we want to solve:

Young people are not supported early enough, and don't feel they belong on the Isle of Wight.



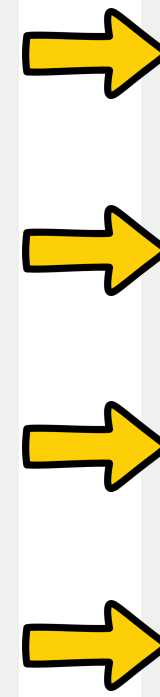
To solve this problem, we identified **FOUR PRIORITY NEEDS** for young people:

- Earlier wellbeing support for children and young people and their parents/carers
- Additional targeted mental health support for children and young people with more complex need
- Help for Young people, 16-25, to move between childhood, adulthood and independence
- Driving change in the IW environment to positively impact children and young people's mental health and wellbeing



Which will be addressed through **STRATEGIC PROGRAMMES**

- 1. EARLY HELP**
 - Tackling the causes of poor mental health through,
 - More tailored support, particularly for under 11's
 - Improved Information, Advice and Guidance
 - Greater support for parents
 - Schools' engagement
- 2. GETTING MORE SUPPORT**
 - Enhancing focused mental health support delivery,
 - Reduced waits for counselling and psychotherapy
 - Digital therapeutics
 - Enhanced support offers for those with additional or complex needs
- 3. MOVING TO INDEPENDENCE**
 - Practical, holistic, 'one stop shop' support addressing some of the causes of poor mental health, including,
 - Improved Information, Advice and Guidance
 - Employment services
 - Housing
- 4. HEAR ME**
 - Advocating with, and on behalf of, young islanders to create more opportunity, including,
 - Activities to enable young islanders speak up and be heard
 - Enhancing youth led participation in the Youth Trust
 - Delivering national good practice in youth engagement



With these **PROGRAMME GOALS**

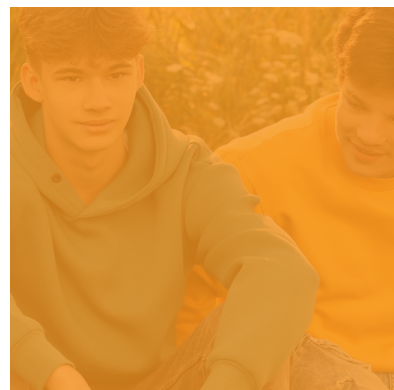
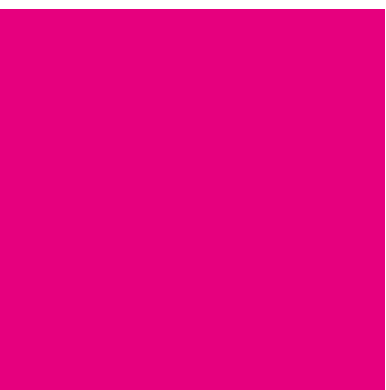
- Children and young people and their parents/carers receive timely and flexible wellbeing support that meets their needs
- Tailored therapeutic interventions to reduce dependency on other services i.e. before they escalate to treatment or crisis services
- By the time young people reach 25, they are well equipped to be independent and resilient
- Children and young people have the confidence and tools to drive positive change in the issues that matter most to their lives and wellbeing

Isle of Wight Youth Trust Theory of Change 2026-2031

Our Strategic Outcomes



Our Strategic



Programmes

Early Help

Why

Demand for youth mental health services is high. We will ensure we can offer help fast, reducing waiting lists and possible escalation into greater need, or crisis.

What we will do

- Ensure children, young people and their families know **routes to access** mental health and wellbeing services on the island
- Expand our digital offer for **Information, Advice and Guidance**, including wellbeing toolkit, online workshops
- Provide more immediate, inclusive **support for parents** through workshops, information, advice and guidance
- Partner to provide support and early prevention **activities in schools** with proven positive outcomes for IW young people
- Provide a more tailored offer for **under 11s and their families**
- Evolve our offer to tackle the **causes of worsening mental health** in children and young people e.g. social media and smartphone usage, better sleep health, healthy family (and other) relationships and creative coping strategies, including exploring feasibility of volunteer peer/lived experience support for preventative wellbeing activities.

How we will measure our performance

% of children and young people on the Isle of Wight have heard of the IWYT (census)

% of parent and carers on the Isle of Wight have heard of the IWYT (new)

Wait time for triage (time from first contact to response)

% achieving improved feelings and emotions with wellbeing support

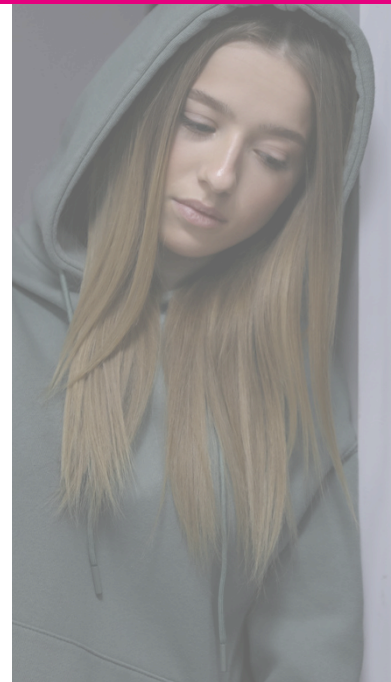
% parents feeling better supported

Service user (CYP, parents / carers, professionals working with children and young people) satisfaction with early help services

What we will monitor

Total referrals

% of service users with risk escalation



Getting More Support

Why

Demand for counselling and psychotherapy services continues to be high, and rising for under 11's. There are more referrals for support (therapeutic and for practical support) which are complex / multi-causal and complex. Additional or more personalised support is needed to effectively address difficulties before escalating into more serious mental disorders, whilst being vigilant to maintain the boundary with regulated services.

What we will do

- Deliver a high quality, safe children and young people's **counselling and psychotherapy** service for those who need it
- Continuously improve to ensure we are the **provider of choice on the island** for NHS and other funders
- Drive down **wait times**, especially under 11's
- Use an evidence-based approach to assess and implement **new digital therapeutic approaches** e.g. digital CBT, therapeutic games
- Work more in **collaboration** to provide a multi-agency approach to young people with complex or significant mental health problems or disorders helping with swift referrals and ensuring clear boundaries with statutory mental health services
- Understand latest evidence and current IW services to explore when and how **enhanced support offers** should be delivered, including those with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), care experienced children and young people, are / maybe neurodivergent, care leavers, on child protection plans (violence at home, parents using substances, and/or with poor mental health)
- **Make it easier for service users to self serve** through introduction of new technology e.g. online booking, self check in

How we will measure our performance

Average wait time – total, under 11's, under 18, enhanced support service users

DNAs / Cancelled appointments

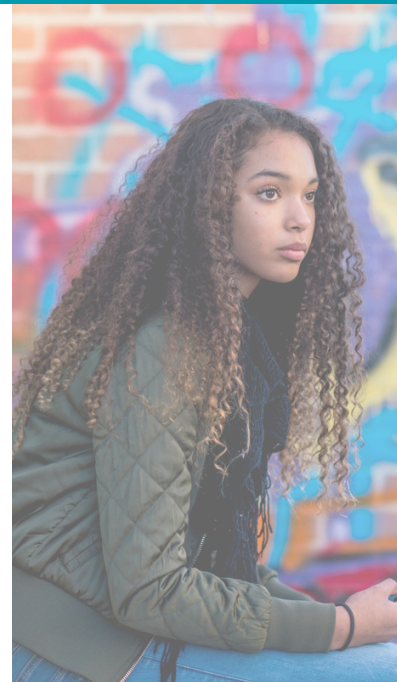
% achieving improved feelings and emotions with counselling and Psychotherapy, re-engaging with education,

Stakeholder satisfaction; service users, parent experience, professionals who need to refer to Youth Trust services

What we will monitor

Diversion from statutory services: % service users escalated to other services, Under 18 A&E Mental health admissions and self harm admissions, Numbers of young islanders in CAMHS

Educational outcomes on the Isle of Wight



Moving To Independence

Why

Moving from childhood to adult independence can be challenging. Experiencing unemployment in youth can lead to mental health issues, emotional problems and reduce lifelong earning/career potential. The Isle of Wight has poor educational outcomes and unique physical barriers to employment. We have achieved good early outcomes. We now wish to continuously improve to create the best-in-class outcomes for marginalised young people.

What we will do

- Continue to provide a **core support offer for young people with multiple barriers to work** to gain practical skills and tools to build their resilience including: Employment support, digital inclusion, housing advice, sexual health, mental health support & healthy affordable eating
- Review programme to **optimise** service model for long term sustainability, including further embedding of quality information, advice and guidance into service delivery
- Explore development of **targeted activities to build confidence and self-esteem**, including through peer support, community engagement, such as volunteering or becoming an ambassador for the Youth Trust
- With careful consideration of capability, resources and evolving evidence base, **expand the offer into a fully holistic 'one stop shop'** to help young people towards independence e.g. prevention of poor physical health and wellbeing, expanding activity in sexual health support, a healthy relationships programme, sleep support, money matters, careers, pathways for more accessible support using digital technology

How we will measure our performance

% service users entering into/staying into training and employment

% service users accessing appropriate housing support

Wait time for access into mental health services if required

Service user perception of their resilience for adulthood and sense of belonging on the island (from service user evaluation)

What we will monitor

Youth unemployment rate on the Isle of Wight

Youth homelessness on the Isle of Wight



Hear Me

Why

Including the voice of young people in decision-making drives more relevant strategies, services, and policies, leading to more sustainable, equitable outcomes. Empowering young people to have their say about the future of the Isle of Wight builds their confidence and civic skills, and challenges decision makers on a rapidly ageing Isle of Wight to make change that will encourage young people to stay and build a vibrant, successful community

What we will do

- Continue to invest in the **IW Youth Census, IW Youth Taskforce and IW Youth conference**
- **Better understand the needs of IW children and young people** to inform future service development, including those who are home educated or from an ethnic minority background
- Review and reinstate the **Schools Mental Health Charter**, aligned to MHST, to work with schools to improve the environment, and support needed, for children and young people.
- Work with partners to drive change against the **IW Youth 6 point plan** - seeking to effect youth led change around employment, young people and mental health, environment, transport, equality and diversity, youth provision
- Carefully deliver nationally recognised programmes, such as **'young inspector'** and **'youth ambassador'** roles to help drive change

How we will measure our performance

- Numbers of young people engaging and participating in the Taskforce, Census and Events
- The extent to which engagement builds skills for life
- Young people's rating of confidence to impact change (evaluations at IWYT involved youth engagement activities)

What we will monitor

- Young people rating of a sense of belonging on the island (census)
- Increased recognition of island organisations and decision makers of the need to engage with young people on the island (narrative)
- Changes achieved from youth action, including against the 6 point plan (narrative)



Strengthening Finance, Communications & Fundraising

Why

High quality services need sufficient, sustainable funding. There is a risk over reliance on statutory contracts leaves an funding gap and increased vulnerability to funder withdrawal. Diversification of income streams reduces this risk. IWYT has historically punched 'below its weight' in terms of voluntary fundraising on the island limiting services for children and young people on the island. With limited income generation resources fundraising activity needs to be carefully targeted to ensure positive return on investment.

What we will do

- Deliver a clear **financial strategy** to effectively manage risk, including funding diversification
- Grow our **communications and fundraising knowledge and expertise**, including co-production with CYP
- Review our **branding, case for support and communications** to increase our community's propensity to support
- Increase **proactive communications** about IWYT to island media
- Further develop an **annual calendar of communications** and give opportunities to support IWYT
- Increase awareness of the IWYT and services amongst **community groups and corporates** on the island to drive 'fair share' of fundraising activity
- Develop strong relationships and efficient application process for **large multi-year funder bids / renewals**
- Maintain **trust and foundation portfolio**, seeking opportunities against strategic programmes
- Maximise opportunities to **build supporter base, particularly amongst parents and carers**, ensuring simple supporter journeys backed by effective data management and income processing
- Optimise **Big Give Christmas Campaign**
- Regularly **review fundraising investment** for efficiency and effectiveness

How we will measure our performance

Income, Income diversification

Awareness of Isle of Wight Youth Trust

Communications: Media coverage achieved, website usage, social media reach and engagement, direct communication open rates

Fundraising: Income by channel, supporter numbers, ROI on fundraising income streams monitored



Supporting People & Culture

Why

IWYT has grown rapidly, and relatively recently expanded into new areas of service delivery. We need to ensure our structures, training, ways of working, processes, premises, systems and culture support the new size and shape of the organisation.

What we will do

- Strategically evolve **organisational capacity and capability** for sustainable growth and flexible change
- Attract, develop and retain a **highly skilled workforce** with a commitment to wellbeing and career development, including evolving distributive leadership model
- Drive **quality culture** through maintaining and exploring new, quality marks
- Increase **skills and confidence** in using **new digital technology** to improve services and productivity e.g. case management, AI tools
- Build and deepen **partnerships** with organisations who enable us to deliver services to the highest standard
- Design and validate a structured approach to **volunteer recruitment and development**, with curated programmes providing clear boundaries training and progression

How we will measure our performance

Staff Survey results – % of staff recommend the IWYT as a good place to work
Staff retention rates
Staff Sickness
Quality accreditation rating
Digital maturity rating
Volunteer recruitment and retention



Resilient Infrastructure

Why

IWYT has grown rapidly, and relatively recently expanded into new areas of service delivery. We need to ensure our structures, training, ways of working, processes, premises, systems and culture are resilient to support the new size and shape of the organisation, and take advantage of innovation

What we will do

- Review premises needs, for all elements of service and infrastructure
- Develop clear plan for central **Newport 'Hub' provision**
- Maximise island-wide access coverage through strengthening **delivery 'spokes'** within community facilities
- Deliver **rolling schedule of works** for all premises to preserve value and provide safe, appropriate work and delivery environments
- Understand **strategic sources of data and insight**, improving collection, storage, aggregation, analysis, reporting and usage for decision making and demonstrating impact
- Carefully **adopt new technologies**, including AI, to maximise efficiency, aid decision making and maintain resilience
- Evolve **planning, reporting, risk management, decision making and assurance** in line with increasing scale and complexity

How we will measure our performance across Infrastructure

Cost of infrastructure / service user,
Adverse events (safeguarding, data, cyber, health and safety)





Isle of Wight Youth Trust is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.

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The Isle of Wight Youth Trust
114 Pyle Street
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 1XA

Tel: 01983 529 569

Email: info@iowyouthtrust.co.uk

Website: iowyouthtrust.co.uk

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