



# Locked-up in lockdown: Young people, rural isolation & Covid-19

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Putting Young People First Will Improve Somerset





# What we do...a youth work charity

## Engagement & Support

- build relationships
- social, economic, educational
- encourage inclusion
- promote life-long learning
- young people & their experience
- Somerset (and beyond)



# How we do it



Work with 3,500 to  
**4,000**  
young people per year

Design local projects  
(& partnerships)



Deliver national  
programmes  
(UK Youth)

**77+**

staff and 12-15  
volunteers

Raise / earn (& spend)

**£2.5m+**  
per year

Voluntary Board of  
Directors & Youth  
Board



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# How we do it...



## Youth Work

Open Access  
Targeted



## Alternative Learning Provision

Skills Development  
Enterprise



## Mental Health & Wellbeing

Community  
Education

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# The Challenges



97%

The number of CYP presenting with mental health concerns has risen by 97% since 2019.

*Source: Kooth*

Young Somerset received a total of 738 requests for Wellbeing Support, across all services, in 2020

738



Some CYP faced digital exclusion and some CYP did not want to engage in virtual interventions



# Mental Health & Wellbeing: a rural filter (amplified)

- Distant from services: isolation
- Distant from peers: loneliness
- Disruption of routine
- Disruption of support
- Vulnerability





## Covid-19 & rural isolation – an agile response

- Moved all YS services online in 5 days: securing safety & clinical governance for therapy
- Active engagement with statutory partners: safeguarding and contact: VRU, CSC, CAMHS, Education
- Deployment of resource:
  - Identify
  - Locate
  - Engage
- Systemic support: further alignment with existing services
- On-going sustainability – next phase

# Modelling accessibility



## Future-proof & sustainable construct

Focus on:



- early intervention, low-level, preventative: mild-moderate MH issues



- low-intensity CBT therapeutic interventions



- joint deployment of youth workers with mental health colleagues



- increased family support offer, wider engagement



- active resourcing – digital reach & repurposed ICT kit

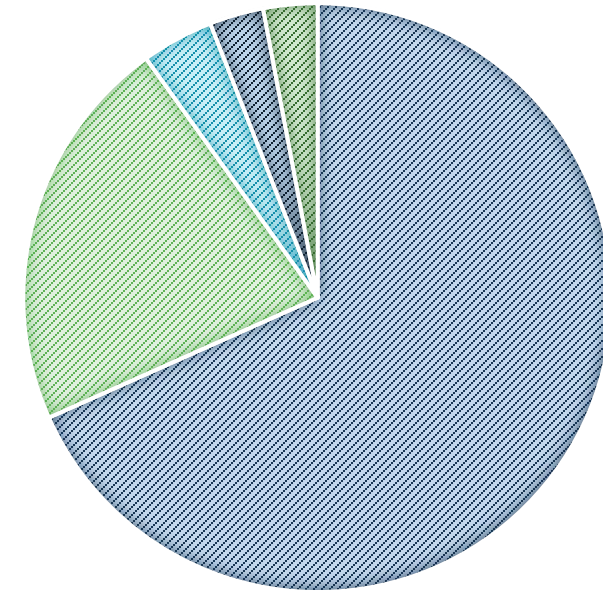




- Initial reduction in demand
- Speed of county lines re-positioning
- Increased demand on staff
- Active staff wellbeing development
- Increased need & prevalence
- Accompanying complexity
  - Neglect 46%, emotional abuse 45% of all Somerset safeguarding cases in C-19
- Systemic turbulence (adjustment)
- Inter-connectedness
- Dynamic feedback: move fast & break things

## REASONS FOR REFERRAL

■ Anxiety ■ Depression ■ Relationship Difficulties ■ Self Harm ■ PTSD



# So what? Our impact...

## Outcomes – Young People



Increased life-chances



Aspiration & enterprise



Positive community engagement



An active future



Raising horizons



Future potential for Somerset



# So what? Our impact...



## Outcomes: “the system”

- increased capacity
- increase participation & inclusion
- increase community awareness
- simpler access – i-Thrive model
- reduce demand ‘upstream’
- preventative services – creative
- sustainable outcomes (transition / step-down)
- addressing the gaps in moving forwards

# The Challenges: Market Towns



## The forgotten middle ground?

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Grass roots VCSE organisations working with young people:

Strong community support / Lack of professional support

Rely on “generous leadership”

Education provision in market towns unfairly expected to be the central (only?) provision for young people

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Migration of young people from their communities

Young people’s identity can be strongly place-based

Issues in Market Towns:

Visible (community) but Hidden (system)

= lack of resourcing to support community solutions

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Requires future-proof and youth-proof thinking

Personal, social, educational, economic development

# Young Somerset

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