

Workforce and Practice Challenges for YIACS

A Short Investigation into Workforce and Practice Challenges Facing Youth Access Members in 2021



**YOUTH
ACCESS**

Championing advice and counselling

www.youthaccess.org.uk
@YouthAccess

Workforce and Practice Challenges for YIACS



Championing advice and counselling

Executive Summary: A Short Investigation into Workforce and Practice Challenges Facing Youth Access Members in 2021

RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This investigation aimed to understand the key workforce and practice issues facing Youth Access members today with the intent to inform the future activities of Youth Access in addressing these challenges.

OBJECTIVES:

- Understand youth advice workforce and practice issues currently facing Youth Access' members
- Consider the role that a National Youth Advice Working Group could play in addressing these workforce and practice issues
- Create informed recommendations for support that Youth Access could provide to members on these issues at a network level, including increased collaboration and influencing at national level

A short-online survey was circulated via Youth Access to their members in April 2021. The survey received 13 responses over a two week period¹. Second, eight semi-structured interviews with Youth Access members from across the country were conducted to discuss:

- The main workforce and practice issues facing their organisation
- Activities or support they were currently undertaking to address these issues
- What support they would like to receive from Youth Access to address these issues²

Finally, additional interviews with relevant stakeholders were also conducted to ascertain the strategic context in which Youth Access members and the wider advice and youth sectors operate.

FINDINGS

Youth Access members identified the following as key workforce and practice issues:

FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Difficulties accessing long-term funding opportunities, which poses substantial challenges to workforce development in terms of both training needs and staff retention and recruitment
- Funding for youth work and advice work in particular was reported to be difficult to assess because this work was perceived not to be valued adequately by various funding bodies
- Funding for YIACS as a whole is limited further by austerity cuts to legal aid and youth services historically, making practice and core activities increasingly difficult to sustain with limited funding

PRACTICE

- Managing increased levels of demand from children and young people presenting with increasingly complex support needs over the course of the pandemic
- Managing this demand via remote methods is not always accessible due to a lack of digital skills or resources within

organisations and due to digital exclusion amongst young people. Assessing needs may also be more difficult via remote methods and thus face-to-face support is required

- The digitalisation of services may not always lead to just and equitable outcomes for young people, such as in court hearings, although it may allow for a greater number of young people to gain 'light touch' support where accessible
- With the return to the office and lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, risk assessments and ensuring health and safety in physical spaces will be an increasingly important issue for practice going forward
- Issues with youth engagement were also noted, particularly for those already excluded or unable to access services, LGBTQ+ young people, or those from ethnically diverse backgrounds

WORKFORCE

- Training needs were identified in relation to developing areas of specialist knowledge, campaigning and advocacy, leadership and team working, as well as digital skills
- The mental health and wellbeing of staff was also reported to have been impacted with the rise in demand, complexity of this demand, and difficulties associated with remote working

CONTACT

For any queries about this report, please contact Kahra Wayland-Larty, Policy and Campaigns Manager at Youth Access. This report was produced by Anita Sangha on behalf of Youth Access in April 2021.

A NATIONAL YOUTH ADVICE WORKING GROUP

Based on feedback from interviews with members and stakeholders, a **National Youth Advice Working Group** could be an effective way of addressing the above challenges and supporting the development of a stronger youth advice sector at the national level. Whilst the exact scope of the Working Group can be defined by Youth Access in future consultation with its membership, feedback thus far suggests that it could undertake the following activities:

RESEARCH

- Closer exploration of workforce and practice challenges facing youth services as outlined above
- Investigation into emerging workforce and practice challenges as we emerge from the pandemic
- Investigation into the evolving needs of young people as they continue to navigate the impact of the pandemic

INFLUENCE & ADVOCACY

- Give members an opportunity to voice concerns to a group

who can design and implement national level campaigning work and strategies, reflecting regional and national concerns

- Support members in advocating for both sector and user needs as these continue to take shape as we recover from the pandemic

NETWORKING

- Facilitate stronger local and national knowledge transfer and discussion of challenges faced, as well as ways to address these based on members' own experiences

The group should liaise and collaborate with the **National Youth Counselling Working Group** given the clear connections between the mental health of young people and presence of legal and social welfare issues, as well as identifying avenues for the sector to explore to promote the mental wellbeing of YIAC staff. Membership should also include organisations from across England and Wales.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address support needs related to **funding and sustainability**, Youth Access can:

- Produce more regular funding bulletins for members to advertise relevant and potential opportunities, as well as including resources to support bid writing, budgeting and application submission
- Consider supporting consortium funding opportunities at the local, regional or national level for members to apply for and work together collaboratively. Youth Access can support members by actively searching for such opportunities and facilitate partnerships and networking between members to apply for and undertake such opportunities
- Use their position as a national level network to demonstrate the social value of advice work to funders to encourage specific funding for youth advice to become available, particularly in the face of increased demand and growing complexity of demand

To address support needs related to offering **dual modes of provision**, Youth Access can:

- Produce regular updates and briefing notes for members on issues pertaining to COVID-19 safety measures and risk management nationally or regionally, liaising with relevant local or regional bodies to develop these resources
- Develop training resources on remote advice, information and counselling delivery or promote pre-existing resources regularly to ensure they are accessible to staff at all levels working long hours and with minimal capacity
- Facilitate networking events, either remotely or in person subject to COVID-19 restrictions, that will allow Youth Access members to share best practice on the challenges related to dual modes of provision, such as maintaining a safe but welcoming space, engaging with digitally excluded young people, and any issues related to returning to the office

To address support needs related to **skills development and training**, Youth Access can

- Continue to facilitate training and CPD at the same level

as it has during the lockdown, tailoring content to the emerging strategic context as it continues to change

- Signpost to pre-existing and upcoming resources, training or events to keep members informed about the range of skills development resources available to them via Youth Network

To address support needs related to improving and protecting **workforce wellbeing**, Youth Access can

- Encourage networking across the country and locally to bring the sector together to discuss potential challenges to social and emotional wellbeing within organisations and ways to cope with the demanding nature of work carried out by YIACS at a time of unprecedented demand
- Support initiatives at the network level to support flexible working and avoid staff burnout at all levels of organisations, from reception and management staff
- Explore the emotional and mental wellbeing of YIACS staff and volunteers in future research to demonstrate the impact of their work on their wellbeing and develop mechanisms to address any issues that may arise in regards to their wellbeing

To support members with issues related to **engaging with young people**, Youth Access can

- Direct members to pre-existing resources and sign-post to upcoming research on maximising engagement with different groups of young people
- Facilitate networking events or training on this theme to bring members together to discuss their experiences and share best practice in this regard
- Support research that explores how young people can or want to be engaged with in terms of accessing advice, information or counselling during and after the pandemic, as well as in service design and evaluation. This could include focus groups with young people with lived experience
- Liaise with partners and stakeholders who have positive outcomes with engaging young people

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Executive Summary: A Short Investigation into Workforce and Practice Challenges Facing Youth Access Members in 2021	1
INTRODUCTION: SUPPORTING 'GENERATION COVID'	4
- Findings	6
- Section Introduction	6
- Funding and Sustainability	6
- Practice: Meeting Demand Across Dual Modes of Provision	8
- Youth Engagement	9
- Practice Conclusion	9
- Workforce Challenges: Skills Development and Training	10
- Workforce Challenges: Mental Health and Wellbeing	11
- Workforce Conclusion	11
DISCUSSION: SUPPORTING YOUTH ACCESS MEMBERS GOING FORWARD	12
- Creating A Stronger Network	12
- A National Youth Advice Working Group	12
RECOMMENDATIONS	13
APPENDIX	14
BIBLIOGRAPHY	16
REFERENCES	17



INTRODUCTION: SUPPORTING 'GENERATION COVID'

This investigation comes just over a year after the first national lockdown to combat the coronavirus pandemic. The challenges facing 'Generation COVID'³ are now more numerous and more complex, as futures become more precarious in the face of global upheaval. The stark inequalities that exist in our society are no longer something that one can simply 'look away' from. They are clearer and deeper than ever. The need to ensure that today's generation can not only recover from the pandemic, but have a hand in this recovery and shape their own futures is thus of paramount importance.

The physical and mental health, and socio-economic implications of the pandemic on young people are well documented in Youth Access' 'Generation COVID' report, but a brief overview of the plurality and complexity of the challenges facing young people across the UK today include record levels of unemployment, a growing attainment gap, increased and exacerbated mental health issues, increased risk of homelessness, and growing demand for welfare and benefit support⁴ - alongside the physical health outcomes of COVID-19 on families and loved ones.

Given the range of socio-economic and physical health issues facing young people even prior to the pandemic, this has had clear negative repercussions upon mental health with the likelihood of young people having a mental health issue increasing by 50% over the last three years⁵. Protecting and improving health outcomes however cannot be separated from the socio-economic impact of the pandemic that may give rise and exacerbate mental and physical health issues in the first instance.⁶

This conception of holistic support for young people underpins the Youth Information, Advice, and Counselling service model⁷ championed by Youth Access: attention must be paid to alleviating and mitigating the social determinants of health in order to improve both mental, physical, social, and economic outcomes for society.⁸

However, cuts to legal aid in the UK over the years have reduced access to the services that would support young people in avoiding negative socio-economic and health outcomes and exacerbating issues already faced. Today's generation have been largely excluded from legal aid:

- Young people aged 18-24 in England and Wales experience 5 million legal problems a year, 16% of which remain under the scope of the LASPO policy reform
- Of these, half are eligible for legal aid on financial grounds, but 84% of this group did not receive support from a professional adviser or lawyer⁹

In combination with a lack of education about their rights as young people, young people are faced with multiple legal problems¹⁰ but limited legal capability

and knowledge as to how to address these or who to turn to for support, meaning problems go unresolved and increase. As a result, not only are young people at greater risk of harm, but additional pressure is placed on social services¹¹, the NHS¹², and criminal justice system.¹³

Ensuring that advice services are accessible to young people across the country is therefore vital, but much research clearly shows that youth engagement with legal and social welfare advice services was already limited prior to the pandemic.¹⁴

With the closure of physical spaces available to young people over the course of the pandemic, accessibility thus reduced further - in particular for those most disadvantaged and digitally excluded¹⁵. Access to advice, information or counselling is therefore minimised due to systemic inequalities faced by young people in the UK today¹⁶

Whilst the voluntary sector as a whole was quick to adapt to remote delivery of services to beneficiaries, the need to maintain both on and offline services is key to making sure services are accessible. However, this is by no means an easy feat and the voluntary sector has faced a number of challenges over the last year, such as getting staff and services online, keeping physical spaces open, funding digital resource procurement, and managing increased, more complex demand to name a few.¹⁷ Research by UK Youth found that:

- 88% of youth organisations surveyed indicated that they are likely or very likely to reduce services
- 31% said staff redundancies were likely
- 64% said they were likely to lose sources of funding, although this figure rises to 69% for 'small' organisations, and overall 72% would need to access emergency funds to support organisational needs

In terms of delivery, 81% reported that a lack of IT infrastructure would pose a barrier to youth engagement with services, and 69% said a lack of private space for young people would also reduce likelihood to engage.¹⁸ This is supported by research by the Centre for Youth Impact, which estimated that as many as 1 million young people would 'disappear' from services that they were accessing due to the pandemic.¹⁹

The need to explore the workforce and practice challenges facing YIACS is therefore clear: we need to ensure that the limited doors that are available to children and young people today stay open, and this demands a strong, well-supported and connected youth sector.

RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This investigation aimed to understand the key workforce and practice issues facing Youth Access members today with the intent to inform the future activities of Youth Access in addressing these challenges.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Understand youth advice workforce and practice issues currently facing Youth Access' members
2. Consider the role that a National Youth Advice Working Group could play in addressing these workforce and practice issues
3. Create informed recommendations for support that Youth Access could provide to members on these issues at a network level, including increased collaboration and influencing at national level

APPROACH

- A short-online survey was circulated via Youth Access to their members in April 2021. The survey received 13 responses over a two week period²⁰. (Appendix).
- Second, eight semi-structured interviews with Youth Access members from across the country were conducted to discuss:
 - The main workforce and practice issues facing their organisation
 - Activities or support they were currently undertaking to address these issues
 - What support they would like to receive from Youth Access to address these issues²¹
- Third, additional interviews with relevant stakeholders were also conducted to ascertain the strategic context in which

Youth Access members and the wider advice and youth sectors operate. Discussions included:

- The main challenges to the advice sector and youth advice work specifically
- The possible ways of addressing these issues at different levels, e.g. local, regional, and/or national
- The role of Youth Access as a national network in advocating for the youth advice sector
- The role of a potential National Youth Advice Working Group in addressing workforce and practice issues; fostering collaboration, and developing influence at the national level
- Additional background research into key issues facing young people and the sector was also carried out to inform this investigation.

TERMINOLOGY

Whilst definitions of a 'young person' will differ between Youth Access members, this research uses 'young people' to refer to those aged between 11 and 25.



FINDINGS

SECTION INTRODUCTION

This section provides an overview of the workforce and practice issues reported by respondents who engaged with the online survey, participated in interviews, and feedback from stakeholders regarding the strategic context of youth advice work today.

Feedback has been included anonymously, although an outline of the profile of interview and survey respondents can be found in the Appendix²². This research was aimed at all Youth Access members, and so reflects the concerns faced by organisations who may specialise in advice, information, and/or counselling respectively, but offer services across these areas as set out by the YIACS model.

We will first review the main challenges and then move on to discuss how Youth Access could address these internally at the network level, as well as via a potential National Youth Advice Working Group.

CHALLENGES FACING YOUTH ACCESS MEMBERS

The main challenges facing Youth Access members both in terms of workforce and practice related to funding which underpinned challenges to practice and workforce development. In terms of workforce issues, these related to specific skills and training needs, as well as promoting workforce wellbeing. In terms of practice, the main challenges here involved managing both in-person and remote methods, as well as ensuring services were accessible to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people who need them most, and providing meaningful opportunities to get involved with service design and evaluation.

FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Difficulties with funding and overall sustainability to YIACS to provide services to young people were identified across respondents. A total of 54% of survey respondents reported facing challenges related to funding and sustainability, alongside just under half of interviewees specifically outlining similar challenges here.

“Short term funding so hard for sustainable future without core funding”
- Survey Respondent

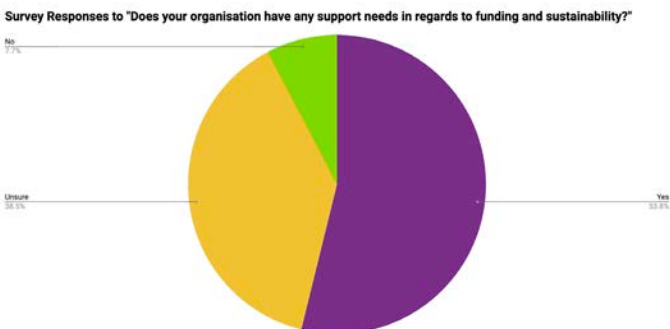


Figure 1. Survey Respondents Who Identified as Having Support Needs in Regards to Funding and Sustainability

ACCESSING FUNDING & RECOGNISING THE VALUE OF YOUTH SERVICES AND ADVICE WORK

Applying for funding was regarded as a challenge - with 39% of survey respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that this was an issue for their organisation. Finding suitable opportunities, e.g. those longer than the usual one to two years, was also an issue for 70% of survey respondents with interviewees describing how such contracts do not allow much flexibility for organisations in terms of longer term strategic planning, promoting workforce security, and ultimately undermining their ability to cover basic core costs and activities.

“(Our) main challenge is accessing long term funding for core work whilst keeping up with demand”
- Survey Respondent

A further 54% needed support with demonstrating the value of their service to funders in order to complete successful bids and access funds. This was reflected in interviews and in discussions with stakeholders: the value of advice work is not clearly understood by funding bodies despite the wealth of evidence that demonstrates that investing in youth services and advice work specifically is an effective way of reducing poor socio-economic outcomes for young people and reducing strain on social services.

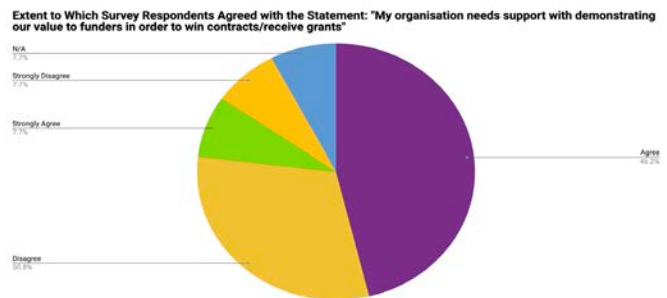


Figure 2. Survey Respondents on Support Needs Surrounding Demonstrating Value of Services to Funders in Funding Applications

Although a quarter of interviewees were complimentary towards funders for their flexible regarding diverting funds to cover the transition to remote practice during the pandemic, the overall value of advice work specifically is thought to not necessarily be as clear to this group compared to that attached to counselling and mental health support work, despite the links between the two. At the policy level, this lack of recognition was linked to the introduction of policies such as LASPO (2012), which several interviewees and stakeholders described as inhibiting the financial sustainability advice and information services for young people, as well as the development of the sector itself.

First, with the scope of legal aid being reduced, the nature of legal aid contracts thus became more restricted and key areas of youth service provision are no longer covered - yet clearly still needed in order to provide holistic and effective support for young people. As a result, young people, particularly those with limited financial resources - a number that continues to grow

during the course of the pandemic²³ - are not able to find or access the support of a trained advisor or solicitor²⁴, present with higher levels of stress, anxiety, depression and other mental and physical health issues²⁵, and increase the overall demand for support to address these interlinked and complex issues.

Second, in terms of developing the sector - if these key areas of provision are no longer covered then organisations must find other sources of funding, which as outlined above is already a challenge in itself. Training in these areas of provision cannot be covered via funding from legal aid contracts and thus specialisation and expertise is harder to develop without the financial resources in place required to do so. This has implications for the quality of advice and information provided and ultimately fosters more generalist service where more specialist knowledge is required, particularly as demand increases and becomes more complex during the pandemic.

Stakeholders also noted how the value of advice not being clearly recognised may also be linked to the lack of rigorous advice quality standards in place uniformly across the country. Whilst counselling work requires stricter levels of accreditation and training, the lack of uniformity in the advice sector and levels of training required for advisors may exacerbate some of the issues surrounding the recognition of advice work as essential work in the same capacity as providing mental health support.

FUNDING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

A lack of funding in general was linked to overall difficulties with workforce development across YIACS. In interviews for example, it was noted that the nature of shorter term funding contracts and lack of attractive salaries in the advice and voluntary and community sector in general made workforce retention and capacity harder to manage.

Extent to Which Survey Respondents Agreed with the Statement: 'My organisation needs support with finding longer-term funding opportunities to cover core activities and costs'

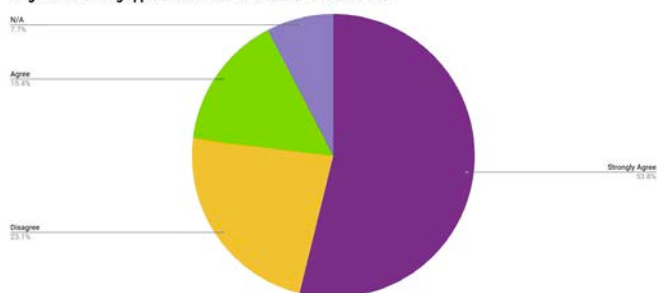


Figure 3. Survey Respondents who Identified as Having Support Needs in Regards to Finding Long-term Funding Opportunities to Cover Core Costs and Activities.

Shorter contracts for specific roles within YIACS were noted to offer little job security for staff as roles are limited and precarious subject to successful applications for continuation funding, and higher salaries available for similar work but within statutory or local authority bodies at a higher pay are more attractive. Staff can be then 'trained' in YIACS but then move on to other, more secure roles with higher salaries, taking their skills with them and threatening the sustainability of service provision overall.

FUNDING AND PRACTICE

Similarly, a lack of sustainable funding has clear repercussions for practice: almost half of interviewees acknowledged how a lack of financial stability limited workforce capacity to cope with increased demand where there was a shortage of staff in general. Survey results confirm this, with nearly a third relied on volunteers to do so (31%) and 70% strongly agreed or agreed that they would need to hire more FTE staff to continue to meet demand.

This was elaborated on by stakeholders, who outlined how funding issues in the the youth and advice sectors over the last ten years²⁶, along with the closure of youth services during the pandemic²⁷ means that ultimately there are fewer 'safe spaces' for young people to turn to in general where they may seek out support for legal and social welfare issues. This is exacerbated by the closure of schools and youth services during the pandemic in particular, and so the number of doors open to young people through which they could access support for the growing number and increasingly complex issues faced continue to close, and their awareness of support available and their rights as citizens also diminishes.

Interviewees also mentioned needing to release funds quickly to transition to remote service delivery, with one organisation noting how they had to rapidly implement a three-year strategic plan for remote, digital service delivery within the first six months of 2020 in order to meet demand, but without a specific amount of funding assigned to undertaking this process. Overall, digital infrastructure support emerged as a key practice issue as it demanded the rapid release of funds for resource procurement and/or training on use and service delivery.

PRACTICE: MEETING DEMAND ACROSS DUAL MODES OF PROVISION

Across interviews, survey results, and engagement with stakeholders, the main issues surrounding practice were associated with transitioning to remote provision and then subject to COVID-19 restrictions, balancing remote practice with in-person delivery; and managing increased and more complex demand.

A quarter of survey respondents reported facing challenges in terms of service delivery. When asked to specify the extent to which they agreed that the following areas were challenges for their organisation, survey respondents identified the following as issues for their organisation:

- Managing a demanding caseload (70%)
- Supporting beneficiaries with more than one need (54%)
- Working with Statutory Bodies, Local Authorities and Health and Social Care Bodies (54%)

MANAGING INCREASED & INCREASINGLY COMPLEX DEMAND

These findings were reflected in interviews, with both stakeholders and Youth Access members identifying a clear increase in demand and more complexity in this need. A quarter of interviewees described having to reduce service provision and increase waiting times for mental health support, with over half stating difficulties in keeping up with the growing demand from young people presenting with increasingly complex issues.

This complexity was also highlighted by stakeholders: the impact of COVID-19 on young people in terms of employment for example has severe ramifications for the economic, social, emotional, and health prospects of young people who struggle to find and stay in work, cover bills and rent, access necessities such as food and clothing, and other basic needs. Further, the ability of organisations to address these is also made more complicated due to challenges providing services in person during the pandemic and remotely.

MANAGING DEMAND REMOTELY

Regarding challenges to remote provision, interviewees and stakeholders reported doing their best to ensure they continued to use services where they were already engaged, but it was difficult to reach new users or see them within reasonable waiting times.

A second key challenge to remote practice pertains to digital exclusion: remote methods are not accessible for the most disadvantaged and marginalised who lack access to digital devices, sufficient data packages, or a space to have private conversations where needed.

Third, not all young people want to engage with digital services and prefer to engage through face-to-face services. Half of interviewees agreed that knowing how to best engage with young people depending on the complexity of their needs, access to digital devices and services, and preferences remained a key challenge during the lockdown.

ARE DIGITAL DELIVERY METHODS EQUITABLE, OR JUST 'EFFICIENT'?

Finally, there are also concerns around whether remote service delivery and overall transition to digital

delivery actually leads to equitable outcomes, rather than being potentially more efficient. Take the use of teleconferencing in child and young people's court hearings. Given the closure of hundreds of county, crown and magistrates courts across the UK over the last 8 years, the rise of teleconferencing in place of physical court hearings was already in place²⁸. With the closure of courts during the pandemic inline with COVID-19 safety requirements, the use of video links in court has increased.

The use of teleconferencing in court hearings has received strong criticism however, due to concerns around lower levels of legal representation in video court hearings, difficulties with audio and visual quality, and often led to harsher sentencing²⁹. Given young people and children going through this process are already more likely to face higher levels of emotional and developmental issues and their participation in court hearings in person was already incredibly stressful and challenging, video link trials may reduce their participation hearings further³⁰ and lead to worse outcomes in terms of sentencing and life chances later. This is just one example of the complexities associated with remote practice.

IN-PERSON SERVICE DELIVERY ISSUES

In terms of in-person delivery, this remains an emerging issue for Youth Access members. Survey results suggested that respondents had been able to use remote methods of provision to provide services to young people. However, interview feedback suggests that balancing remote provision with in-person delivery going forward is more complicated.

This was linked to a lack of clarity and uncertainty around providing in-person services, either back in organisations' own buildings, or in communities (e.g. schools, street engagements) depending on regional or national COVID-19 measures. There were also widespread concerns regarding the need to maintain a safe, welcoming physical space for young people to turn to where they can receive in-person support but is not 'clinical' due to the nature of risk assessments and safety measures required to provide a COVID-secure space.

On the organisation side, there were also reported concerns in relation to the safety of returning to the office. Whilst interviewees reported that staff remained committed to supporting young people, returning to the office is a challenge in itself due to:

- Risk assessments to be carried out to ensure offices are safe for staff to return, with personal protection equipment being procured as needed
- Where staff may be more vulnerable, returning to the office during the pandemic prior to vaccinations posed substantial physical health risks and increased anxiety

Further, not all staff saw a need to return to the office in order to provide support to young people where some services could be provided remotely and had proved to be effective. This can cause friction within services over the best way to balance workforce wellbeing with effective service delivery. Such workforce-related concerns will be explored in more detail in the subsequent section on workforce challenges.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

As mentioned, another key concern related to youth engagement: knowing how to engage with young people who are the most vulnerable has been a challenge where they may not know what support exists or be able to access it at all - either in person or remotely. Stakeholders and Youth Access members highlighted how the pandemic had exacerbated such challenges to youth engagement in place prior to 2020, such as:

- A lack of rights-based knowledge in general about what support young people are entitled to and where to access this
- A lack of access to digital devices and subsequent lack of access to remote services for advice, information or counselling
- A limited number of safe spaces to turn to for support, particularly with the long-term funding cuts to youth services and advice work

In particular, interviewees identified the following groups of young people as having greater difficulty accessing advice, information and counselling

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic children and young people
- LGBTQ+-identifying young people
- Digitally excluded young people and children

Much of Youth Access' past work demonstrates the impact of systemic inequality³¹ upon these groups and how this translates into and ultimately perpetuates the complex, intersectional and overlapping socio-economic challenges they face that underscore their need to access youth services in the first instance. Research shows the impact of the pandemic upon the mental health and social welfare difficulties faced by these groups have increased and thus the need to ensure these groups are able to access support and are empowered to advocate for change themselves remains vital.

REPRESENTATION

Furthermore, ensuring that youth organisations are representative of the communities they serve is also highly important to young people's engagement. One interviewee described the importance of workforce representation and the renewed focus on increasing representation along different axes of social difference,

from sexual orientation, to ethnicity, to disability, as they saw this as key to increasing engagement amongst the groups of young people outlined above. Stakeholders also discussed the importance of representation in increasing youth engagement,

SERVICE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

As outlined in the Altogether Better Charter, having input from young people in service design and delivery is a key factor in their overall accessibility and success. Interviewees identified difficulties however in engaging with young people with intent to obtain feedback on the impact and quality of services accessed.

These were identified with reference to needing support with understanding how to best navigate these conversations in general: it feels 'clinical' and insensitive to ask distressed young people using services how they felt about them, let alone provide suggestions for improvement or capture feedback to be used in reporting

"We often struggle in maximising youth engagement with regards to evaluating and shaping delivery. We do it, but would love to do more. If there was a youth panel that all member organisations could access for feedback on shaping of services and helping with ideas on obtaining more service user feedback that would be great"

Survey Respondent

PRACTICE CONCLUSION

Overall, challenges to practice were underpinned by difficulties with funding, managing demand and increasingly complex demand, and working across both in-person and remote forms of service delivery. Difficulties promoting youth engagement with services were also discussed, with reference to digital exclusion and general lack of rights-based education for young people. These issues also posed challenges to workforces in terms of funding, workforce skills development and training, and overall well being, which we will now move on to discuss in more detail.

WORKFORCE CHALLENGES: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

Workforce issues faced by organisations pertained to specific training needs. Survey respondents identified training needs in the following areas:

- Developing areas of specialist knowledge relating to different areas of social welfare law (85%)
- Developing organisations' ability to campaign and advocate on behalf of their beneficiaries (85%) and the sector (77%)
- Support with management and leadership skills development (85%) and general support with team working, e.g. improving communication between team members, delegation etc (77%)

Digital skills training remained a key issue to address going forward with 60% identifying having workforce needs here. Given that respondents also identified as not having a difficult time getting online, this suggests that there are still significant support needs around making the most of remote service delivery options. An additional 54% of respondents raised obtaining quality accreditation (54%) as an issue, although whether this pertains to advice or counselling work is unknown and requires greater exploration.

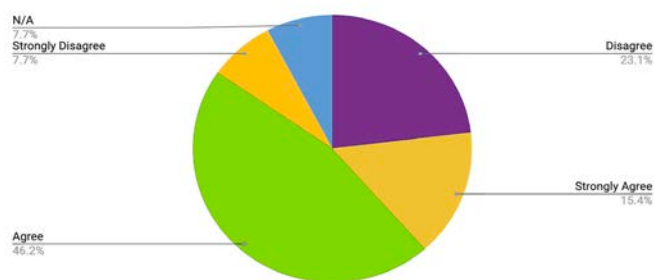
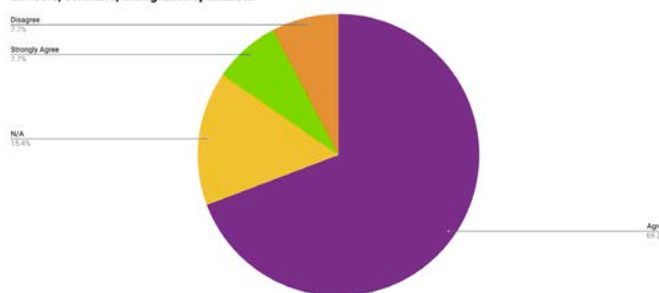


Figure 4. Extent to which Survey Respondents Identified as Having Digital Skills Training Needs

These results are reinforced by interviewees and stakeholders. Both groups saw the need to challenge the issues facing young people at the policy level, and welcomed efforts by Youth Access to facilitate national level coordination and collaboration to more strongly advocate for systemic change on behalf of young people. The desire to advocate on behalf of the sector was also reinforced in interviews, with interviewees and stakeholders referencing the lack of perceived value of advice work at the funder and national level.

In terms of quality accreditation and developing specialist knowledge, interviewees and stakeholders both groups referenced again the historic funding cuts to the legal aid sector meaning advice work became difficult to recruit for as it becomes a more 'niche' area of provision. Subsequently, staff require additional training upon recruitment which in turn requires more investment and funding from organisations. One respondent mentioned how they had taken on a trainee and provided training internally, but there exists still a clear need to create stronger and well-funded pathways into the profession.

Extent to Which Survey Respondents Identified Support Needs Around Recruiting Specialist Staff, e.g. welfare advisors, solicitors, immigration specialists.



Advice work was also regarded as lacking as rigorous levels of quality accreditation and regulation compared to counselling work for example, with one respondent calling for the advice sector to develop a stricter set of standards pertaining to advice services and for the development of a more cohesive, national level. Such a body was comparable to the role of the British Association for Counselling and Psychology in counselling service delivery and design.

Additional concerns were raised by half of interviewees in regard to continuous changes in social welfare and COVID-19 policies, making it harder for staff to keep on top of and adjust their advice and services for young people. This posed further complications for service delivery: where young people just need to access information, this was thought to be easier to achieve through remote methods, but depending on the complexity of the issues faced, in-person support may be more effective. For workforces, this creates greater uncertainty and lack of clarity around what advice to provide to whom, and how, as well as making developing expertise in different areas of social welfare law more complex overall.

WORKFORCE CHALLENGES: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Finally, it is imperative to discuss the very real mental health impact of remote working on youth advice organisations and their workforces. Not only does working from home itself come with a multitude of challenges, but the emotionally challenging nature of youth work increases as the demand and complexity of need developed over the pandemic. Supporting all staff to manage working from home is therefore a key area of concern in promoting the sustainability of the workforce and ability to provide high quality support for young people who need them.

Interviewees identified a range of issues associated with working from home that had a negative impact on staff wellbeing, which included:

- Difficulties 'switching off' because of the removal of the barrier between work and home and working longer hours
- Taking calls from distressed young people at home, with little to no privacy or whilst trying to balance other responsibilities, e.g. childcare
- 'Zoom fatigue' as meetings no longer took place face to face, and increased isolation between staff members as opportunities to engage in more informal conversations - which often facilitated stronger relationships and team working patterns across teams - were no longer possible

Interviewees discussed the measures they had introduced to support staff wellbeing. These included:

- Specific clinical supervision for advisors
- Encouraging staff to talk about how they felt and were coping together and checking in with staff regularly
- Reviewing work shift patterns and hours to avoid staff burnout

It is also key to note that mental wellbeing and emotional support was required across all levels of a given organisation where this was mentioned, from administrative or reception staff who act as the first point of call for young people when they initially engage with services, all the way to senior management staff who are expected to be ready to support the rest of the team.

Workforce wellbeing was further challenged by managing the transition between dual modes of provision. Returning to the office was reported to be a cause of concern and anxiety for staff due to fears of safety - particularly for clinically vulnerable staff, concerns around vaccine uptake. Furthermore, where staff were reported to prefer to work remotely, returning to work was a point of contention, whereas for staff who had struggled to work remotely they were eager to return. Managing the needs of both staff and young people in terms of methods of provision is therefore incredibly complicated in terms of meeting needs across both groups in a meaningful way that alleviates anxiety and distress on both sides.

WORKFORCE CONCLUSION

The main challenges associated with the workforces of Youth Access membership organisations related to developing skills and expertise in advice work in particular, as well in their ability to campaign and advocate for young people and the sector at the national level. Policy changes in advice and relating to COVID-19 were thought to make service delivery more difficult, create further challenges to developing skilled workforces and promote quality provision across the country.

DISCUSSION: SUPPORTING YOUTH ACCESS MEMBERS GOING FORWARD

The findings of this research only reflect a small segment of Youth Access' membership. Whilst the Youth Access membership is at least 190 strong, due to constraints we have only managed to hear from a very small sample of this collective. However, the combination of survey, interviews, and stakeholder engagements does provide at least an outline of some of the most pressing issues facing youth advice, information and counselling services today as we navigate the recovery from the pandemic and continue to deal with its multidimensional impact on young people and as a sector.

Research findings suggest that, in as much as we need to address the challenges facing young people in a holistic manner, we need to do the same for the youth service sector. The key themes that emerged across surveys and interviews reflected a lack of value ascribed to youth services and advice work. The direct links between access to advice, information and counselling services and improved socio-economic and health outcomes for young people were perceived as under-valued by funding bodies and at the policy level.

This results in difficulties accessing funding for youth service work, producing further difficulties developing more skilled and qualified workforces, managing demand from young people presenting with increasingly complex needs, and managing provision across both in-person and remote methods. Overall, there is a clear need for Youth Access to support the establishment of connections between members and the sector, and empower members and stakeholders to champion the cause of the youth advice sector and the rights of young people.

This section will review the challenges facing Youth Access members today and reflect on potential avenues for Youth Access as a network, its membership, and other strategic-level stakeholders may work to address these issues going forward to:

- Support the financial sustainability of youth advice, information and counselling services across the country
- Overcome practice issues related to working across both in-person and remote methods
- Addressing barriers to youth engagement
- Address workforce training needs and skills development
- Promote and advocate for the wellbeing of members' workforces

It will then conclude to discuss the role of a National Youth Advice Working Group in investigating the practice and workforce issues discussed by members, and challenges facing young people as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold and implications upon the sector continue to emerge.

CREATING A STRONGER NETWORK

Survey respondents were asked what support they would like to receive from Youth Access. The results showed that in general, they wanted to be connected with other members and youth organisations nationally and locally to address challenges across practice, workforce, and funding and sustainability.

In regards to funding, survey respondents wanted to be connected to other organisations local to them (23%), work with similar beneficiary groups (31%) or provide similar services across the UK (31%) to share best

practice and discuss experiences with accessing funding. Interviewees also mentioned how stronger connections with other members could open the door to potential consortium funding opportunities where organisations could work together to work on bids and projects together to greater effect as they draw on their collective expertise and resources.

This was reflected in relation to practice issues - with a third of survey respondents in favour of facilitating the development of stronger **local partnerships** for organisations working with similar beneficiary groups to discuss common challenges and share best practice (31%), as well as at the national level (23%). In regards to workforce issues, there was also support for the development of stronger national and local partnerships for organisations working with similar groups, with 15 and 23% voting for each respectively.

In stakeholder interviews, the need to foster stronger relationships at national, regional and local levels was discussed in detail as this was thought to encourage collaboration and influence at all levels to advocate for the value of advice on improving outcomes for young people. At the local level networks are often informed by strong local and contextual knowledge that encourages more holistic support for young people as local organisations get to know each other and what other organisations may be able to support users.

At the same time, regional and national level connections promote the strengthening of the collective voice of the sector as a whole to tackle systems-level barriers to access to justice and young people's engagement and flourishing in society overall. When possible, subject to COVID restrictions, facilitating both online networking events where attendees from across the country can connect, and in-person events to help establish more informal but equally important relationships with others in the sector were also thought to be powerful ways of connecting members.

There was also support for the creation or dissemination of online resources across all three key areas. Interviewees praised Youth Access' past training and online resources, and wanted these to continue after the COVID-19 pandemic and reflect the challenges brought about by the emerging socio-economic landscape.

A NATIONAL YOUTH ADVICE WORKING GROUP

Based on feedback from interviews with members and stakeholders, a **National Youth Advice Working Group** could be an effective way of addressing the above challenges and supporting the development of a stronger youth advice sector at the national level. Whilst the exact scope of the Working Group can be defined by Youth Access in future consultation with its membership, feedback thus far suggests that it could undertake the following activities:

- **Research:**
 - Closer exploration of workforce and practice challenges facing youth services as outlined above
 - Investigation into emerging workforce and practice challenges as we emerge from the pandemic
 - Investigation into the evolving needs of young people as they continue to navigate the impact of the pandemic

• Influence & Advocacy

- Give members an opportunity to voice concerns to a group who can design and implement national level campaigning work and strategies, reflecting regional and national concerns
- Support members in advocating for both sector and user needs as these continue to take shape as we recover from the pandemic

• Networking

- Facilitate stronger local and national knowledge transfer and discussion of challenges faced, as well as ways to address these based on members' own experiences

The members of the Working Group should have diverse areas of expertise pertaining to advice, information and counselling, as well as research, policy and campaigning,

and lived experiences. Second, this Working Group should liaise and collaborate with the **National Youth Counselling Working Group** given the clear connections between the mental health of young people and presence of legal and social welfare issues, as well as identifying avenues for the sector to explore to promote the mental wellbeing of YIAC staff

Engaging with non-youth specific organisations such as the **Money And Pensions Service** is also vital to the success of the working group to include greater insights into the socio-economic challenges facing young people³². This will allow the Working Group to combine expertise to consider how to best support young people in navigating these issues and inform advocacy, networking, and research work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the feedback from the survey, interviews, and stakeholder engagements, the following recommendations are put forward to Youth Access to consider in their plans to support members to overcome workforce and practice issues.

To address support needs related to **funding and sustainability**, Youth Access can:

- Produce more regular funding bulletins for members to advertise relevant and potential opportunities, as well as including resources to support bid writing, budgeting and application submission
- Consider supporting consortium funding opportunities at the local, regional or national level for members to apply for and work together collaboratively. Youth Access can support members by actively searching for such opportunities and facilitate partnerships and networking between members to apply for and undertake such opportunities
- Use their position as a national level network to demonstrate the social value of advice work to funders to encourage specific funding for youth advice to become available, particularly in the face of increased demand and growing complexity of demand

To address support needs related to offering **dual modes of provision**, Youth Access can:

- Produce regular updates and briefing notes for members on issues pertaining to COVID-19 safety measures and risk management nationally or regionally, liaising with relevant local or regional bodies to develop these resources
- Develop training resources on remote advice, information and counselling delivery or promote pre-existing resources regularly to ensure they are accessible to staff at all levels working long hours and with minimal capacity
- Facilitate networking events, either remotely or in person subject to COVID-19 restrictions, that will allow Youth Access members to share best practice on the challenges related to dual modes of provision, such as maintaining a safe but welcoming space, engaging with digitally excluded young people, and any issues related to returning to the office

To address support needs related to **skills development and training**, Youth Access can

- Continue to facilitate training and CPD at the same level as it has during the lockdown, tailoring content to the emerging strategic context as it continues to change
- Signpost to pre-existing and upcoming resources, training or events to keep members informed about the range of skills development resources available to them via Youth Network

To address support needs related to improving and protecting **workforce wellbeing**, Youth Access can

- Encourage networking across the country and locally to bring the sector together to discuss potential challenges to social and emotional wellbeing within organisations and ways to cope with the demanding nature of work carried out by YIACS at a time of unprecedented demand
- Support initiatives at the network level to support flexible working and avoid staff burnout at all levels of organisations, from reception and management staff
- Explore the emotional and mental wellbeing of YIACS staff and volunteers in future research to demonstrate the impact of their work on their wellbeing and develop mechanisms to address any issues that may arise in regards to their wellbeing

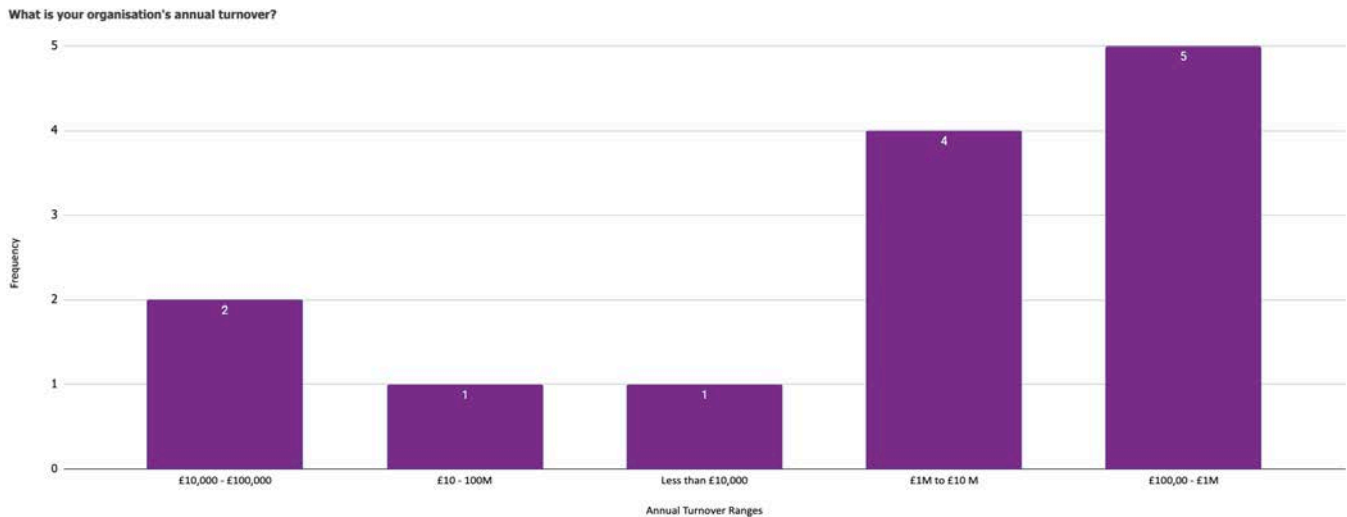
To support members with issues related to **engaging with young people**, Youth Access can

- Direct members to pre-existing resources and sign-post to upcoming research on maximising engagement with different groups of young people
- Facilitate networking events or training on this theme to bring members together to discuss their experiences and share best practice in this regard
- Support research that explores how young people can or want to be engaged with in terms of accessing advice, information or counselling during and after the pandemic, as well as in service design and evaluation. This could include focus groups with young people with lived experience
- Liaise with partners and stakeholders who have positive outcomes with engaging young people

APPENDIX

1. ABOUT SURVEY RESPONDENTS

- There were a total of 13 respondents from a range of organisations spread mostly across England. Overall, 46% were associate members, another 46% were full members, and just 8% were not Youth Access members
- Nearly two thirds of respondents were providing generalist services to young people (62%), with 23% providing advice and support with health and social care, 8% working with youth offenders specifically and on homelessness prevention respectively
- In terms of beneficiaries, 31% provided services to young people with mental health issues; 8% provided services to young people not in education, employment or training and 62% identified as providing services to all young people
- Overall, just 8% provided services nationally, compared to 46% who provided services county-wide, 31% worked borough-wide, with an additional 15% working exclusively in their borough



2. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interviewees were sent the following questions in advance of telephone interviews conducted in April 2021. Interviewees held senior management roles such as CEO, Director, or Services Manager/Departmental Lead.

1. What are the main challenges your organisation faces in regard to providing advice, information and counselling to the young people you work with?
2. What challenges does your organisation face in regard to developing and maintaining a strong workforce with the necessary skills and knowledge required to meet user needs?
3. What support, if any, do you currently access to address any workforce issues within your organisation?
4. What support, if any, do you currently access to meet any challenges to your organisations' ability to provide advice to young people?
5. What support would you like to receive from Youth Access to help your organisation address any practice or workforce issues?

3. STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders consulted in this research include:

- Advice Services Alliance
- Just for Kids Law
- Youth Legal
- Citizens Advice Redbridge, Youth Innovation Project

Stakeholders were asked to discuss:

- The main challenges facing the youth advice sector and how these may evolve as we recover from the coronavirus pandemic
- The role that Youth Access in fostering collaboration and coordination across the youth advice sector at the network level
- The potential role of a National Youth Advice Working Group in addressing workforce and practice issues and developing

APPENDIX (CONTINUED)

further the influence of the sector and Youth Access

SURVEY QUESTIONS

- What is the name of the organisation you work for?
- What is your job title?
- What area of advice, information and/or counselling does your organisation specialise in?
- Where is your organisation based?
- Please identify the main beneficiaries of your service.
- Where do you provide your services?
- What is your organisation's annual turnover?
- What is your organisation's main source of income?
- How many members of full time employed (FTE) staff does your organisation currently have?
- Does your organisation have any support needs in regards to funding and sustainability?
- Please select from the list below the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding accessing funding.
 - My organisation needs support with the process of applying for funding, e.g. bid writing, demonstrating need and impact
 - My organisation needs support with finding funding opportunities relevant to our work
 - My organisation needs support with finding longer-term funding opportunities to cover core activities and costs
 - My organisation needs support with demonstrating our value to funders in order to win contracts/receive grants.
 - My organisation has enough time to apply for funding alongside covering core activities.
 - My organisation needs support with gaining quality accreditation in order to access funding.
 - My organisation needs support with the process of applying for funding, e.g. bid writing, demonstrating need and impact
 - My organisation needs support with finding funding opportunities relevant to our work
- Do you currently receive any support to help address any challenges faced in regards to applying, accessing, and maintaining sustainable levels of funding for your organisation?
- What support could Youth Access offer you to help address any challenges your organisation faces in regards to improving access to funding and increasing sustainability?
- Please specify the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding your organisation's workforce and ability to provide services to young people.
 - My organisation has been able to keep up with the demand for support from young people over the last 12 months.
 - My organisation has relied on volunteers to meet demand for support from young people.
 - My organisation has been able to use remote methods of provision (e.g. telephone/text services, webchat, emails, or video calling) to provide services to young people.
 - My organisation was able to transition to remote methods of provision easily.
 - My organisation needs to hire more FTE staff in order to sustainably meet demand.
- To what extent does your organisation have any support needs in relation to workforce development or training? Please select the extent to which you agree that your organisation needs support with the following areas of workforce development.
 - Digital Skills Training
 - Specialist Knowledge on Different Areas of Social Welfare Law
 - Campaigning and Advocacy on Behalf of Beneficiaries
 - Campaigning and Advocacy on Behalf of the Sector
 - Recruiting Specialist Staff, e.g. welfare advisors, solicitors, immigration specialists
 - Recruiting and Retaining Staff
 - Recruiting & Retaining Volunteers
 - Management Skills Development, e.g. project management, communication, delegation, etc.
 - Team Working Skills
 - Development, e.g. increasing communication and collaboration
 - Support with Gaining Quality Accreditation
- Do you currently receive any support to help address any challenges faced in regards to workforce development and training?
- What support would you like to receive from Youth Access to help you address your organisation's workforce development and training needs?
- Does your organisation have any issues relating to service delivery?
- What challenges does your organisation face in providing services to young people?
- Do you currently receive any support to help address any challenges faced in regards to providing services to your beneficiaries?
- What support would you like to receive from Youth Access to help you address your organisation's workforce development and training needs?
- In order to better support our members going forward, we would like to understand what barriers currently exist that prevent you from engaging with support available.
- Do you have any final remarks regarding any challenges facing your organisation in terms of practice, workforce, or how Youth Access could support you to address these issues?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Balmer, N.J, and Pleasance, P. (2012) Youth Access, 'The Legal Problems and Mental Health Needs of Youth Advice Service Users: The Case for Advice', Accessed April 2021
- Bowcott, O. The Guardian UK, 'videolinks in court trials undermine justice system, report says' October 23 2017. Retrieved <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2017/oct/23/videolinks-in-court-trials-undermine-justice-system-says-report> Accessed April 2021
- Dearden, L. The Independent UK, 'Coronavirus: Defendants more likely to be jailed in video hearings, research warns amid rise of remote justice' Retrieved <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-court-hearings-jail-sentence-remote-lockdown-a9500101.html> Accessed April 2021
- Mistlin, A., The Guardian UK, 'Funding cuts hitting UK youth services as demand grows, report says' February 25 2021 Retrieved <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/feb/25/funding-cuts-hitting-uk-youth-services-as-demand-grows-report-says> Accessed April 2021
- Money And Pensions Service, 'UK Strategy for Financial Wellbeing 2020-2030: Five ambitious changes to help people make the most of their money and pensions', January 2020, Accessed April 2021
- Our Minds, Our Future England, 'Our Minds Our Future: Our Manifesto' (2021) Retrieved <https://www.ourmindsourfuture.uk/england/> Accessed April 2021
- Social Mobility Commission (2020), 'Monitoring Social Mobility Report, 2013-2020 Is the government delivering on our recommendations?' Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/891155/Monitoring_report_2013-2020_-_Web_version.pdf#page=17 Accessed April 2021
- The Children's Society, Children's Mental Health Statistics (2021) <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/well-being/mental-health-statistics> Accessed April 2021
- The Sutton Trust, January 2021, 'Remote Learning: The Digital Divide', Briefing Note, Accessed April 2021
- UK Youth (2020) Research Briefing, 'Impact of covid-19 on young people and the youth sector' Accessed April 2021 <https://www.ukyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/UK-Youth-Covid-19-Impact-Report-.pdf>
- United Nations, (2013) 'Youth as a Smart Investment' Fact Sheet Retrieved <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-smart-investment.pdf> Accessed April 2021
- YMCA (2019) 'Out of Service: A Report examining local authority expenditure on youth services in England and Wales' Retrieved <https://www.ymca.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/YMCA-Out-of-Service-report.pdf> Accessed April 2021
- Youth Access, 'A Travesty of Justice: Young Peoples Access to Legal Aid', Policy & Research Briefing September 2018 Reetrieved <https://www.youthaccess.org.uk/downloads/a-travesty-of-justice-yp-access-to-legal-aid.pdf> Accessed April 2021
- Youth Access, 'Generation COVID?' Socio-economic factors impacting young people's mental health in the wake of the pandemic, Policy Briefing, March 2021 . Accessed April 2021
- Youth Justice Legal Centre, April 17 2018, "Report suggests child defendants' right to a fair trial compromised by video link hearings", Retrieved from <https://yjlc.uk/report-suggests-child-defendants-right-to-a-fair-trial-compromised-by-video-link-hearings/> Accessed April 2021
- 'Youth as a Smart Investment' Fact Sheet, United Nations, (2013) Retrieved <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-smart-investment.pdf> Accessed April 2021

REFERENCES

- 1 A breakdown of the key characteristics of survey respondents can be found in the Appendix. Please note that feedback from interviews with Youth Access members has been incorporated anonymously and a list of interviewees will not be made publicly available to protect participants' anonymity.
- 2 Appendix 5. Interview Questions
- 3 Youth Access, 'Generation COVID?' Socio-economic factors impacting young people's mental health in the wake of the pandemic, Policy Briefing, March 2021
- 4 Youth Access, 'Generation COVID?' Socio-economic factors impacting young people's mental health in the wake of the pandemic, Policy Briefing, March 2021
- 5 The Children's Society, Children's Mental Health Statistics (2021) Retrieved <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/well-being/mental-health-statistics> Accessed April 2021
- 6 Our Minds, Our Future England, 'Our Minds Our Future: Our Manifesto' (2021) Retrieved <https://www.ourmindsourfuture.uk/england/> Accessed April 2021
- 7 Youth Access, 'The YIACS Model', <https://www.youthaccess.org.uk/our-work/yiacs-model#faq-6> (Youth Access, n.d.) Accessed April 2021
- 8 United Nations, 'Youth as a Smart Investment' Fact Sheet, (2013) Retrieved <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-smart-investment.pdf> Accessed April 2021
- 9 Youth Access, 'A Travesty of Justice: Young People's Access to Legal Aid', Policy & Research Briefing September 2018, Accessed April 2021 <https://www.youthaccess.org.uk/downloads/a-travesty-of-justice-yp-access-to-legal-aid.pdf> Accessed April 2021
- 10 Youth Access, 'A Travesty of Justice: Young People's Access to Legal Aid', Policy & Research Briefing September 2018, Accessed April 2021 <https://www.youthaccess.org.uk/downloads/a-travesty-of-justice-yp-access-to-legal-aid.pdf> Accessed April 2021
- 11 Balmer, N.J, and Pleasance, P. (2012), 'The Legal Problems and Mental Health Needs of Youth Advice Service Users: The Case for Advice', Accessed April 2021
- 12 Pleasance, P. et al. (2015) 'Health Inequality and Access to Justice: Young People, Mental health and legal Issues' Policy & Research Briefing, Accessed April 2021
- 13 Youth Access (2011) 'Civil Legal Problems: Young People, Social Exclusion and Crime' Accessed April 2021
- 14 Youth Access, 'A Travesty of Justice: Young People's Access to Legal Aid', Policy & Research Briefing September 2018, Accessed April 2021 <https://www.youthaccess.org.uk/downloads/a-travesty-of-justice-yp-access-to-legal-aid.pdf> Accessed April 2021
- 15 Youth Access, 'A Travesty of Justice: Young People's Access to Legal Aid', Policy & Research Briefing September 2018, Accessed April 2021 <https://www.youthaccess.org.uk/downloads/a-travesty-of-justice-yp-access-to-legal-aid.pdf> Accessed April 2021
- 16 The Sutton Trust, January 2021, 'Remote Learning: The Digital Divide', Briefing Note, Accessed April 2021
- 17 UK Youth (2020) Research Briefing, 'Impact of covid-19 on young people and the youth sector' Accessed April 2021 <https://www.ukyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/UK-Youth-Covid-19-Impact-Report-.pdf>
- 18 UK Youth (2020) Research Briefing, 'Impact of covid-19 on young people and the youth sector' Accessed April 2021 <https://www.ukyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/UK-Youth-Covid-19-Impact-Report-.pdf>
- 19 UK Youth (2020) Research Briefing, 'Impact of covid-19 on young people and the youth sector' Accessed April 2021 <https://www.ukyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/UK-Youth-Covid-19-Impact-Report-.pdf>
- 20 A breakdown of the key characteristics of survey respondents can be found in the Appendix. Please note that feedback from interviews with Youth Access members has been incorporated anonymously and a list of interviewees will not be made publicly available to protect participants' anonymity.
- 21 Appendix 5. Interview Questions
- 22 Appendix 4. About Survey Respondents
- 23 Social Mobility Commission (2020), 'Monitoring Social Mobility Report, 2013-2020 Is the government delivering on our recommendations?' Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/891155/Monitoring_report_2013-2020_-_Web_version.pdf#page=17 Accessed April 2021
- 24 Youth Access, 'A Travesty of Justice: Young Peoples Access to Legal Aid', Policy & Research Briefing September 2018 Youth Access, ' Accessed April 2021
- 25 'The Impact of LASOO on Routes to Justice', Equality Human Rights Commission, September 2018
- 26 YMCA (2019) 'Out of Service: A Report examining local authority expenditure on youth services in England and Wales' Retrieved <https://www.ymca.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/YMCA-Out-of-Service-report.pdf> Accessed April 2021
- 27 Mistlin, A., The Guardian UK, 'Funding cuts hitting UK youth services as demand grows, report says' February 25 2021 Retrieved <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/feb/25/funding-cuts-hitting-uk-youth-services-as-demand-grows-report-says> Accessed April 2021
- 28 Bowcott, O. The Guardian UK, 'videolinks in court trials undermine justice system, report says' October 23 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2017/oct/23/videolinks-in-court-trials-undermine-justice-system-says-report> Accessed April 2021
- 29 Dearden, L. The Independent UK, 'Coronavirus: Defendants more likely to be jailed in video hearings, research warns amid rise of remote justice' Retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-court-hearings-jail-sentence-remote-lockdown-a9500101.html> Accessed April 2021
- 30 Youth Justice Legal Centre, April 17 2018, "Report suggests child defendants' right to a fair trial compromised by video link hearings", Retrieved from <https://yjlc.uk/report-suggests-child-defendants-right-to-a-fair-trial-compromised-by-video-link-hearings/> Accessed April 2021
- 31 For more information about Youth Access' past research into key issues facing young people today and the impact of systemic inequality on YIACS users, please go to <https://www.youthaccess.org.uk/resources/practice-resources?date=&cat=Research>
- 32 The Money And Pensions Service recently launched their UK Strategy for Financial Wellbeing which aims to improve the financial health of people across the country. A key part of this strategy involves developing 'financial foundations' via educational initiatives for young people to be able to make the most of their incomes and pensions. Please see <https://www.maps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/UK-Strategy-for-Financial-Wellbeing-2020-2030-Money-and-Pensions-Service.pdf> for more information.



**YOUTH
ACCESS**

Championing advice and counselling

