

Youth Concern's 3 year strategy

October 2025 – September 2028



**How 13–25 year olds in Aylesbury Vale will feel
safe, seen and supported to live with
confidence, purpose and possibility**

Setting the context

Youth Concern's 2022–25 strategy focused on growth and data, and delivered strong results:

- We expanded our annual reach to over 1,500 young people across three services, far surpassing our original aim of supporting 1,000 young people each year.
- We deepened collaboration by launching a youth panel that meets bi-monthly, involving service users in programme design, rebranding and co-creating this strategy.
- Youth voice became more prominent through regular surveys and opportunities to engage directly with community leaders.
- Financially we massively increased our income – from £557,706 in the year ending September 2022 to £877,380 in the year ending September 2025, a 57% increase in three years.

This progress has only been possible thanks to the collective effort of the Youth Concern family – our frontline teams, support staff, trustees, volunteers and valued partners across the community.

On these strong foundations, this new strategy focuses on quality, ensuring we sustain, measure, and build on our success as we prepare for our next big steps:

- Finding a suitable building for the Youth Hub, which will be a vehicle for growth. A Youth Hub will enable us to signpost young people across corridors rather than across town, run more activities and programmes and recruit more staff and volunteers
- Preparing for £1m turnover which will transform us from a small to a medium charity, with the additional reporting requirements and new fundraising challenges that will bring.

This strategy has been written in the context of councils in the southeast spending 40% less on youth services this year than 10 years ago, increased demand from young people and a difficult fundraising environment.

So, while outcomes often focus on growth or improvement, this strategy recognises the importance of maintaining current service levels. With baseline costs up 10%, sustaining our provision is itself a significant achievement.

But standing still isn't an option. Youth Concern's strong reputation for quality youth work, combined with this strategy's aim to raise awareness, will bring more young people to our services as we continue delivering the 'gold standard.'

Meanwhile young people's needs are becoming increasingly complex. Many face a combination of mental health challenges, family breakdown, housing insecurity, poverty, neurodiversity, and experiences of trauma or abuse. These overlapping issues often require more intensive, multi-agency support, and place greater pressure on frontline youth services like Youth Concern.

With fundraising investment, exploration of earned income, new collaborations and the ideas and networks that new trustees will bring, Youth Concern will adapt, strengthen capacity and ensure our services remain equipped to meet young people's evolving needs.

Hannah Asquith, Chief Executive
October 2025

Contents

Introduction	page 4
Youth Concern: why, who and how?	page 5
Vision, purpose, values, personality, new logo	page 6
The reality for young people in Aylesbury Vale	page 7
The next three years (strategy summary)	page 8
How Youth Concern will achieve our goals	page 9
How Youth Concern will know it is making a difference	page 10
What people say about Youth Concern	page 11

Introduction

Youth Concern is an independent charity based in Aylesbury Vale, Buckinghamshire that works with 13–25 year olds. We are inclusive; we aim to support all 13–25 year olds, particularly those navigating complex challenges. In running a Drop-in Centre, counselling and homelessness projects, Youth Concern's holistic service delivers real benefits for young people.

Buckinghamshire, and the wider Home Counties, is an affluent place – but affluence can mask need. And there is real need in Aylesbury Vale; it experiences the most deprivation of Buckinghamshire's four districts and it includes areas which are amongst the 20% most deprived in England.

Young people, trustees, staff and volunteers have all worked together to develop this new strategy.

- In the autumn of 2024, we gathered qualitatively what young peoples' needs were.
- In early 2025, we used our own data and external data (e.g. National Youth Agency) to quantitatively understand what services young people valued and what their needs were 2022–25, highlighting trends and gaps in service provision.
- In March 2025 we held a strategic away day, where we examined the information collated to date and explored our role in helping young people be aspirational – and how we could do more.
- The strategy was refined and an accompanying delivery plan written in summer 2025.

This ambitious strategy aims to co-create a better future with young people, supported by trustees, staff, volunteers, partners and donors. We look forward to embarking on this journey. If you want to join us, please get in touch. We would love to explore how you could help us achieve our vision.

Get in touch!
www.youthconcern.org.uk
admin@youthconcern.org.uk
Social media [@youthconcern](https://www.instagram.com/youthconcern)

Youth Concern: why, who and how?

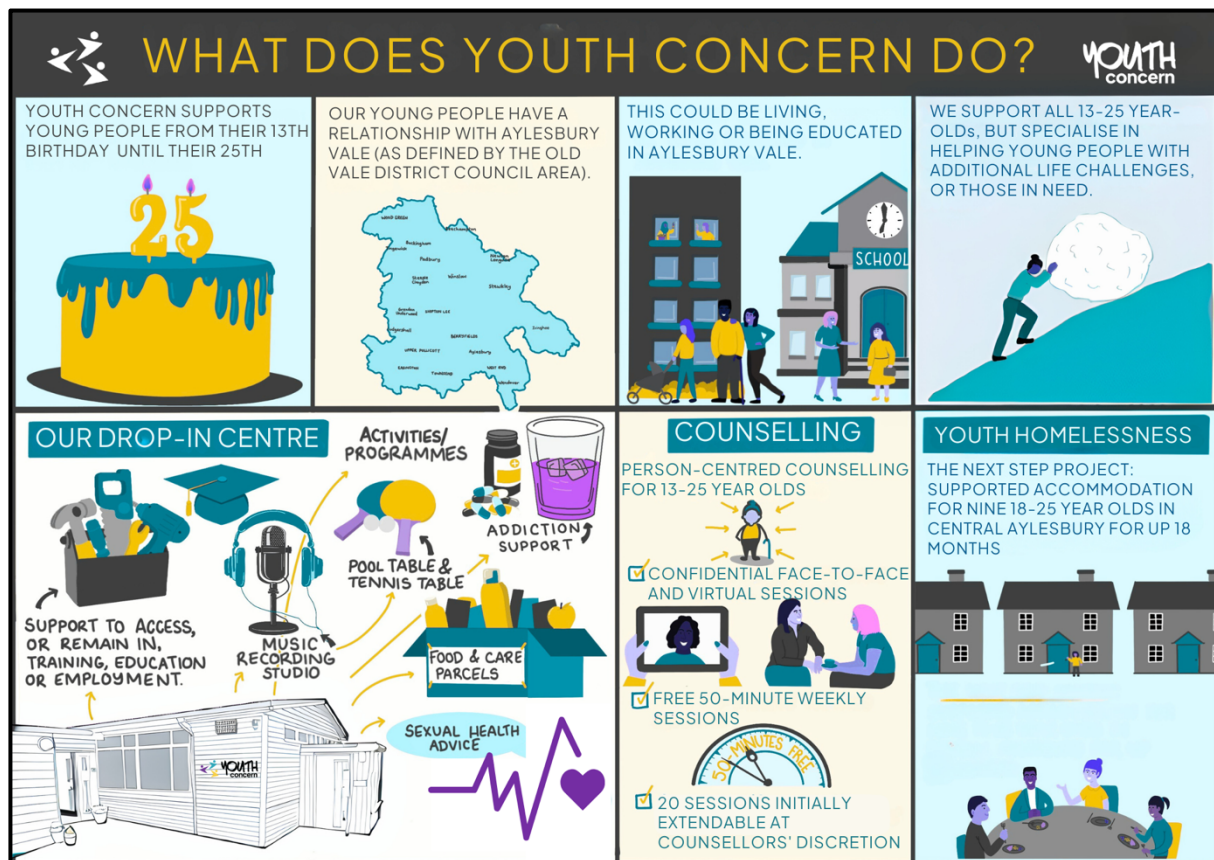
Why?

- To create spaces where young people can feel safe, be real and thrive
- There is real need in Aylesbury Vale (see page 8)

Who?

- With decades of trust, a reputation built on impact, and deep roots in the community, Youth Concern is uniquely placed to stand alongside young people and drive lasting change.

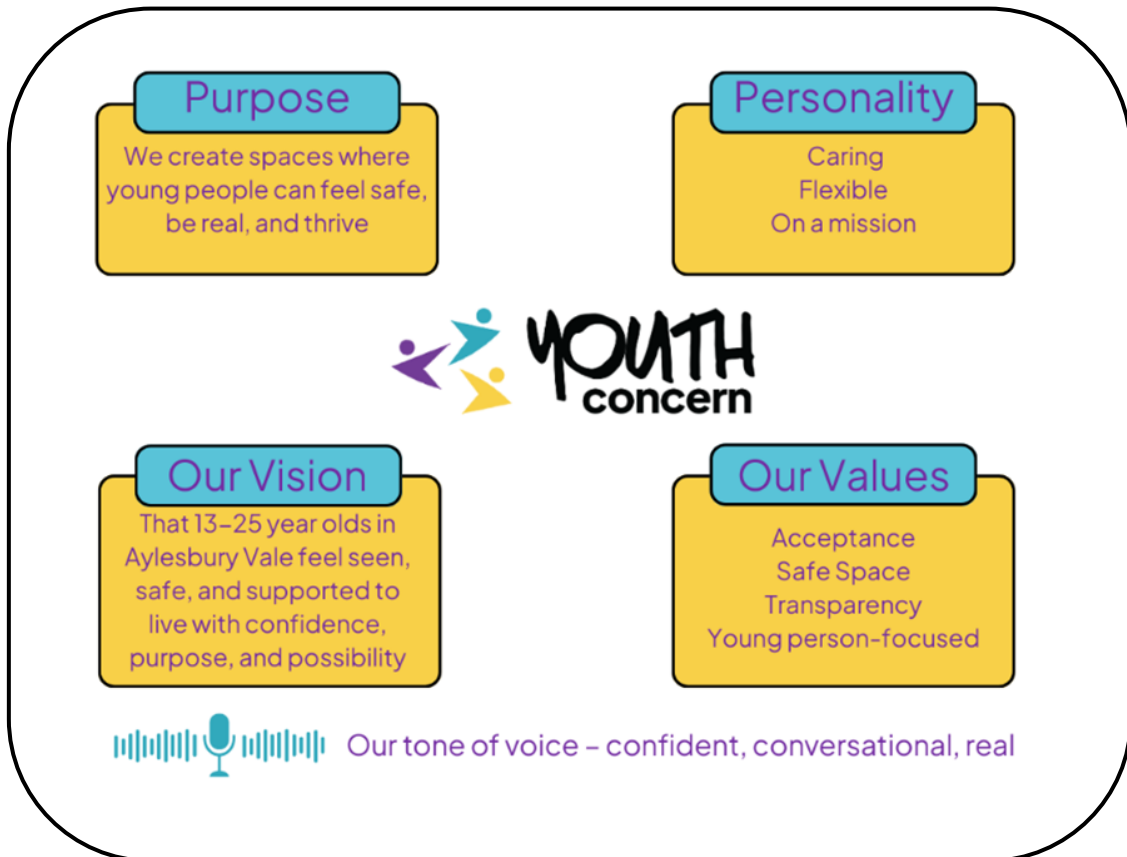
How?



- **Drop-in Centre** for 13-25 year olds in central Aylesbury, a safe space that runs drop-in sessions, activities and support services including food and care parcels, advice on sexual health and substance misuse, support with education, training and employment and much more
- **Counselling service**, for 13-25 year olds, operating face to face from our Drop-in Centre and other central Aylesbury locations, by phone and virtually
- **Youth homelessness projects:**
 1. The Next Step Project offers up to 18 months' supported accommodation in central Aylesbury where previously homeless 18-25 year olds learn how to live independently
 2. Homelessness prevention through our own services and in collaboration with partners.

Vision, purpose, values and personality

We reviewed our brand in the spring and summer of 2025. Our refreshed purpose, vision, personality and values are a rephrasing, explaining what we stand for, and have always stood for, in language that reflects the young people we serve. We recognise that young people have agency to make their own changes, to set their own paths.



New logo

As part of our brand review, in early 2025 we ran a logo design competition for Bucks New University graphic design students. Judged by members of our youth panel and our staff, we are excited by our new logo and the way it – and its creation – embodies our new brand. We are pleased to launch our new logo alongside this new strategy.

Our new brand will have enormous impact, strengthening our reputation, enhancing our reach and amplifying our impact as we seize the opportunity from October 2025 to clearly communicate Youth Concern’s vision, purpose, values, personality purpose and audiences.

The Reality for Young People in Aylesbury Vale

Deprivation

Aylesbury Vale is in the top **20%** most deprived areas in England



42.8% of Bucks households experienced deprivation in at least one of these measures: employment, education, health and household overcrowding,

Crime

Aylesbury reports **65%** more violent & sexual offences than national average



Aylesbury North higher than national average drug offences

20 people in Aylesbury Vale experience domestic abuse daily (slightly higher than national average)

Mental Health



1 in 5 children experience mental health difficulties

Average wait for counselling in Bucks: 378 days vs 187 national average

Children and young people with mental health conditions:

- 25% live in households with reduced income
- 10% live in homes that rely on food banks
- 14% live in homes that cannot be kept warm

Poverty



13% of children in Aylesbury Vale live in poverty

34% in Quarrendon

24% of under 19s in Bucks are in low-income families (15% nationally)



Youth Concern distributed **63%** more food parcels in 24/25 versus previous year

Complexity



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities prevalence: Bucks (4.7%) in line with national average (4.8%)

Number of Education, Health, and Care Plans have doubled since 2015

Homelessness



Youth homelessness in Aylesbury Vale is **22%** higher than the national average

Estimated 983 homeless or at-risk young people (aged 16-24) in Bucks

Loneliness



16-29s are twice more likely to feel chronically lonely than over 70s

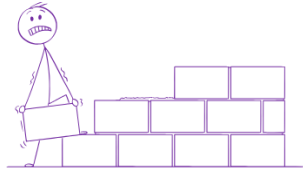
Stigma stops young people, (esp. men) from seeking help

Lack of safe spaces: "Life is just school/work and then home"

Information from: Bucks Data Exchange, Heart of Bucks, Community Impact Bucks and others.

Strategy Summary

How 13–25 year olds in Aylesbury Vale feel safe, seen, and supported to live with confidence, purpose, and possibility



1. Expand & Strengthen Youth Services that Work

- Safe, welcoming spaces for 13–25 year olds
- Outreach and detached youth work
- Homelessness prevention and supported accommodation
- Free, accessible counselling
- Empowering young people to drive change

2. Develop a Youth Hub in Central Aylesbury

- A one-stop shop for 13–25 year olds
- Will include a Drop-in Centre, counselling rooms, office space
- Base for other youth-benefitting services
- Designed to meet increased demand
- A vehicle for growth, more staff/volunteers, more activities, and better youth signposting
- Will require additional fundraising



3. Increase Collaboration & Partnerships

- Work more closely with other youth-benefitting services in Buckinghamshire

4. Strengthen Infrastructure

- Improve financial resilience
- Enhance HR, volunteer training
- Boost fundraising capabilities
- Upgrade administration, IT, and internal communications

Youth Concern was established in 1979 to support young people in Aylesbury Vale. As part of developing this strategy we considered the value of widening our geographical area to become country-wide. We decided however that there is much work to be done in Aylesbury Vale and that this is where we have real and valuable relationships, expertise and networks. For this strategy, we intend to go 'deeper' into Aylesbury Vale rather than 'wider' into Bucks

HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR GOALS



Respecting young people

We will build and model positive, professional relationships with and between young people, staff, volunteers, partners and funders.



Young person focused

Our approach is flexible, meeting young people where they are, listening to their views and adapting to their needs.



Resourcing well

We will build and grow a resilient, values-led team by investing in recruitment, wellbeing and the development of staff, volunteers and students.



Delivering quality

We will review and improve our work continuously, partner to expand our services and for greater impact, and lead by example in safeguarding and governance.



Embedding equity, diversity & inclusion

We will ensure our services are open to every 13-25 year old. We will create spaces for all voices, listen deeply and celebrate diversity.



Reaching those who need us most

We will expand outreach, strengthen partnerships and grow our digital presence to reach under-represented, rural and isolated young people.



Championing youth issues

We will stand with young people, amplifying their voices locally and nationally through media, events, partnerships, campaigns and political conversations.



Tracking real change

We will capture meaningful outcomes and lasting change in young people's lives.

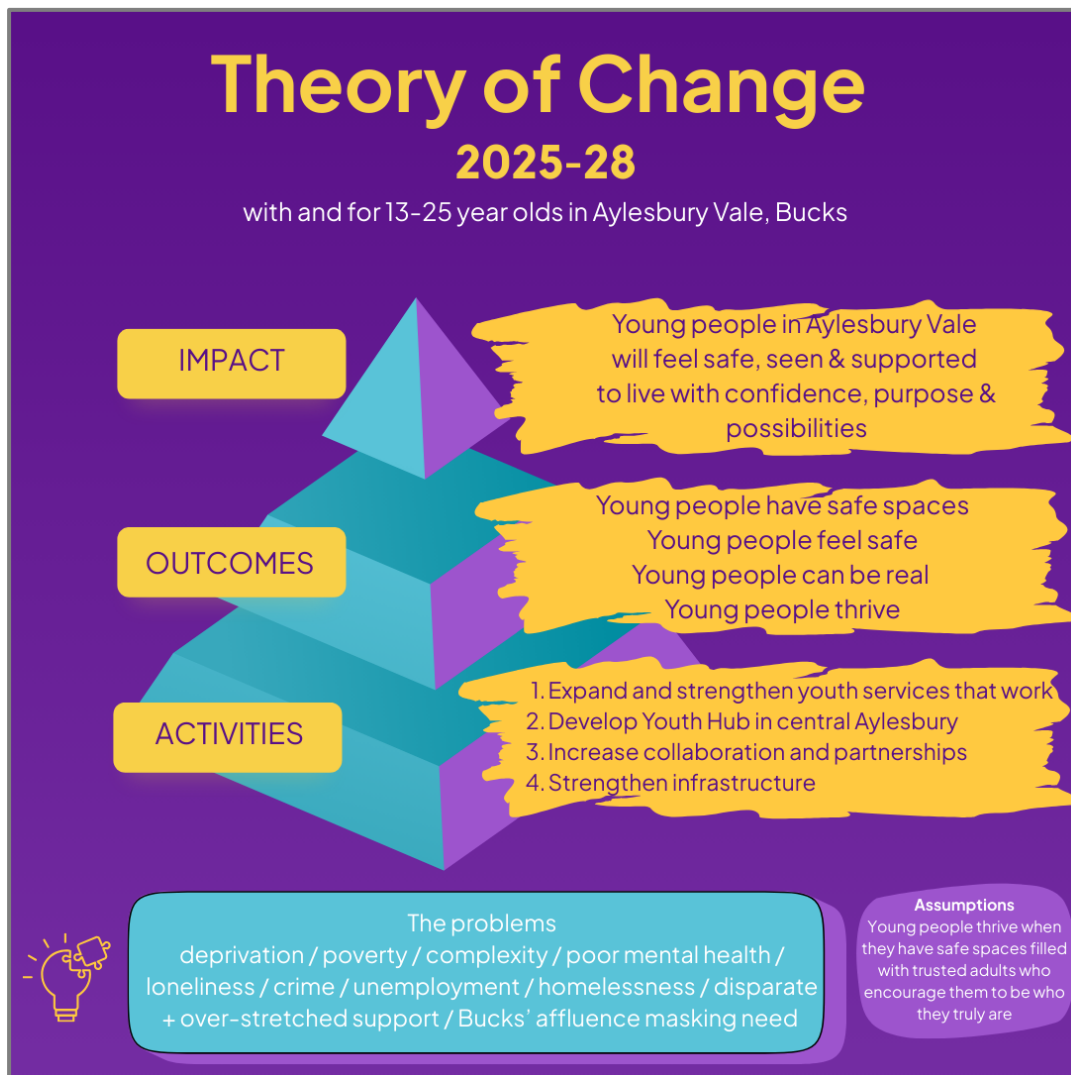
How Youth Concern will know it is making a difference

As part of this strategy, Youth Concern is proud to publish its first Theory of Change. Theory of Change is a description of why a particular way of working will be effective, showing how change will achieve the intended outcomes and impact.

This is a key difference for Youth Concern. Until now we have recorded outputs. We will continue to record some outputs (how many young people come through our Drop-in Centre doors, how many counselling sessions a young person receives on average, length of residency at the Next Step Project) but of much more import is the life-changing differences made – the young person who moves from isolation to connection, from crisis to stability, from surviving to thriving.

Our Theory of Change helps us define, track, and communicate these changes clearly, so we can better understand our impact, hold ourselves to account and continue improving the support we offer Aylesbury Vale's 13-25 year olds.

Theory of Change



What people say about Youth Concern

Next Step Project Resident

'I feel more hopeful, I have better self-esteem, way more confidence and I have an identity outside of the family home.'



Parent of Counselling Client

'Seeing my son wanting to go to counselling every week is a gift, he seems happier. He's putting some effort into his personal hygiene and appearance and doing more than just gaming. Thank you so much.'

Laura Kyrke-Smith, MP for Aylesbury

'Youth Concern's work exemplifies the principles of the government's Young Futures programme. The charity's commitment to supporting young people in Aylesbury Vale is amazing.'

Young Person

'I felt so alone in all this until I spoke with you. Things are getting much easier now.'

Local NHS Staff

'I wanted to thank you all for offering such a fab service. You are all so kind and understanding and offer fantastic support to young people.'

Corporate Supporter

'My own childhood in Aylesbury was not without its challenges, but I was lucky enough to be surrounded by supportive adults. It's great to see our company giving back to the community which gave me so much.'