

# Annual Review 2023

Supporting,  
empowering and  
inspiring young people

[berkshireyouth.co.uk](http://berkshireyouth.co.uk)

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## Vision, Purpose and Values

### Vision

Empowering youth to reach their full potential through inclusive and enriching experiences.

### Purpose

Be the champion of young people by helping them successfully navigate adolescence, social challenges and promoting personal development.

### Values

- 1 **Inclusivity:** Embracing diversity and creating a welcoming environment for all young people.
- 2 **Empowerment:** Fostering self-confidence and enabling youth to make positive life choices.
- 3 **Collaboration:** Working together with partners and communities to achieve meaningful impact.

Berkshire Youth supports young people across the county as they transition from childhood to young adulthood. Many are vulnerable or disadvantaged and unable to access help elsewhere. Tough childhood experiences can limit life chances. We focus on prevention and helping young people who are missing out, not yet in crisis and who cannot afford what is on offer or face barriers to access. They may have mental health issues, responsibility as a carer or low self-esteem.

Berkshire Youth's youth work is delivered by a team of experienced youth workers, many of whom have lived experience. In line with good youth work standards, they aim to engage young people, enabling them to deepen their understanding of themselves, their community and the world in which they live. Berkshire Youth support them to proactively bring about positive change. This approach is transformational and harnesses the skills of young people.



# Welcome

**As the year began in April 2022, young people were entering the midpoint of the first full academic year since the global pandemic cast its shadow over the world. As the pandemic continued to influence every facet of society, the repercussions on our young people in Berkshire became increasingly evident. Elevated anxiety and disengagement from education weighed heavily on our community.**

The challenges facing our youth remain today, but Berkshire Youth continues to respond and evolve to provide much needed services, thanks to all our supporters, both nationally and locally, to whom we remain ever grateful.

We believe there is an exciting opportunity for organisations in Berkshire to further support young people locally, through corporate sponsorship, fundraising and engaging their employees in community programmes. Investing in tomorrow's talent today is not just good for young people but good for business'. With the increased demand for our services and the rising cost of living, now more than ever, is support from the private sector needed.

At the heart of this dynamic year, Sarah Emery was appointed as our new CEO in November 2022. Her leadership is marked by a profound commitment to our mission, a deep understanding of our community, and an unwavering determination to make a difference. Having served 18 years at Berkshire Youth, most recently as Operations Director, Sarah was the natural successor to our former CEO, David Seward who retired but remains involved in the charity.

In March 2023, Sarah Atkinson was elected as the new Chair of Berkshire Youth, having served as a Trustee for four years. Sarah took the helm from Berkshire Youth's President, Roger Smee, MBE, who had kindly stood in after the previous Chair, Jim Leftwich OBE retired in May 2022. Sarah brings a wealth of not-for-profit and industry experience to our organisation. Her commitment to the community extends beyond Berkshire Youth, as she serves as a Board Director at the Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) where she leads the charge for Diversity & Inclusion in Berkshire, championing equality and opportunity for all. With over three decades of leadership experience in the technology sector, she brings a strategic vision to Berkshire Youth that is instrumental in navigating the complex challenges facing our youth today.

Together with our dedicated team and passionate supporters, Berkshire Youth continues to provide vital services directly to young people while offering guidance and support to numerous clubs and communities dedicated to uplift our youth. Our diverse range of activities mirrors the multifaceted landscape our young people navigate daily, the struggles our communities confront, and the incredible potential for positive change. We remain committed to Personal Social and Emotional Development (PSED), supporting children to have a positive sense of themselves, respect for others, social skills, emotional wellbeing and a positive disposition to learning. These are all crucial for school readiness, developing confidence and independence.

In this annual report, we invite you to journey with us through the past year's accomplishments, challenges, and the transformative impact we and our supporters have collectively achieved.

We are particularly pleased that, with support from government and our local authorities, we were able to offer the Holiday and Activities Food (HAF) programme again this year at our three Inspired Facilities, Waterside Centre in Newbury, The Wayz in Bracknell and the Britwell Youth & Community Project (BYCP) in Slough. This provided support to children in receipt of free school meals through holiday periods. Research has shown that the school holidays can be a pressure point for low-income households.

We are resolute in our mission to empower the young futures of Berkshire. Thank you for your unwavering support. Together, we are shaping brighter tomorrows for the youth of Berkshire.

**Sarah Emery, CEO and Sarah Atkinson, Chair of the Board of Trustees.**

# Who we are and what we do

The primary objective of our charity is to facilitate the development and education of young individuals through leisure time activities. Our overarching goal is to empower them in their path to adulthood as responsible members of society, while also striving to enhance their quality of life. To achieve this, our charity focuses on several key areas:

## 1 Addressing Social Issues

We recognise the importance of addressing critical social issues such as drugs and alcohol abuse, crime, and other societal challenges. Our programmes are designed to engage young people to help prevent them from getting involved, while also providing support to youth who are dealing with these issues.

## 2 Community Projects

We actively engage in initiating and supporting community projects that benefit young people and the broader community. These projects are aimed at creating a positive and supportive environment for youth.

## 3 Establishing and Supporting Youth Clubs

We aim to create, maintain, and nurture clubs tailored to young people's interests and needs. These clubs provide a safe and constructive environment for recreational and educational activities.

## 4 Training and Personal Development

We offer high-quality training and personal development opportunities through a network of national and local partners. This empowers young people with valuable life skills and knowledge.

## 5 Partnerships with Specialised Agencies

Collaborating with specialised agencies allows us to enhance social inclusion and promote financial independence among young individuals. We work in tandem with these organisations to achieve these vital objectives.

## 6 Supporting Government Initiatives

Our charity aligns itself with local and national government initiatives and social development programmes. We actively contribute to these efforts through our voluntary youth service.

## 7 Commercial Partnerships

We establish connections with commercial organisations to develop a wide range of sponsored programmes and activities for young people. These partnerships provide valuable resources and opportunities for youth to explore their interests and talents.

In summary, our charity is dedicated to fostering the holistic growth and development of young people by providing them with a variety of educational, recreational, and support services. We firmly believe that by addressing social issues, promoting personal development, and collaborating with various stakeholders, we can empower young individuals to reach their full potential and contribute positively to society.



# Our work across Berkshire



● Towns ● Youth clubs and organisations supported by Berkshire Youth

## School Mentoring and Detached Youth Work

With serious crime, county lines and youth violence continuing to be an issue facing young people in Berkshire, our school mentoring and detached youth work has continued to grow across Berkshire. This project focuses on young people who are at risk of becoming involved in these activities or who are at risk of exclusion from school and therefore increasing their potential risk.

We welcomed new funding from BBC Children in Need to support young people in Slough, building on the great work in West Berkshire through the Supporting Families Programme, and in Bracknell with the support of The Henry Smith Charity.

Through the school mentoring project, we proactively engaged 271 young people through 1,710 interactive sessions. In addition, the team has had 1,043 engagements with young people through 81 detached work sessions. This is where our Youth Workers proactively go into communities and meet with young people wherever they are such as parks and playgrounds.

## The Berkshire Youth Hub

Established as a pilot for West Berkshire during the pandemic, the hub provides a central point of information for young people, parents, and professionals on advice, activities and training available across the county. It now covers all the six local areas of Berkshire and continues to go from strength to strength.

We have further built upon this initiative to include Mental Health support work for young people awaiting clinical support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Alongside this, we have teamed up to provide training for staff and volunteers to ensure they are better equipped to face mental health issues currently presented by young people.



## Youth Club Development

Berkshire Youth strongly supports local youth provision and welcomes membership from groups, projects or organisations who share our vision and value the contribution young people make to society.

Through our club affiliation programme, we offer a range of services to help communities successfully establish and run youth clubs for young people locally. Our services include help with:

- Setting up, running and developing a youth group or project, with model policies and good practice suggestions, events and activities. We have a range of training available including mental health, First Aid, managing risk and leadership training to engage young people at risk of exclusion and those not in education, employment and /or training
- We can access the Disclosure and Barring Service for affiliated members
- Training, support and advice to clubs, councils, organisations and schools about how to effectively and meaningfully involve young people in the design, delivery and evaluation of services delivered; and helping young people have a say in decisions that affect them
- Provide or support opportunities and resources for young people to participate, engage and perform at a range of levels at local, regional and national events including after school clubs

We currently support 22 youth clubs and organisations across Berkshire:

- 2nd Goring & Streatley Scout Group
- Britwell Youth & Community Centre
- Cippenham Youth Club
- Coles Diner
- Eton Wick Youth Club
- Hungerford Youth & Community Centre
- Kintbury Youth Club
- Lucky Gloves School of Boxing
- Newbury Youth Theatre
- PALS (West Berkshire)
- Pinewood Starr ABC
- Sandhurst Youth
- Slough ABC
- Sonning Common Youth Club
- Thames Valley ABC
- Thatcham Youth
- The Wayz
- The Zone
- Tilehurst Junior Club
- Tilehurst Parish Council Thursday Youth Club
- Twyford Youth & Community Centre
- Waterside Centre

We currently support 22 youth clubs and organisations across Berkshire!

Through our Community Development work, we collaborated with communities to expand existing provision and create new youth offerings. A highlight this year, is our partnership with Tilehurst Parish Council and Lambourn Youth Junction, which we have supported to develop significant services for their communities.

### Duke of Edinburgh Award

As a virtual award programme, it gave young people flexibility to engage with it to suit their lifestyle, resources, and time.

Gold Level – 46 registered; 1 completed  
 Silver Level – 53 registered; 10 completed  
 Bronze Level – 122 registered; 16 completed  
 Training Universal Safeguarding – 4 participants; 1 session  
 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – 2 participants; 1 session  
 Emergency First Aid at Work – 7 participants; 2 sessions.

“Doing the expeditions gave me more confidence to leave my comfort zone and put myself in new situations. This has helped me in everyday life to get on with activities, even if I’m anxious in doing so. By the time I was at Gold, I deliberately chose the expeditions where I didn’t know people in the group and in more challenging locations, as I had had such good experiences previously.” Daisy (below)



“I’ve been volunteering since April 2022 and it’s been an amazing experience to get to know the young people in the community and work alongside them. It’s been fun being at the youth club with staff and young people, it has taught me a lot.”  
 Quin, Berkshire Youth Volunteer, Tilehurst

## Community Engagement

In strengthening our community engagement, the Waterside Centre has become home to several community groups including the Community Larder, Refugee Support, and a local boxing group.

The Newbury Domino Event took place in June 2022, and our young volunteers joined in by setting up domino blocks across the area. Starting at The Corn Exchange, the initiative travelled through Newbury town centre. Since Waterside Centre was a landmark within the path, our young people set up the route through the lobby and up the stairs – ready to topple off the balcony of our River View Gallery as it continued to the finale at Victoria Park.

With funding through the Holiday, Activities and Food (HAF) scheme, we offered primary school aged children the opportunity to join us for breakfast followed by activities for a nominal cost.

In addition to HAF funding, we also received grant funding from Sovereign Housing, Greenham Trust and other local trust funds. This enables us to deliver our summer holiday programme for secondary school aged young people at no charge, including dinner. Activities included: multi-sports, team challenges, themed-activities, boxing, paddling, climbing, T-shirt printing, bird box designing, egg-drop parachutes and paper boat races.

The HAF programmes have provided climbing, paddling and boxing workshops to primary and secondary school age groups in partnership with Cloud 9 Pursuits, Thames Valley Amateur Boxing Club, Sport in Mind, Berkshire Printmakers and BoxWise.

The cost of living has significantly increased our operational costs and had an impact on staff recruitment. In addition, many small community groups have not returned to lease our building as they too struggle to secure funding. We have therefore had to review our income generation model.

Whilst we successfully secured a grant from The National Lottery to support the development of the Waterside Centre for five years from its reopening, our priority remains to build a robust operation, diversify income and generate stronger community links.

## Waterside Centre

Over the last year, the Waterside Centre has welcomed over 13,000 attendances.

Key achievements include:

- Holiday Programmes – 1,234 registrations for 19 programmes; 21 After Schools Youth Sessions: 609 registrations for 7 programmes
- School Activity Sessions – 26 individuals for 3 programmes
- Sport in the Park sessions – 464 attendances; 21 sessions
- Youth Club Climbing – 543 attendances at our climbing club sessions
- Waterside Junior Paddle Club – the Waterside Centre is an officially recognised Junior Paddle Club with British Canoeing (the governing body for paddle sports in the UK). Youth Club Paddling 465 attendees



The Waterside Centre welcomed over 13,000 attendances

### Newbury Town Team

This year, we continued to build on our relationship with Newbury Town Council and other partners across the Newbury district. This collaboration enables us to offer regular support, connection, and provide safe spaces for the town's young people.

The detached Youth Workers had 1,796 interactions with young people through 197 sessions.

### West Berkshire Community Programmes

West Berkshire Community Programmes, supported by Greenham Trust, enabled a variety of projects designed to support young people and communities across West Berkshire.

Notable highlights over the last year include:

- SPLAT programme – 77 sessions; 175 hours; 533 individuals
- Leadership programme – 100 sessions; 182 hours; 72 individuals
- Fit 4 YOUth – 10 sessions; 20 hours; 125 individuals
- Girls Sports – 61 sessions; 179 hours; 660 individuals
- Community Sports – 153 sessions; 521 hours; 1304 individuals
- Community Development – we employed a Youth Development Worker to support the development of Youth Provision and quality within existing provision

### School Engagement

Falkland Primary School and Trinity School visited the Waterside Centre with a group of young people for an activity day, including climbing and paddling. A cohort of students from St Barts school also joined us for a weekly programme.



### Britwell Youth & Community Project (BYCP), Slough

The BYCP Centre on the Britwell Housing estate in Slough resumed its regular after-school sessions and attendance gradually picked up to pre-pandemic levels. Dedicated staff and volunteers continue to provide much-needed support and guidance to young people.

The BYCP provides a range of activities to engage young people, including ball games, arts and crafts, table tennis, music studio, video games, and bicycle repair. Alongside these are grant-funded sessions and outings including RollerDome, Mad Scientist, and Berkshire Birds of Prey.

The Britwell team has built on the success of the schools' project, with a key aim to help prevent young people from carrying knives. Its success has been further supported by The Blagrove Trust, which sponsored a weekly film club throughout the year – of which the young people of Britwell have created their own film 'Stranger Danger' highlighting the risk of speaking to strangers. A Love Music Hate Violence programme funded by GWR saw young people take part in performances at three local train stations.

Our holiday clubs which run during school term breaks during the year are popular. The government's HAF programme provided lunch for many young people attending our holiday sessions.

With Slough Borough Council declaring bankruptcy in 2021 and a significant decrease in funding, the team at Britwell provided an invaluable service to local families. BYCP gratefully recognises the support it receives from its various supporters, particularly as its main funding source through The National Lottery expired at end of 2021. A renewal application was successful which secures the future of the centre for a further five years.

BYCP was one of a few organisations in the country to receive a tree and be recognised by the Queen's Green Canopy. The tree was presented to BYCP by the Lord-Lieutenant of Berkshire, Mr James Puxley. The tree was a thank you token for the late Queen for the valuable work undertaken for the benefit of the Britwell community, and to recognise the community's young people.



### Key BYCP achievements include:

- School holiday provision: 174 individuals; 37 daily sessions
- Weekly youth provision: 231 individuals; 97 daily sessions

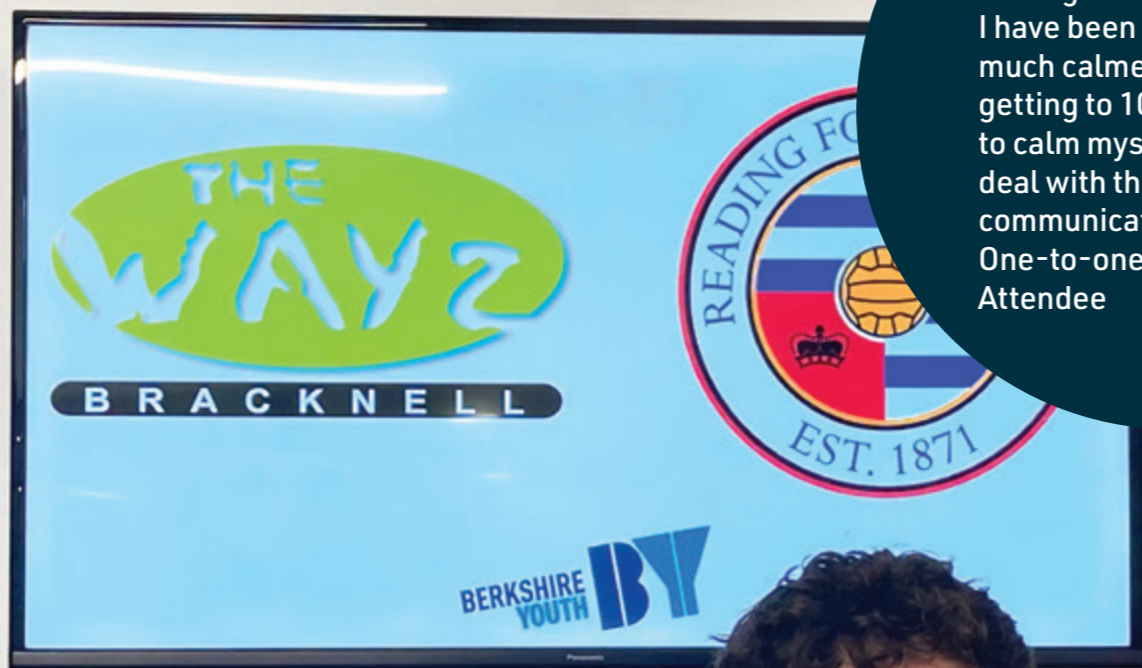


### Our Work in Bracknell and The Wayz

The Wayz is a fun, safe and welcoming youth centre for young people from across Bracknell Forest. Its variety of programmes engage, support and enable a range of youth from ages eight to 25. In addition to enjoying leisure time activities, young people have the chance to try new things and further their Personal, Social and Educational Development (PSED).

Our role is to support and empower them through their own development by providing through a consistent and positive pathway of new opportunities, challenges, experiences, training, self-reflection and awareness. These are designed to help young people gain the confidence and understanding needed when dealing with issues and challenges in their lives.

"I am so proud of myself, the strategies we talked through, I have been trying and I am much calmer. Rather than getting to 100, I was able to calm myself down and deal with the situation from communicating."  
One-to-one Support Attendee



### Provisions

Throughout the year, our projects included: Juniors, Inters, Seniors, Chill Out, Hang Out, Day Camps Activity Scheme, Volunteer Programme, 13 to 17 year old Offer, Community Programmes, Fusion, Youth 1:1 Support and Mobile Hub (offering youth support in schools and detached within the community).

Weekly sessions varied from youth-led activities within the building to occasional trips. The Day Camps holiday programme for 8 to 12 year olds included trips and team building activities. This year, the government's HAF programme provided lunch for many young people attending our holiday sessions enabling a higher uptake throughout Easter, summer and Christmas.

Key highlights:

- 13 to 17 year old Holiday Programme: 56 individuals; 21 sessions
- Day Camps Holiday Programme: 109 individuals; 44 sessions
- Juniors: 93 individuals; 37 sessions
- Inters: 87 individuals; 44 sessions
- Seniors: 74 individuals; 47 sessions
- Chill Out: 15 individuals; 40 sessions
- Hang Out: 37 individuals; 46 sessions
- Number of referrals from schools: 76
- Number of referrals from outside agencies requesting support: 99

To further optimise opportunities and accessibility of our programme, the team at The Wayz has continued to build its professional network. In April 2022, after completing the programme our senior session saw all 25 young people successfully go on to achieve and maintain either further education or employment.

Several of our one-to-one support sessions with young people came to a natural end as they felt they had the tools and network to support their own development. For each of these cases, young people stay in contact with our team either by taking part in activities, regular check-ins, or school drop-ins.

As Youth Workers, it is great to be able to offer a range of opportunities, but the real success is in the engagement and experiences the young people gain throughout. For example:

- Young people eating in a restaurant for the first time.
- Achieving their first certificate
- First time camping and the sense of achievement that goes with it. Often a first time away from home
- Taking the first step onto a programme
- Having fun and being young people

We have seen so many challenges overcome. Our collaborative way of working has been shared across agencies and councils. This year, we are delighted to have embarked on a new partnership with Crowthorne Parish Council and enhanced our collaboration with Bracknell Town Council which have both really benefitted all parties, and more importantly the young people.

Through many events, our staff, young people and partners, all recognised and celebrated the engagement, achievements and developments of the young people our programmes have supported. Creating opportunities for families to see their children's progress, meet staff and others that support the service, from within the community.

"Both children have benefitted from going to The Wayz, my eldest child is so much more confident in himself and is now more aware of life around him, my youngest not so much but enjoys attending the days out which gives him confidence away from the family."



# Thank you



**Sean Wright and Paula Murphy** (above)

Congratulations to BYCP Centre Manager Paula Murphy and Senior Youth Worker Sean Wright for each being awarded the 'Britwell Community Champion' award in June 2022 for over five decades of service to the young people of Britwell. Thank you to both Paula and Sean for all that they have done and continue to do for the community of Britwell.



**David Seward** (above)

Having joined Berkshire Youth in 1999, David served as Chief Executive for 23 years growing the organisation from a small voluntary organisation to the county-wide service we are today. David grew the organisation with a never-ending passion for young people and a drive for more opportunities for more young people to fulfil their potential. Forever an advocate for young people, we are delighted that David remains involved with Berkshire Youth. We send our thanks on behalf of the young people, volunteers and communities that have benefitted over the years thanks to his commitment to young people.

**Roger Smee MBE** (left)

We wish to acknowledge the continued support of Roger Smee, President of Berkshire Youth, who stepped in as Chair of the Board of Trustees this year. Roger and his family have been great supporters of Berkshire Youth for many decades and instrumental in securing and refurbishing the Waterside Centre. This year, Roger has gone above and beyond to ensure the future of Berkshire Youth is as bright as it has ever been during his tenure.

Image: Newbury Weekly News.



# Financial summary

This financial year, our income exceeded our expenditure by £18,302. The Trustees are pleased to report that in the first full year of operation the Waterside Centre generated a surplus which has contributed to the overall surplus of Berkshire Youth.

Berkshire Youth has established partnerships with several new organisations, notably: The Henry Smith Charity, Charles Hayward Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Department for Work & Pensions (DWP), and West Berkshire Council. This has enabled Berkshire Youth to diversify its sources of income, which has made the organisation more financially secure.

**Reserves policy**

The Trustees have established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity should be between 3 and 9 months of the resources expended, which equates to between £120,000 and £360,000 in general funds. At this level, the Trustees feel that they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding. If this happens, it would obviously then be necessary to consider how the funding would be replaced or activities changed.

Currently free reserves amount to £208,737 which equates to 7 months of resources expended. Our reserves at year end comprise of:

Restricted funds for projects	£227,215
Funds invested in fixed assets	£19,661
Designated funds	£62,323
Free reserves	£208,737
<b>Total</b>	<b>£517,936</b>



**Expenditure on charitable activities to year end 31 March 2023**

The charity supported young people throughout the county by delivering a range of projects and activities. The total expenditure was £847,935 with the main focus summarised as follows:

● <b>Activities</b> (Leisure, sport, healthy lifestyle)	<b>£81,857</b> (9.7%)
● <b>Training and development</b> (Leadership and learning opportunities)	<b>£46,198</b> (5.4%)
● <b>Clubs</b> (Providing support to youth clubs)	<b>£224,418</b> (26.4%)
● <b>Support and governance costs</b> (These are costs incurred to ensure the effective delivery of all charitable activities)	<b>£183,589</b> (21.7%)
● <b>Action</b> (Community based projects and support for young people)	<b>£311,873</b> (36.8%)

# Get involved

By partnering with Berkshire Youth, you are showing a commitment to support and promote young people in your community and helping contribute to our mission – to be the champion of young people in Berkshire, furthering their development, education and enriching their lives through leisure time activities.

We help young people reach their full potential by enabling them to find their voice and place in society. Many of the young people we work with are vulnerable or disadvantaged and unable to access help elsewhere. Further to the current cost of living crisis, combined with the increase in mental health issues, the number of young people needing support is the highest we have seen in our 80 years. Families are struggling to afford what is on offer or young people are facing barriers to access: they may have mental health issues, responsibility as a carer or low self-esteem.

We are appealing to local organisations to help us to maintain support for the young people most in need in Berkshire.

## Good for business

As well as helping us support young people and deliver critical services for young people, helping the communities where you operate, and your employees live, is good for business.

Customers today not only expect great products and services, but they also want to work with great companies that support their local communities and give back. In a market where staffing and talent is becoming even more competitive, everyone has a role to play in developing, and nurturing tomorrow's talent – and potentially your workforce of the future.

Benefits for your business:

- Demonstrate real action towards delivering social value and impact
- Engage your employees in team fundraising and volunteering
- Link to a local charity supporting local young people
- Reach potential new audiences and build your reputation as a socially responsible business
- Showcase to customers your commitment to social value by helping local young people

## Get in touch

Become a Corporate Sponsor or make us your Charity of the Year and encourage your employees to fundraise together or individually. Whether it is a bake sale or a bike ride, we would be delighted if you would adopt us for a year (or longer!) to raise awareness of the importance of youth services and the role we play.

T 0118 909 0927

E [admin@berkshireyouth.co.uk](mailto:admin@berkshireyouth.co.uk)



## Donate today

### Online donations

You can donate to us via JustGiving, Localgiving and CAF Donate. Gift Aid makes a huge difference to us. We receive an extra 25% and it costs you nothing! £5 becomes £6.25, £10 becomes £12.50, and so on. If you're a UK taxpayer, you can make your donations to Berkshire Youth go even further.

### Online shopping

You can also support our work by shopping online via easyfundraising and The Giving Machine. If you select us as your chosen cause, they will donate to us every time you shop via their websites, and it's free.







**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE**  
We invest in people Gold



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