



Merseyside Youth Association

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

2021-2022

(1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022)



"Creating positive and lasting change in the lives of Merseyside's young people"



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RIPPLES

This year we have finally launched our 130th Birthday celebrations, 2 years late.

MYA has ebbed and flowed, sailing through both tranquil waters and stormy seas since 1890.

Yes 1890. Think about that. Our charity is older than Liverpool football club, the Liver Building, and the radio and motion pictures.

I am very proud that MYA had its origins in the girl's club movement and started life as Liverpool Union of Girl's Clubs. The Association of Boy's clubs emerged 21 years later, and it was not until the late 1960's that they merged to become MYA. At the forefront of social change, we were one of the first nationally to merge the boy's club and girl's club movements into one organisation.

We are set up by philanthropists who, in equal measure, were both saddened by the plight of Liverpool's poor, but also driven by fear of declining morals in young people. But in our delivery, this charity has always sought to positively support those who need it most.

We started as a Union – an organisation that helped connect different clubs together, supporting them, organising events, competitions, and holiday camps. There were hundreds of boys and girls clubs across the city and we were the net that linked them together.

We also have a proud history of innovation and bringing new approaches to youth work into the city, pioneering mixed gender youth work in the 1940's,



detached youth work in the 1970's, inclusive youth work with disabled young people in the 1980's and fundraising and renovating a city centre one stop shop for young people in the 1990's. Recent innovations are in the areas of mentoring and mental health support.

So, it is clear, that times may have changed but the fundamentals of what we do with young people do not. We always start by listening to young people, we use their interests and talents to build confidence, self-esteem, and resilience. We use art, music, sport, group work and one to one support as tools to break down barriers, motivate, inspire, and give hope.

MYA's history is our history. It is the history of our city, of our country, it is the history of our lives. In many ways MYA's history had been shaped by world events – two world wars, two pandemics, universal suffrage, birth of the welfare state, urban disturbances, tragedies, and multiple recessions. These big stories act as markers and are often the catalyst to social and political change that have impact on Liverpool's economy, on how our people

make a living, or are unable to, and how, as a charity working with young people, we have responded, adapted, and changed.

But MYA's history is also about the little stories, the stories of individual lives changed, of friends met, of chins raised, of horizons broadened, of first loves and teenage crushes. Of someone who listened. Of people that cared. Of troubles shared. Of wet Saturday afternoons and football matches won. Of your first time on stage. Of your first holiday. Of your light bulb moment, and of memories that last a lifetime.

These little stories that are as important to us as the big ones, because they are ripples in a pond. And we want to change the world a ripple at a time.

Each piece of work we do, each conversation we have with a young person is like throwing a pebble in the pond. Every pebble makes ripples, some are harder to see than others and some may seem like they disappear quickly- but if you look really carefully you can see their impact on the pond. They gain momentum and some make great waves for all to see. But whether big or small the ripples have an effect on the world around them.

So, when I hear people being cynical and saying "what's the point" and that "it all ends the same in the long run", or the fatalists tell us that our fate is set out before us whatever we do or don't do, I tell them that is not what our work tells us. Our history tells us that we

can make a difference to young people, to their families, to the communities and to our world. This work matters because it does make change.

We want to change the world a ripple at a time. So, pick up a pebble and throw it in your pond. That pebble could be a smile, a kindness, or a listening ear and watch for the ripple.....

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. Bainbridge". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'G' being particularly large and stylized.

GILL BAINBRIDGE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CARING FOR OTHERS

It is always good when writing a piece for this publication to look back at what I wrote in the previous year, and whilst the narrative was about hope, the deeds of those about whom I wrote was more about how their actions and deeds showed people that there was hope in general humanity and outlook.

As I wrote last year the actions of Reverend Desmond Tutu and Marcus Rashford showed that in caring for people, the hope that emanated from those actions both mobilised people to volunteer and to help in caring for their communities. Given the post pandemic period in which we now find ourselves, I suspect that caring for our neighbours and those less fortunate than ourselves in our communities, will continue to rise markedly in the weeks and months ahead.

General economic factors emanating from the war in Ukraine, continuing supply issues resulting from Brexit and post pandemic issues along with the worldwide energy crisis will all continue to fuel both general inflation and fuel cost inflation, leaving many wondering how they will make ends meet.

The use of food banks in our society continues to rise, yet we see little

action from government to try and reverse this deepening trend in our society and the signs of “levelling up” do not seem to have materialised in the way the government would have us believe. It

is not my intention here to make a political point, but merely to comment upon the realities that are experienced day in and day out by our local communities, and in particular our young people.

An emanant American businessman called Jim Rohn once said, “one person caring about another represents life’s greatest value”. Rohn had an extremely successful business career and quite clearly was a very wealthy man. Later in his career he became an author and a motivational speaker and mentor to the American author and philanthropist Tony Robbins, who created his own foundation in 1991 intending to help the young, the homeless, the hungry, the elderly and the imprisoned. In his latter life, Rohn concentrated not only on mentoring Robbins, but as a motivational speaker he concentrated more on wellbeing than he did on business development.



The quote itself perhaps reflects what many people experienced during the pandemic, where we as a society actually became more caring and appreciative of others. As we start to hear now of not only the increasing use of food banks but the advent of “warm banks” that can be used to help people keep warm if they cannot afford to turn on the heating in the winter ahead, we will surely as a community seek to help those around us where we can, and hope that government policy catches up with general human sentiment and decency.

We have continued to be here for our young people in Merseyside throughout the pandemic and we are supporting them with education, a place to turn when they are in need, with food through our foodbank if they go hungry, and a place to come and share their experiences and help develop them as individuals to become the best version of themselves that they can be.

Our young people are a huge investment in our future and to be able to show care and compassion to them, can only foster the sentiment for years to come that was outlined

in the Rohn quotation.

Through the sterling work of our Board of Trustees, we have managed to continue to provide stability for MYA, which has provided a sure foundation to allow our Chief Executive and the tireless and dedicated colleagues within MYA with the ability to deliver first class care and support to our young people.

I will conclude by asking the key question that emanates from this passage, which is how can we all do a little bit more to support someone in need within our community and in particular the young people who will be even more susceptible to these socio-economic factors? MYA will be there to do our bit as it has been for over 132 years.

But moreover, I would like to thank most sincerely our Board of Trustees and all colleagues within MYA for continuing to deliver first class support for our young people in these challenging times.



ANDREW GIBBONS, CHAIR OF MYA BOARD

TALENT MATCH PLUS

This year has seen the Talent Match Plus project go from strength to strength. Securing Youth Futures Foundation Funding and extending ESF/YEI match funding sees the project embark on a new chapter, whilst ensuring Talent Match can continue their work with young people aged 15-29 who are long term NEET within the Liverpool City Region.

This year also saw the Liverpool MYA Youth Hub launch. Designed to offer an alternative to the traditional Job Centre Plus setting for unemployed young people, MYA's Hub was identified by the National YEG (Youth Employment Group) as a demonstrator model and is the best performing hub nationally. This success is due to the hard work and commitment of the staff team, which has also ensured the hub secured another year of funding.

A huge amount of work has been

undertaken in preparation of Youth Futures Foundation including the procurement of King's College London and School of Social Economics being awarded the contract for the evaluation.

Talent Match Plus ended financial year 2021/22 with its final report for its Social Return on Investment Impact. Over the last three years of The National Lottery Community Fund Sustainability Grant of £3,001,146 matched with ESF/YEI Talent Match have a return of over £62 Million Pound of savings to the Treasury. The biggest impact being on self-esteem, confidence, and wellbeing.

The year has not been without its challenges. No one could ever predict the impact of COVID on us, as an organisation, our work, and on a personal level within the Talent Match Plus team. The project's counsellors and Intensive Mentors have noted a substantive increase in the level of anxiety and mental health anguish, with over 75% of young people reporting that their mental





health had been compromised during the pandemic. Safeguarding became a daily occurrence, as did homelessness, neglect, domestic violence. For many of Talent Match's young people, being told to stay home and protect the NHS, put their own lives into turmoil and terror.

The key focus for staff was getting back to delivering fulltime face-to-face work as soon as safely possible, and we did. The various Talent Match sites are now abuzz, delivering various PSD, therapeutic and work readiness interventions, all designed to support young people in stabilising their personal circumstances and developing the skills and confidence required to enter employability.

As The National Lottery Community Fund element of Talent Match drew to a close, this was a perfect opportunity to pause and reflect, as well as celebrate the significant achievements of the Talent Match team and its young people. A celebration conference took place on 29th March 2022 and was a fitting end to a difficult yet successful year.

Young people were integral to the success of the event, and their case studies, young person's panel, and youth voice were testament to the work of Talent Match LCR, and showcased MYA at its very best.

MICHAEL

When Talent Match first met Michael, he was in a very dark place. Michael's life had been 'on track' 5 or 6 years ago – he was at university studying History and wanted to make a career for himself after a tough upbringing. Unfortunately, when Michael was in his second year, his dad passed away.

Michael ended up dropping out of university, and using his student loan to pay for his dad's funeral. From there, Michael felt that his life went downhill, and he wasn't sure if there was ever a way out. Michael lived in his own flat, but couldn't afford gas or electricity. Every time Michael topped up his gas with £10, the company would take £8 of it, leaving him with just enough to have two baths.

Michael was receiving £200 per month and after all his bills, this left Michael with barely anything to survive on. This also meant he had no washing facilities for his clothes – he'd use a local launderette, but could rarely afford it and was embarrassed about his appearance leading to further social isolation. He was also eating cold tinned food as he couldn't afford any electricity to cook.

Michael suffered with his mental health, and there had been instances of self-harm in the past. Although not officially diagnosed, Michael started feelings of depression. He didn't like the person he was becoming and was aware he needed a doctor's

appointment, but just couldn't get around to doing it.

Michael was assigned an Intensive Mentor Sian through Talent Match and slowly they began working on stabilising factors in his life. Michael was referred to YPAS for counselling, and although tough at first Michael states these as being integral to 'turning things around'.

Sian supported Michael to contact Liverpool Citizen's Support Scheme, to see if he was eligible for help with his gas and electricity costs, for which he was awarded a £50 voucher. Sian also rang British Gas to ask if they could reduce the amount that was taken every time he topped up – a few days later his debt was wiped. Talent Match purchased gas and electricity top ups so Michael could bathe and eat some hot food.

Another important factor was getting Michael some new clothes, as this was significantly impacting his self-esteem. Talent Match provided Primark vouchers and Michael's mentor supported him on a shopping trip for new clothes; for which he was incredibly grateful. Michael was also able to access MYA's foodbank

Sian also called Michael's GP to get him an appointment and access further support. For Michael it was a big thing to have someone

to help him with these things, as he had been alone for so long with no one to help him except for his advisor at the Job Centre.

Michael's Job Centre advisor also played an important part in getting Michael back on track. She looked for appropriate opportunities for him, as well as working closely with Sian and Talent Match to ensure both services were providing the best possible support for Michael.

Knowing Michael wanted to get back into society and start earning some money, Michael's advisor referred him to opportunities she knew would be understanding of his situation, and that would be a good steppingstone. This led to Michael being put forward for a Kickstart opportunity as an Administration Officer. Michael hadn't even walked home from his interview (a 10-minute walk!) when they had already rang to offer him the position.

Sian took Michael to Primark the next day to purchase suitable clothing for his job, and the change in him was evident – the job had definitely given Michael the massive boost he needed.

Michael is now thriving in this new position. The confidence and the smile on his face since starting his job has been amazing to see. Michael has hopes to eventually go back

to University to finish his History degree, once he's back on his feet properly.

Michael says – "I would either be unemployed and nothing, or even worse if not for Sian and her work. Thank you so much. You changed my life".

IGOR

Igor was referred from OKUK via Lindsey, who is now a counsellor at Talent Match. Having worked with Igor for the past 4 years, Lindsey felt Igor would benefit from the support offered by Talent Match.

Igor was very low in confidence, struggled with his self-esteem and very socially anxious when he first accessed Talent Match. Igor would struggle to hold eye contact, and when accessing the main MYA office, Igor would try his best to avoid speaking to anyone until his appointment time.

Igor is originally from Poland and had been living in Liverpool for around 10 years. He had completed his secondary school education in Liverpool, before moving to college to study applied law, applied science and psychology. However, after a while Igor's attendance started to suffer, Igor left the course and had been out of employment, education, or training for two years when he joined Talent Match.

Igor was assigned an Intensive Mentor, and after a few weeks of working together, Igor felt able to engage with the wider Talent Match offer. His mentor supported Igor to consider different career options, with a view to gradually supporting Igor to enter employment or education. Igor identified he would like to do something creative, such as

animation or computing. Igor was referred to partner organisation Comics Youth for an 8-week course, of which he completed with 100% attendance.

However, in August 2019 Igor, who had now significantly grown in confidence, was asked to join the Urban Workbench 3-week carpentry course. This sparked a passion and interest in Igor and made him curious to think the possibility of a career in construction. Working alongside the Talent Match employability team, Igor was supported to consider his options, either an apprenticeship or college course. Initially, due to his previous bad experiences with college, Igor was leaning towards an apprenticeship. To support this process, Igor obtained his CSCS card and completed a construction course through the Liverpool Waters Construction Hub in February 2020, which he passed with full marks. Igor had come very close to securing an apprenticeship when lockdown hit. Igor felt like he'd taken one step forward and ten steps back.

The lockdown did however give Igor the opportunity to rethink what he wanted to do. Supported by his Intensive Mentor and the Employability team, Igor reconsidered the college option and this time decided it was something he'd like to pursue. Igor applied and got accepted to start his dream construction course in September.

However, whilst Igor was focusing on the next steps in his career, he also had to consider the implications of Brexit on his future. Being a Polish citizen, Brexit now meant Igor had to apply for Settled Status in the UK. This involved a lengthy process of gathering evidence to demonstrate Igor had been living in the UK for a continuous 5-year period, something that was very difficult for someone who hadn't been in education or employment for over two years, wasn't claiming any benefits and didn't have a bank account. Igor was essentially 'invisible' to the system.

Talent Match supported Igor to apply for his provisional licence, which could then be used as ID to open a bank account. The project also contacted Igor's previous schools and obtained letters from medical professionals to support his application. Finally, in July 2021 Igor's Settled Status was confirmed.

Igor flourished at college, passing his first-year top of his class and with 100% attendance, something that is a massive achievement compared to the last time Igor

enrolled in college. Igor is now progressing into year 2, where he will be specialising in bench joinery.

The difference in Igor is stark, he keeps in touch with his Intensive Mentor, but is now everyone's friend when accessing MYA's Head Office, as opposed to shying away in the corner.

Igor says – "I found Talent Match to be full of very kind and supportive people, who helped, and advocated on my behalf throughout my time on the project".



NAVIGATORS

The Navigator programme is a hospital-based intervention service that helps 10 to 25-year-olds navigate their way away from violence and criminal activity or other harms. They may be a victim, perpetrator, or both.

It's aimed at young people who have attended the adult or paediatric emergency departments or urgent care centres in Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Royal Liverpool University Hospital or Aintree University Hospitals because of violence.

Navigators proactively identify vulnerable young people, helping them to access and engage the support they need to prevent any potential escalation of violence and reduce the risk of repeat victimisation or exploitation. They coordinate support for those young people admitted to emergency departments right through to their discharge back into the community. This support could include referrals into specialist organisations including mental health, substance misuse, education training and employment, recreational activities, and housing.

This is the first year of the Navigator project delivery for MYA. The last 12 months has been an extended mobilisation phase for the programme, which has taken lots of partnership working and relationship building to launch the programme successfully.

Navigators have been positively embedded within Alder Hey Children's Hospital and is currently being embedded within Royal Liverpool and Aintree University Hospitals. The hospitals have each had complex NHS systems which the Navigator team has had to embed within, which has taken time. Honorary contracts have also had to be secured for staff to be able to access the hospital database systems.

The project was fully staffed by February 2022, giving the team greater flexibility to cover all three hospitals, including later evening shifts. Those steps have helped to build NHS staff knowledge and awareness of the programme, which increased the number of referrals and engagements with young people.

ABIGAIL

Abigail was referred into the project after presenting to Alder Hey A&E following a double assault whilst in school. Abigail was attacked firstly by a group of four older girls, and then again later in the day by another student. Abigail was treated for bruises to her head, face and arms and then referred to Navigators by the Rainbow Safeguarding Team.

Up to this point, Abigail's mother Hayley had struggled to get any form of support for Abigail. Even though she had a formal diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder and an EHCP in place via CAMHS, Abigail's school had not put appropriate support in place, leaving her to do her best in class. As a result, Abigail's understanding of social cues and her ability to interact with other students was having a negative impact, Abigail's mum felt this could partly be the reason for Abigail's troubles with fellow students.

Following her referral to Navigators, Abigail and her mum attended a face-to-face introduction meeting with Navigator Miles. During this meeting Abigail's mum disclosed her primary concern was receiving support to help Abigail effectively engage in mainstream education, to ensure a positive future for Abigail.

Miles informed Abigail's mum that an

Education Healthcare Plan is a legal document, outlining specific support and as such is legally binding. Once Abigail's mum was supported in how to articulate this to the school, an appropriate level of support was quickly initiated for Abigail.

Abigail engaged with the Navigator service for four weeks, accessing regular telephone contact and support. However, after successfully securing support in school for Abigail, her mum was happy for Abigail to exit the programme, confident Abigail's already has positive engagement in extracurricular activities.

Miles referred Abigail's case to a Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service, to ensure further appropriate support with Abigail's SEND Department.

Abigail's mum says – “Miles has been so supportive; he has been on hand to advise every step of the way. I can't praise the Navigators Programme more highly. I was completely left in the dark and felt very alone, but Miles made sure that was not the case; he gave me direction when I didn't have any and it has truly made all the difference, not just to myself, but more importantly my daughter and our whole family.”

JAMIE

Jamie was the victim of an assault whilst in school, by a group of young men who are members of an online gang known as the ABs. Following the assault, Jamie's dad removed him from school and attended Alder Hey's A&E with Jamie. Following appropriate medical attention, Jamie was referred into the Navigator project by the Rainbow Safeguarding Team.

The priority for Jamie and his family, upon initially engaging with the project, was to secure an alternative school place. Following the assault, Jamie's dad no longer felt it appropriate for Jamie to attend the same school as the perpetrators.

The Navigators programme supported Jamie's dad to liaise with his Head Teacher to secure a managed move for his son. Jamie has now successfully moved and is well settled into his new school.

Jamie's dad says – "We are absolutely over the moon with Miles and the Navigator team. We would never have been able to get such a great outcome for Jamie, had it not been for their support. We wouldn't have even known where to start.

Thanks to Miles and the Navigators Programme, we've got our son back and the difference this has made to our family can't be priced"





NOISE

This year has been a positive one for the Noise project, as they continued to welcome young people back to face-to-face sessions, into MYA's studio space and increased group sessions as covid restrictions eased.

Demand for Noise's 'Musically Minded' programme has never been higher. Funded by Youth Music, the programme offers young people aged 11-25 from across the Liverpool City Region, the opportunity to access a range of musical instrument lessons from singing, drumming, guitar, keyboard, or musical production.

The sessions also provide young people with the opportunity to access therapeutic support, via their music mentor. Many young people suffered with an increase in poor mental health, anxiety, and isolation during the

pandemic and so Noise have now introduced a 'record club', to encourage young people within the group to bring their music to a group setting and access peer support to enhance their music skills.

This year also saw Noise secure funding from the PRS Foundation, to support young people in making the transition from education to the music industry. The programme brought together industry professionals, to support the development of several artists.

The sessions, coordinated by Noise, were all designed to support young people from the writing, to recording, to release of a single of their choice. One young person has already had their track played on Jazz FM, and another group are working to release their single later this year.

LEIGHTON

MUSICALLY MINDED – YOUTH MUSIC

When Leighton first accessed Noise, he was initially interested in gaining more knowledge around music production and the piano.

Noise provided a great opportunity to not just learn more about music itself, but to expand Leighton's creative goals and vision.

Upon joining Noise, Leighton picked up the guitar and became an avid student. In between his weekly Noise sessions, Leighton has studied his craft consistently at home, and the results are clear to see. More recently, Leighton made the decision to put a band together with his friend, and highly skilled drummer Azize Dia. Leighton then asked if he could use his sessions at Noise to develop new music, and audition for extra musicians.

Over the past few months, many jam sessions have taken place in the Noise studio, as well as several musicians trying out for a place in Leighton's band. Along the way, Leighton has developed a skillset around how to hold auditions – which often involves managing not just the music, but the atmosphere and environment of sometimes nervous musicians playing together for the first time.

As of today, Leighton now has a solid band around him, and they are working on a set list of covers as well as original songs too.

At Noise, Leighton has had the opportunity to take advantage of a safe and supportive setting that allows him complete flexibility and consistency to ensure he grows artistically at his own pace. Some sessions Leighton brings half-finished ideas, gets feedback, and goes away to develop them. Other sessions are just auditions while some sessions just feature Azize and Leighton rehearsing new songs meticulously. Every step of the way he has a mentor to turn to for guidance, advice and support.

Leighton has accessed numerous tutoring sessions (piano, guitar, music production) and now taken advantage of the opportunities for artist development. Noise has, in his words given him '*a place to push myself further towards my goals.*' He is a great Artist in the making and staff at Noise are super proud of his determination, commitment, and work ethic. His journey is a great reflection of what Noise truly has to offer 'musically minded' young people.



THOMAS

TALENT MATCH PLUS FUNDED

Thomas was referred to the Noise Project via Talent Match in July 2021. At that time, Thomas had a complexity of issues impacting his life to the degree where his employment prospects became, at best, remote. He did not value confidence because in his words “I’ve never had it, don’t know what it is, I know people who have it, but I don’t”.

The thought of employment frightened Thomas, it was not in his reasoning let alone something he would consider. His only comfort throughout this tumultuous period was music. Getting a job was way outside his rational of thought.

It was listening to music which gave Thomas succour as he could connect his own feelings with what he was listening to, at no time did he consider himself a player of music.

Alongside the Talent Match team, who also provided personal development training, the Noise Project began to support Thomas accessing music sessions here at MYA. Within induction Thomas talked about wanting to learn the guitar. Noise duly set up guitar lessons for him to run concurrently once a week.

The sessions to begin with were fraught, Thomas struggled to strike a balance between instruction and the practical elements of physical playing, Noise see this often. But in their experience, staff know to persevere. Noise did, and soon enough the shoots of learning began to appear, change began to happen.

Time, patience, and on Noise’s part, fortitude, began to impact Thomas, he started to view the world from a brighter place, his perspective on life began to change, he also started singing, tentatively.

One year later, Thomas can play guitar, and has found a singing voice, transferable skills which will give him enjoyment for the rest of his life. These newfound skills have grown the very thing he thought he never had, confidence.

Noise are continuing to support Thomas, albeit less intensely, ensuring his progress remains ongoing. He said recently “that confidence thing, I’m getting it now, in fact I reckon I’ve got it.”

Thomas has proven that when MYA’s projects work together in synergy, the combined effect can produce remarkable outcomes for young people. Thomas’s mother went on to say “MYA has done so much for my son; I don’t know where to begin to say thank you for everything you have done for him “



SPACE

Usually operating from a purpose-built centre in Sefton, the SPACE team had to work harder than most to adapt their offer during lockdown. However, staff quickly developed a blended approach, ensuring they could continue to offer workshops in music, dance, drama, digital and technical skills to young people aged 13-19 years old as restrictions changed.

The team have introduced new sessions, including the development of a media and technical arts group. These young people worked hard this year to produce a SPACE promotional video and wellbeing magazine, to support young people's mental health.

The dance, drama and music teams were able to adapt their offer to deliver virtual writing, directing and choreography sessions during lockdown. Following the return to face-to-face sessions, young people took

ownership of this initiative and delivered an evening's entertainment of monologues and dances, to express the issues and concerns they faced during the pandemic.

Upon the return to face-to-face delivery, staff noted a significant increase in the number of young people requiring one-to-one sessions. To meet this need, the SPACE team developed the 'SPACE to Talk' listening ear service for young people, to provide opportunities for young people to talk through their concerns and worries.

SPACE has continued to build strong connections with local partners, including delivery at Chesterfield High School, Sefton Youth Team, Sefton Music Service, SKY Music Hub and Brighter Sounds. This collaborative working has strengthened and expanded the offer available to young people in the local area.



JAMES

James has been attending SPACE for the last three years. Upon first joining the project, James was struggling with significant anxiety, as well as physical health problems. This had left James feeling isolated from his peers and unable to leave the home.

Since joining, the SPACE team have noted a significant change in James; he is more confident, chatty and starting to talk about developing his career, something James had never been able to consider previously.

However, SPACE remains one of the only places James was willing to leave his home to attend. SPACE staff supported James to consider joining the Talent Match project, explaining the help and guidance available to consider his career options or returning to education.

This collaborative working was vital to James accessing the help he needed to make the next step and positively move his life forwards. James is now excited about the future, knowing SPACE and Talent Match will be there to support him along the way!

ALEX

Alex joined SPACE in late 2019, just before the pandemic hit. Alex was quiet and shy upon first joining the project, he struggled with his confidence, and this was a real hurdle when it came to performing.

However, Alex quickly found his feet, supported by his peers and staff at SPACE, Alex found the confidence to perform on stage for the 'Down Our Street' project and has been 'hooked' ever since. Alex maintained contact throughout the pandemic, engaging in virtual online sessions. This was vital to ensure Alex didn't lose any of his hard-won confidence!

Upon the return to face-to-face working, Alex now actively engages in all aspects of SPACE, from music to filming and even taking the lead on several projects. His confidence onstage has improved significantly too, performing solos during SPACE's musical performances.

Alex is determined to give back to the centre and support other young people who were in his position. Alex is now a peer-mentor; supporting staff to deliver summer sessions, leading on exercises, and ensuring young people feel welcome and included.

Staff couldn't be prouder of Alex's journey so far and look forward to seeing where he'll go next!



RAISE

This has been a productive and impactful year for MYA's mental health promotion team.

The team continue to deliver mental health training to parents, carers, and professionals. Building on developments during lockdown, RAISE continue to deliver their 'bitesize' virtual training, covering a variety of mental health topics. The sessions are still proving to be very popular, attended by parents, carers, and professionals from all over the country.

RAISE also deliver a number of face-to-face courses, including Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma Informed Practice Training to a range of delegates. This year has seen the addition of a 7-day EMDR training, that equips practitioners with the skills to conduct Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing. This form of psychotherapy is specifically designed to alleviate PTSD and trauma symptoms. RAISE trained 120 professionals in EMDR, and 60 delegates in Dialectical Behaviour Therapy.

This year has also seen RAISE extend its face-to-face delivery, post lockdown, the team delivered their 'ROCKET', a peer-led resilience programme to 34 schools and 1020 children in 2021/22. A further 2158 children also accessed the team's 'EMPOWER' programme, which had been adapted to address increased anxiety and concerns post-Covid.

The biggest development for RAISE this year, was the introduction of their Mentors in Violence

Prevention programme. Funded by Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership, the programme is designed to train peer mentors in schools to help reduce violence in that setting. To date, 412 mentors have accessed the course and supported 3620 mentees.

The programme is needs-led, and the first step in each new school is to survey young people to ascertain their top concerns. From the 3752 young people surveyed, the recurring top three concerns were racism, online abuse, and suicide. RAISE then worked to adapt the MVP programme to address these concerns.

The team's NOW Festival is now in its 7th year of providing children and young people with the coaching support and theatre space to develop performing arts pieces around children and young people's mental health. These are vital youth voice pieces, which the team then use to raise awareness of mental health across Liverpool.



MYA YOU

This year MYA YOU's staff have been driven by a focus to ensure their children and young people were supported to feel safe and secure in face-to-face settings. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, subsequent lockdowns, and session closures, many of the projects young people were struggling to access social settings and engage in activities with their peers.

The added stresses and concerns that came from the fear of infections, social distancing, mask wearing, and isolation have made it challenging for many of the project's young people to reengage. For some of these young people, it had taken them years to feel comfortable accessing settings even before the pandemic.

Staff utilised a sensitive and understanding approach to encourage their young people back to session. By applying empathy and awareness of their difficulties, staff have allowed young people to move at their own pace. Eventually, as local cases and guidance permitted, staff began to gradually reduce covid-19 infection precautions. Staff have now supported all previously registered participants back into their youth setting, ensuring they have access to the peer interaction that is so vital for emotional health and wellbeing.

Delivery continues to be needs-led, driven by the interests and requests of the project's young people. This year has seen staff provide a variety of opportunities, including sports and games, quizzes, talent shows, cooking and life skills, arts and

crafts and gardening and planting. Where appropriate staff have encouraged co-delivery, with activities being led by young people, encouraging them to develop their confidence and leadership skills.

As young people have become more confident and comfortable with the post Covid world, staff have gradually introduced activities outside of their usual comfort zones, for example taking trips to more public environments. As such, the Childwall SPLICE group visited Pizza Hut for a meal out. For many of the groups young people, this was their first opportunity to explore their independence and engage with peers in an experience in line with those of their mainstream peers.

During this period, we also delivered our VRP funded In Roads programme across all of our existing SPLICE settings. This programme was designed around the Raise Team's Mentors in Violence Programme (MVP) and was tailored to create accessible workshops which could be delivered to our young people, engaging them in exploration and learning around topics such as Knife Crime, Community Safety and Disability Hate Crime. These workshops were a huge success and an external assessor from the funding team who visited one of our Childwall SPLICE workshops was absolutely blown away. The feedback was that if they could bottle up some of what our Session Lead had and give it to the other providers, that the outcomes of the funding across projects would have been much better!



MINDY

Mindy is 17 years old and has attended MYA's Shrewsbury House SPLICE setting in Everton since 2020. Mindy has a diagnosis of ASC and struggles with social settings and interactions. This had led to her becoming extremely socially isolated for most of her teenage years and following a series of bullying incidents and further challenges, her mum made the difficult decision to remove her from the situation and begin home schooling.

Mindy's mum became increasingly concerned about the further impact that home schooling was having on her opportunities for peer interaction as she became more and more isolated within the home. Mum initially reached out for support through the family's social worker who made a referral to the disability and inclusion team within the Local Authority. Mindy was allocated a disability support worker through LCC's Targeted Support Team who referred her into one of the Local Authority led SPLICE clubs in Norris Green.

It was immediately apparent that this large and lively youth setting was not the best fit for Mindy's needs. She was transitioned over to Shrewsbury House SPLICE which is a smaller and more intimate setting in which staff ratios and the needs

of the other young people, engender capacity for more one-to-one support and access to quiet spaces.

Staff took a slow and gentle approach in getting to know Mindy and understanding her interests and needs. Once a relationship of trust had been established Mindy felt comfortable to share ideas for things she would like to get involved in during her time in club. Mindy expressed an interest in baking, so staff planned a series of baking activities for Mindy to take part in. Each week staff carefully selected one or two other young people to take part in these activities alongside Mindy and this encouraged friendships to form with peers.

Over the course of the next few months, Mindy made strong bonds with some of the other young people, and this led to her building confidence and learning to trust.

Mindy no longer attends Shrewsbury House SPLICE as she has outgrown the provision and now attends a mainstream youth setting and spends time shopping and going to the cinema with friends.

LILLY

Lilly is 17 years old and has a diagnosis of ASC and Global Developmental Delay. Lilly lives with her Auntie and Uncle who are her registered carers, and extremely committed to ensuring that she has as many opportunities as possible to engage in positive activity with peers.

Lilly has attended MYA YOU's Childwall SPLICE setting in the YPAS South Community Hub for over 3 years and during that time staff have had the privilege of watching her grow into a funny, charming, and talented young lady.

Lilly enjoys anything creative and always gets involved in all the activities which are on

offer including crafts, drama, singing, textiles, and cooking. As well as the activities which form part of the core offer and are written into session plans in line with the needs and interests of the group, Lilly has a passion for hair and makeup. Staff have supported this interest by purchasing hairdressing mannequins and a variety of make-up studio sets and face paints.

Lilly has developed a strong talent for styling hair, painting nails, and doing face painting and makeup. This has given her a real identity in the club as the other young people love having her style their hair or paint their nails and now line up each week to have one of her famous Lilly Makeovers.



CHOICES

2021/22 has been an interesting year for the development and performance of MYA's Choices Knowsley 'Short Breaks' Project. Following a restructure of the specification for the new contract, MYA was awarded 8 of the 12 lots of funding applied for. The team are now working closely with the Endorphins Project, who are delivering the other 4 lots of 'short breaks' provision, on behalf of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (KMBC).

Throughout 2021/22, the Choices Knowsley team have continued to deliver weekday, weekend, and school holiday sessions to provide short break provision to parents or carers of a child or young person with a disability in Knowsley. The project works with young people aged 4-19 years old, to provide engaging, fun, and inclusive activities.

Following the acquisition of the Integrated Youth Service (IYS) contract in Knowsley, staff have been working closely with the IYS team to gain a deeper insight and understanding of the support available to young people and families in Knowsley. The project has now increased its offer to enable more than 100 children, young people, and families to access their services during the transitional contract period.

NATHAN

Nathan is a 12-year-old male who has diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Condition and co-morbidities which include Selective Mutism, which Mum has stated are triggered by his anxieties and changes to situations.

Nathan comfortably attended Choices Knowsley's summer holiday provision, however from September there were some unavoidable staff changes, including a new team leader. When Nathan returned to his usual weekday session, these changes understandably had an effect on the way Nathan communicated.

Although Nathan continued to attend sessions weekly, unfortunately his behaviour became increasingly more challenging. Nathan was unable to effectively communicate or engage in the activities and also refused to comply with personal boundaries set with staff and other young people. Staff liaised with Nathan's mum, who confirmed that Nathan had been demonstrating similar challenging behaviour at school and in the familiar home.

The team worked closely with Nathan's mum, to support him through this difficult period of transition. The Team Leader would meet with Mum prior to every session, to gain an understanding of how Nathan was feeling that day, and if anything, significant had happened in school or at home. Nathan's Mum had explained he needed firm boundaries by all staff to avoid an escalation in behaviour.

The team worked collaboratively, considering Nathan's home and school life, as well as his personal preferences to get the best out of each session. The new Team Leader facilitated regular participation and planning sessions with the young people, to ensure sessions continued to be needs-led. This also developed Nathan's sense of belonging, confidence and assisted him in communicating effectively.

Nathan began to build positive relationships with the new staff members, and in turn he is much more content, comfortable, and confident within sessions. Nathan now also communicates well with his peers, and will happily initiate group games, as well as participating in the group participation sessions.

ALICE

Alice is an 11-year-old girl, who is mostly non-verbal and so uses Makaton to aid communication. Alice was referred into the Short Breaks project to offer her parents with respite support, as well as providing much needed social interaction for Alice, with peers of her own age.

Alice required constant reassurance upon first accessing provision, often asking staff and other young people the same questions repeatedly, even if they had previously answered. Alice also required 'hand over hand' support during cooking activities, particularly during busy sessions, as she

would quickly become over-excited from the sensory overload which triggered more intense question-asking and disinterest in the current task.

The primary focus for staff was to initially support Alice in increasing her concentration periods and so ability to participate in sessions. Working with Alice's parents, it was agreed to set-out clear guidelines for Alice so she knew what to expect each session. Alice would often become overwhelmed and disengage without boundaries, and so it was agreed that she can ask a person three questions then should focus on the activity in hand. Staff also worked to increase Alice's Makaton vocabulary to enable her to ask more varied questions and make her needs known.

The joined up approach at home and in sessions proved successful, and Alice made great progress in terms of her social skills and ability to settle to complete tasks. Alice remains calm throughout tasks, communicating with staff and her peers effectively. As a result, Alice is much more confident in group setting, and willing to persevere until people fully understand what she is wanting to communicate and enjoys teaching her peers Makaton.

Alice's parents are thrilled with the difference the provision has made, Alice's improved confidence, cooking skills and clearer communication methods.



NEW KNOW

This financial year saw MYA successfully bid for the Knowsley Integrated Youth Service.

The project New Know includes:

- Detached youth work – taking youth work onto the streets, and engaging young people where they already meet, in their local areas.
- Intensive mentoring – targeted trauma informed and wide-ranging support for local young people. The interventions will be needs-led, built around the development of bespoke outcome pathways for individuals.
- Participation – MYA will now be leading the development of the Youth Voice Strategy in Knowsley, supporting young people to facilitate their Youth Cabinet meetings and agenda. The already established group includes a newly elected Member of Youth Parliament, who will represent Knowsley at the National Youth Parliament meetings.
- Health – the dedicated health team will deliver a range of thematic interventions, including working with local clinics and school nurses. The team will also deliver a range of fun and creative health workshops for young people to access in a variety of settings.

In addition to this MYA is now proud to be the new custodian of the state of the art youth work facility, 'Our Place' in Huyton. The facility boasts a conference room, 1-1 rooms, meeting rooms, 2 climbing walls, and quite possibly, the best outdoor Skate Park in the

North West! Over the last two months of this financial year, contractors have been on site, refurbishing the facility in MYA style and bringing it back to its best.

The contract also includes the management of an Outdoor Education Centre on the Lord Derby's estate, affectionately known as 'The Dam'. This is a stunning facility set on the edge of a lake surrounded by fields and range of wildlife, which due to its proximity to the safari park can include sightings of White Rhinos. Two months into the contract and we have already secured £44,863.00 through a Children in Need- Youth Investment Fund grant, to buy a wide range of equipment including:

- Rescue Boat
- Canadian Canoes
- Kayaks
- Rafts
- Paddleboards
- Archery equipment

The focus now will shift to recruitment, ensuring we secure staff for a number of key roles so delivery can commence.

These are exciting times for MYA and our work in Knowsley, so watch this space!



WHO WE HELP

Support to young people,
parents/carers, organisations
and professionals during
2021-2022:



144,385

Direct Contacts with
Young People

Worked with
324
partner and
referral agencies

Number of
organisations/
professionals
trained
3339

17%
aged
7 - 11

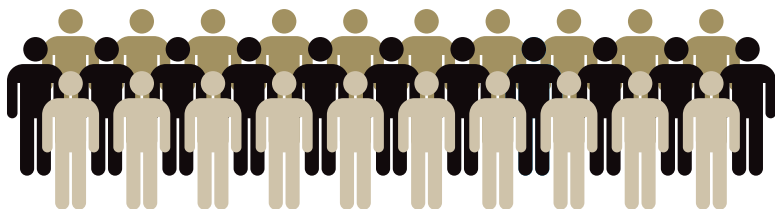
49%
aged
12 - 16

14%
aged
17 - 21

20%
aged over
20

3,746

Different young people accessing projects, of which...



48%

Male

52%

Female



5.8%

LGBT and
Questioning



9.6%

BAME
(Black, Asian and
Minority Ethnic)



28.8%

Declared Disabled

OUR IMPACT

MYA creates positive and lasting change in the lives of young people. Our work delivers the following outcomes:

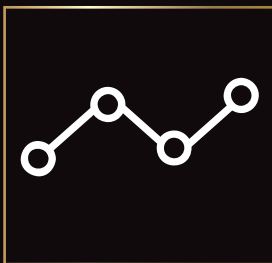
- Enhanced employability
- Improved health and emotional wellbeing
- Increased confidence and self-esteem
- Enhanced personal and social skills
- Raised aspiration and achieving learning goals
- Increased independence through transferable skills

PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO INCREASED:



94.8%

Skills



95.7%

Aspirations



95.6%

Belonging



95.8%

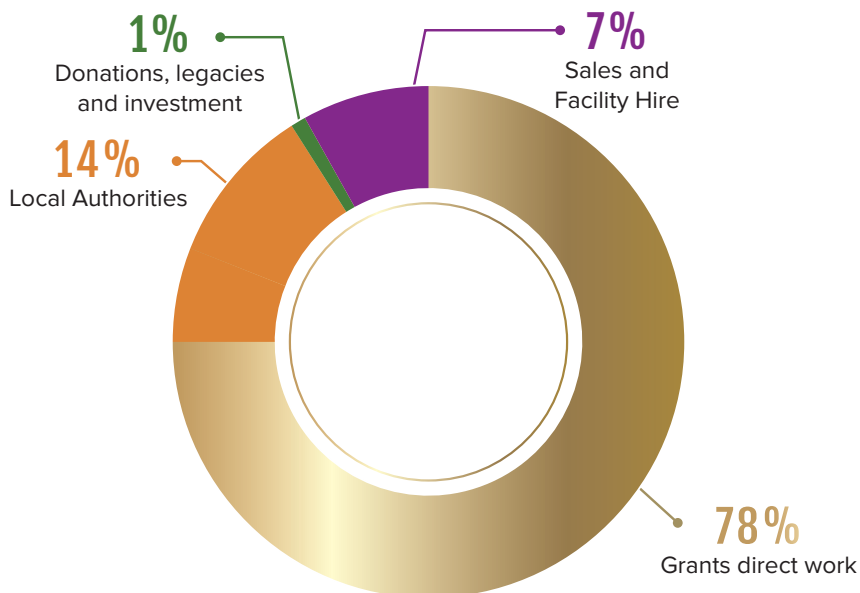
Resilience



95.8%

Motivation

FUNDING



GRANTS-DIRECT WORK:

- National Lottery Community Fund (Talent Match)
- European Structural and Investment Fund (European social fund and Youth Employment initiative)
- Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group/ Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System (CAMHS)
- Community Foundation of Merseyside
- Youth Music
- Sefton CVS
- Liverpool Learning Partnership
- Arts Council England
- LCVS
- Department of Work and Pensions (Flexible Support Fund)
- Merseyside Police Violence Reduction Partnership
- BBC Children in Need (YIF)
- Grantscape - Burbo Bank

GRANTS-DIRECT WORK:

- PRS Foundation
- VOLA
- YPAS (Peer Action Collective)

LOCAL AUTHORITIES:

- Liverpool City Council
- Knowsley Council
- Sefton Council

SALES AND FACILITY HIRE:

- Insurance Recharges
- Photocopying Income
- MYA Youth
- Programme Income
- Project Sales Incomes
- Other Income

DONATIONS:

- Ian Matthews
- LCVS Amelia Chadwick Trust
- Mason Owen
- Miscellaneous donations

OUR FUNDERS

MYA would like to thank the following funders and partners for their support in 2021 - 2022:



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Burbo Bank Extension
Community Fund



Knowsley Council



NHS
Cheshire and Merseyside



**MERSEYSIDE
Violence
Reduction
Partnership**



**COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**
For Merseyside



GROWING STRONGER COMMUNITIES TOGETHER



**TOGETHER
FOR LIVERPOOL
FOR GOOD**



**SPORT
ENGLAND**



Department for
Digital, Culture
Media & Sport



**COMMUNITY
FUND**

Sefton Council



Sefton CVS

Supporting Local Communities

**YOUTH
MUSIC**



ARTS COUNCIL
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European Union
European
Social Fund

Talent Match Plus

This project is part-funded by the
European Social Fund and the Youth
Employment Initiative



**PRS
Foundation**



**windmills
foundation**



Sefton
Emotional
Achievement
Service

**youth
futures**
FOUNDATION





Merseyside Youth Association

CELEBRATING
130 YEARS
1890 - 2020

PATRON:

Jimmy Mulville

DIRECTORS / TRUSTEES:

Andrew Gibbons (*Chair*)

John Lewys-Lloyd (*Treasurer*)

Debbie Cooke

Richard Dears

Nick Ellis

David Swaffield

John Gosney

Michael Wynn

Paul Boyce

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE /
COMPANY SECRETARY:**

Gill Bainbridge

**WE UNDERSTAND
YOUNG PEOPLE.
WE UNDERSTAND
MERSEYSIDE.**

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Reg Charity No: 700738

Company Reg No: 1843226



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We invest in people Gold

