



23/24

Impact Report

**BLACKBURN & DARWEN
YOUTHZONE**

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1135949

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Hannah Allen

It's a privilege to be the guardian of such an impactful Youth Charity within Blackburn & Darwen, our team work tirelessly to open our doors 7 days per week over two sites and on the street. This year we have seen a significant increase of young people benefiting from our services with average attendance being 1,400 per week. Our core purpose is to give young people a space of their own where they feel safe and a sense of belonging. This year we undertook a consultation with young people who told us above all the Youth Zone is a safe place.

We know how important our services are to young people and want to ensure they are accessible in the context of economic uncertainty. That is why for the third year in a row the board has taken the decision to ensure access to our facilities and a warm meal is provided for free. This year we have provided 20,127 hot meals. In addition we are grateful to our donors who have supported our Give and Take campaigns that aim to provide gifts to mark the holidays, coats, uniform and stationary to young people and families in need.

Blackburn & Darwen Youth Zone is a place for every young person, we are proud that our membership reaches every ward across the borough and reflects the local population, this diversity is mirrored within our wider team.

In a time where the world seems divided, it is vital we have a safe and inclusive space for young people to share commonality rather than differences.

Although Youth Zone is a safe space for young people to socialise and build friendships, our programmes have been curated to build aspirations, skills and roots to industry. This year we have clearly defined our 6 service strands of programming

Young people, particularly those from challenging backgrounds, need a trusted advocate, and they need to look no further than their Youth Zone. For young people, we always provide somewhere to go, something to do and someone to talk to. While we fulfil this role for over 5,000 members who visit our venues throughout the year, it is clear from our consultation that our reach should be much broader. Young people and our partners, including community members, told us we should be more prominent across the borough and not just in our centres. This will be a key feature of our organisation as we plan for growth over the next five years.

We have recently been successful in a bid to the Youth Investment Fund and have received a grant of £3.1 million to completely revamp a large area of our building (The Fusebox.) As we launch our annual report this exciting development will become a new World of Work centre supporting young people's life journey. We have ambitious plans for this space, and like many of our other programmes, this will be delivered through the Power of Partnership.

This year, we have transitioned the Chair of the board from the Rt Hon Jack Straw to Wayne Wild MBE. Through Rt. Hon Jack Straw's leadership we have been inspired to do more and be more for the young people of Blackburn and Darwen. Through his leadership, we were able to create impactful change and are forever grateful for the support he gave. We are extremely excited for the future of the Blackburn Youth Zone board under the leadership of Wayne Wild.

With the changes we will see over the next year, our aim is to remain consistent in quality of programming, while strengthening our internal systems to withstand and thrive amongst the change.



This year we undertook a significant consultation with our stakeholders to inform our new five year strategy aimed to develop and evolve as a service to reach even more local young people than ever before, meeting them where they are at and supporting them to where they want to be.

OUR CHARITABLE Objectives

Blackburn Youth Zone's objectives are to help educate children and young people resident in the North West of England through their leisure time activities. Blackburn & Darwen Youth Zone does this by promoting their physical, mental and spiritual potential so that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society.

The Trustees have given due consideration to the Charity Commission published guidance on the operation of the public benefit requirement and are satisfied that this requirement is met by carrying out the activities described in this report.

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5,414

MEMBERS

This comprises 2,219 Minis & Juniors (5-7 & 8-12) and 3,123 Youth (13-18.) Membership has increased by 24% compared to 4,091 members in 22/23

Strategic Parameters

In January 2023, we commenced a root and branch review of our organisation in preparation for the next decade. We consulted widely with young people, our people, parents, patrons, partners and members of our communities. Together, we agreed on the following strategic parameters:

Our Purpose: To provide a safe environment for all young people to thrive and reach their full potential.

Our Vision: For all young people to be safe, healthy and happy

Our Priorities

One: Place young people at the heart of our delivery & decision-making

Two: Extending our reach and influence into the wider community

Three: Investing in the Workforce of the Future

Four: Strengthening Partnerships for Enhanced Services

Five: Sustainability and Long-Term Impact

Six: Revitalising Spaces and Services

Our Values

Our Values, developed alongside our young people and team members in 2017, still guide how we support each other, our wider community, partners and other stakeholders. These we express as our 'H.E.A.R.T. Values'.

Honesty is the best policy

Excellence is learned through experience

Accountability is doing whatever is right

Respect should be universal

Teamwork makes the dream work!

These values encapsulate the ethos of Blackburn & Darwen Youth Zone, reflecting not only the aspirations of our organisation but also the enduring legacy of those who have contributed to our journey.

Our Strategic Pillars

Our work is built on three strategic Pillars, which have guided our hand over the last decade. They have enabled us to focus on the central aspects of our Movement that do not vary, irrespective of the programme, project or initiative. These are:

- Health & well-being
- Social integration
- Aspirations, skills and employability

Our delivery model

Our brand of youth work is predicated on personal development through informal education. Even in a play environment, we believe that every young person can learn from their experiences and aim to provide a surplus of opportunities for young people.

Over the past year we have developed the seven youth work strands which drive our service offer in line with our engagement model of Try, Train, Team, and Teach. The "Try, Train, Team, Teach" approach allows our young people to experience many new activities for the first time. For those activities that prove popular, we codesign a

training programme alongside young peoples' aspirations and help them develop hard (technical) and soft skills (life skills.)

If there is sufficient demand and ambition, we then progress to a formal Team approach through a club, team or initiative, which allows our young people to develop their social, emotional and technical life skills. A small proportion take the activity to the next level and seek a qualification in the discipline. This approach accelerates learning and provides opportunities for essential life skills to form part of a young person's unconscious competence.

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1,491

AVERAGE ATTENDANCE PER WEEK

This includes sessions in Blackburn and Darwen and also trips away and detached/outreach engagements



Below is a summary of our delivery outputs. These are contextualised in the section 'Delivering our Services'.

1,755

TOTAL NUMBER OF YOUNG LEADER HOURS

The Young Leaders initiative began in 2023 and has is continuing to gain momentum over the years.

90

AVERAGE HOURS OF SERVICE PER WEEK

Representing delivery hours across our two sites in the towns of Blackburn and Darwen

192

QUALIFICATIONS AQA, DOFE AND SPORT LEVEL 1

These are made up from Arts Awards, Health and Safety, Food Safety and First Aid.

Our Year

IN NUMBERS

1,323

NEW MEMBERS 2023/24

Across both our Blackburn and Darwen centre

6,882

ALL VOLUNTEER HOURS

These include Corporate, Individual, Event Young People, and Young Leader hours.

107

YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

The young people 11-18, who gave their time this year to community projects

74%

MEMBERS FROM TOP 20% OF THE MOST DEPRIVED WARDS IN ENGLAND
This is the 2nd highest in Lancashire after Blackpool

15%

OTHER MEMBERS
15% of young people preferred not to give their gender/identified as other.

2,827

MEMBERS RECEIVING FREE SCHOOL MEALS
This is one of the highest proportions of young people in Lancashire receiving free school meals

46%

ETHNIC MINORITIES
Reflective of the borough demographic

77,532

NUMBER OF VISITS THIS YEAR
Individual visits across both our Blackburn and Darwen centre

3,169

YOUNG PEOPLE ATTENDING TEN OR MORE SESSIONS DURING THE YEAR
Over half our membership visited us on ten separate occasions or more.

387

MEMBERS WITH A DISABILITY OR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED
Representing 7% of our membership

2,863

INFORMAL EDUCATION SESSIONS
The focus here was based on need/ask and included substance misuse, sexual health, bullying, relationships and democracy

47

YOUNG LEADERS
Young people 13-18 who have completed the Young Leader programme across both our Blackburn and Darwen sites.

52%

MEMBERS LIVING IN THE TOP 5 DEPRIVED BOROUGH WARDS
Just over half of our members reside in the poorest five borough wards

DELIVERING *Our services*

ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMMES & INITIATIVES

Blackburn & Darwen Youth Zone (the brand identity used for the registered charity 1135949 Blackburn Youth Zone) now operates from two sites and across the borough in detached and outreach settings. The largest of these two venues is on Jubilee Street, Blackburn, which houses, across three floors, a wide range of youth facilities. The second, in the town of Darwen, is located in a temporary space which houses, across two floors, a range of youth programming spaces..

Irrespective of the location from which our services operate, we provide high-quality youth facilities across our 7 Youth Work Strands. These include:

- Sports and Physical Activity (Next Level, TaAF, 6 Golden Sports)
- The Arts (MakerZone, Performance, Making, Music)
- Diversity (Diversity Zone- SEND, Allsorts- LGBTQ+ supports)
- Aspirations, Skills and Employability (Youth Hub; World of Work)
- Emotional Health & Wellbeing (Wellness Zone and Targeted Twilight)
- Cyber & Tech (Cyber Zone-AI, Cyber, Tech Zone-ESports)
- Outreach (Street Zone, Community Zone, Enrichment Zone)

Access to our venues and services is provided free of charge. Every young person and member of our youth work teams is provided with a free, hot, nutritious meal at every visit. This includes detached and outreach, where nutritious snacks are distributed alongside healthy drink options (Hot drinks in winter).

Our three pillars of social integration, health and wellbeing and aspirations, skills and employability permeate our programmes and activities. We are heavily influenced by the national levelling up agenda and are committed to providing our young people with every opportunity afforded to their more affluent peers across the UK, proving that postcode doesn't determine success.

This year, we have seen even more young people accessing our services, projects and programmes and now have a record of 5,414 members. We welcome an average of 1,491 young people per week, 52 weeks a year, across our two sites and detached and outreach provisions.

Youth Zones across the UK historically focus their youth services around a universal offer. We are similar in this regard, but we also provide targeted services for young people who require an elevated level of support, particularly around emotional health and wellbeing issues.

Our Seven Youth Work Strands are a useful reference to view both our universal, outreach and targeted offers over the last year. Below is a snapshot of the strands and activities offered within them.



1,893

YOUNG PEOPLE TRYING SOMETHING NEW

This includes activities from every youth work strand and includes 35% of our members.



5,501

YOUTH CONSULTATION

This represents the number of young people engaged in polls, questionnaires, and focus groups. It also includes decision-making sessions delivered through our Youth Voice groups.



Sports and physical activity

We are committed to delivering a vibrant sports and physical activity offer directed and supported by our young people. We are keen for young people to have the opportunity to try as many activities as possible, and this is central to our Try, Train, Team, Teach methodology. Our sports programme, titled 'The Next Level', funded through the generosity of Gordon Taylor, enables young people to live healthier, more prospectus lives through the power of sports and physical activity and for them to strive for their "Next Level." The three primary aims have been core to our sports offer this year:

- Children and young people have the opportunity to realise developmental, character-building experiences through sport, competition and active pursuits.
- "Next Level" is designed around the principles of physical literacy, focuses on fun and enjoyment and aims to reach the least active and tackles health inequalities of those most affected. supporting the national agenda of, "every young person participating in 60 minutes of activity every day.")
- Use our greatest biggest asset, our building, to act as a beacon for sporting excellence that drives change and provides a centre for "Next Level" building

Young people have told us that football, boxing, cricket, badminton, gym, climbing, and basketball are their chosen sports (We term these 'Golden sports'). We have plans to develop an academy approach around these as we go forward while increasing targeted programming, making Golden Sports accessible to all. As we build the academy, below is a summary of the progress we've made around sports and physical activity in general over the last 12 months.

Our aim is to increase the number of partnerships within the community. Building train sessions and aiming to provide provisions in the team portion across all Golden Sports.

PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT

In 2024, we had the ability to work with multiple partnership agencies, trusts, and foundations. These included:

Blackburn Rovers

Blackburn Rovers Ladies Team

Tauheedul Boys and Empire Fighting Chance

Technique Boxing

Blackburn Hawks

OneVoice Blackburn

Activities Offered 2023-2024

Climbing Wall
 Volleyball
 Martial Arts club
 Cycle to London Challenge
 Boxing
 Rugby
 Inter-Youth Zone Basketball
 Ice skating
 Football
 Open Gym/1:1 PT
 Badminton
 Cycling
 Dance Fitness
 Rowing to Manchester Challenge
 Dance
 Cricket
 Bootcamps/ Assault Courses
 Junior Competitive Teams
 Basketball Senior Team
 Golf Try Sessions

CASE STUDY - KICKZ

POPPEH

Poppeh began her journey in sports by participating in "Try" sessions at Blackburn. While she enjoyed the sessions, feedback from the girls revealed that they felt uncomfortable training alongside boys. They expressed a desire for girls-only sessions, emphasising that they believed this would enhance their experience and development.

In response to the girls' feedback, the sports coach organised dedicated girls-only sessions, led by a female coach. This initiative not only addressed the concerns raised but also created a supportive environment where the girls could thrive. The sessions quickly evolved from "Try" to "Train," thanks to the high turnout and enthusiastic participation.

As Poppeh engaged in these tailored sessions, she enjoyed numerous opportunities that enriched her experience. Some highlights of her journey include participating in trips like **Ewood Express**, which allowed her to experience football beyond the training ground, competing in a tournament at **Liverpool FC**, which exposed her to a higher level of play and competition, and watching women's football matches at Blackburn Rovers, where she had the unique opportunity to be a **mascot** and a **ball girl** during a match, providing her with valuable insights into the sport.

Over weeks and months of dedicated training, Poppeh developed a genuine love for football. She excelled in her skills, demonstrating remarkable improvement and resilience. Poppeh's hard work paid off, and she is now a player for a local football team, **Blackburn Eagles**. Despite her success with the Eagles, she continues to attend and train at the Youth Zone, eager to further enhance her skills and contribute to her team's success.

Poppeh's journey highlights the importance of listening to participants' feedback and creating inclusive environments in sports. The transition from mixed sessions to girls-only sessions not only improved attendance and engagement but also allowed young athletes like Poppeh to discover their passion for football. Her story exemplifies how targeted initiatives can lead to personal growth and opportunities for young people in sports.

1,999

ATTENDANCE

Number of young people who attended programming



58,908

ENGAGEMENTS

Number of overall interactions in sports and physical activity.



Cyber & Tech

This year we have expanded our Maker Zone capabilities with the employment of a full time creative lead who has been responsible for increasing the access our members have to relevant Art & Design, Technology skills and experiences in an informal STEAM framework. We have been developing and implementing a curriculum as part of the Maker Zone Network with the two other prototype maker zones to reduce the barriers our members would traditionally face when trying to access key technologies and instil a DIY "punk" aesthetic of focussing on the core principles and concepts that can be tested and developed with whatever is to hand.

PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT

In the fiscal year, we successfully partnered with several agencies, foundations, and organisations. These include:

Sairo Gamification Consultation

Virtual Reality Club

Maker Zone- Girl Guides Programme

"I LOVED THE SAIRO GAMIFICATION PROJECT, ESPECIALLY THE IDEAS OF MAKING YOUTHZONE LOOK LIKE MY FAVOURITE VIDEO GAME, MINECRAFT!"

-E, YOUTH MEMBER

Activities Offered 2023-2024

Animation Club
Arcade Emulation
Origami Circuits
Coding
Ozobot Robotics
Gaming
3D Printing
Soldering Skills

DIY Guitar Pedal
Super Science Week
Design Engineering
BT Speaker Design
Sphero Racing
Gen AI
Circuit Mending
& Music Hardware



804

ATTENDANCE

Number of young people who attended programming



6,473

ENGAGEMENTS

Number of overall interactions.

Diversity

We support young people with various special educational needs and disabilities. Complex needs are adequately catered for across our local partnership network and within schools. Our Diversity strand aims to provide an inclusive space for all young people who enter our walls. Our primary programming within this strand falls into the Rainbow Zone (LGBTQ+) and Diversity Zone (SEND).

The goal of the Diversity strand over the past year has been to increase participation within the Rainbow Zone, build a more diverse SEND programming offer with the support of IMO, and support the progression of members to universal services.

PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT

In 2024, we had the ability to work with multiple partnership agencies, trusts, and foundations. These included:

Burberry Project

Ignite Cricket

"SOMETIMES PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT AUTISM IS AND CAN END UP LEAVING PEOPLE OUT OR BULLYING THEM. BUT ALL PEOPLE WITH AUTISM NEED SOMETIMES IS A FRIEND OR SOMEONE TO TALK TO AND GO TO. WE COME TO YOUTH ZONE AND CAN TALK TO OUR FRIENDS AND STAFF WHO UNDERSTAND US. THIS MAKES ME HAPPY."

- A MESSAGE FROM J (8)

Activities Offered 2023-2024

Dance Syndrome
Canvas Painting
Rainbows on the go
Mask Painting
Magic Tricks
Gardening

Autism Awareness
Clay Moulding
Rainbow Zone
Bracelet Making
Pride Events

114

ATTENDANCE

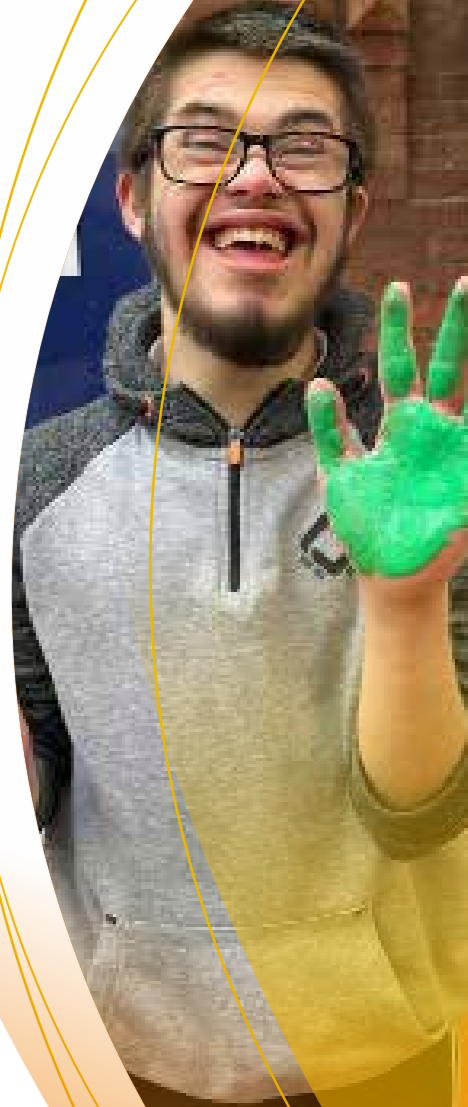
Number of young people who attended programming



4,304

ENGAGEMENTS

Number of overall interactions.



The Arts

Our Arts offer is represented across three distinctly different programmes. These are Performing Arts, Creative Arts and Digital Arts. Our young people are passionate about all genres of 'The Arts', and we intend to develop our programmes over the next period further to give this youth work theme greater prominence in our offer. Our Maker Zone makes up a large portion of our Arts programming offering.

The main goal of the Arts strand this year has been to increase SEND and targeted support while integrating more youth voice based programming into the schedule including more music provisions and upcycling.

PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT

In 2024, we had the ability to work with multiple partnership agencies, trusts, and foundations. These included:

- We Are Noise-Darwen Music**
- Young Voices Unite**
- Festival of Making**
- Uncultured Creatives**

Activities Offered 2023-2024

Jewellery Making	Therapeutic Drawing	Clay Modeling
Precious Plastics	Comic Book Creation	Scrapbooking
Bubble paint	Baking Club	Drama
Creative Writing	Drum Machines	Slime Making
3D Diamond Art	Music Performance	Up-Cycle workshop
Precious Plastics	Arts Mental Health Night	Henna Art
Sewing	Ear Training	Digital Arts
Laser cutting	Screen Printing	Music Production
DJ Workshops	Vinyl Printing	Garment Design

2,435
ATTENDANCE
Number of young people who attended programming

17,979
ENGAGEMENTS
Number of overall interactions.

CASE STUDY THE CREATION OF STAR MAKERS

After many months of experimenting, making and recycling, the brother and sister partnership hit on a new business idea to make coasters from discarded plastic bottle tops. (or precious plastics, as we call it here at Youth Zone.) They noticed that during the recycling process for plastics, many cool shapes and designs popped out randomly. They experimented some more and found bottle tops made with the best materials and the funkiest designs. They didn't have nearly enough to make any more than a few products so went on a mission to shout about recycling and set up six collection points across the borough. After a few weeks, these were full to overflowing, and the pair now had their raw materials to get things moving!

With the help of their Maker Zone youth workers and Crown Paints (one of their best customers), they launched a new business selling their beautifully recycled coasters. Each coaster is unique and produced to a high standard. They now grace the many dinner tables of Blackburn and Darwen, and demand so far still outstrips supply.

"I joined BYZ, not the most confident person, but my mum pushed me to do a coding workshop in December which I enjoyed. I went a few times and then covid. Again, my mum pushed me to do some online quizzes, she had to sit next to me as I wouldn't do it on my own, they soon became the highlight of my week. After covid I became



EMOTIONAL HEALTH &

Wellbeing

Emotional Health & Wellbeing Support is central to our professional practice and permeates every project, programme, and initiative.

This is often delivered through our universal setting, but unlike other youth servicing services, we provide targeted through our Targeted programming, Targeted Twilight. The main goal of the Emotional Health & Wellbeing strand, both in targeted and universal provisions, over the past year has been focused on increasing programming and attendance while streamlining the referral process and procedures.

PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT

In 2024, we had the ability to work with a multitude of partnership agencies, trusts, and foundations within Emotional Health & Wellbeing. These included:

- Strong Sisters**
- Aldridge Project**
- Healthy Young Minds**
- IMO Charity**

Activities Offered 2023-2024

- Targeted Twilight
- Nurture Youth
- Mentoring
- Service Projects
- Workshops
- Peshkar Project
- Mental Health Week
- Empowering Against Bullying

1,153

ATTENDANCE

Number of young people who attended programming



5,389

ENGAGEMENTS

Number of overall interactions.

CASE STUDY TARGETED TWILIGHT

AC joined Blackburn and Darwen Youth Zone to access positive activities and create new positive relationships. During her initial days, AC preferred to converse with only her friends and was wary of interacting with staff and other young people. However, after a falling out with her usual friends, AC became upset and confided in a youth worker about her past experiences. Thus she was referred to the junior nurture programme. AC, although having recently started engaging with the programme, has been progressing well in recognising emotions and exploring stress and anxiety. AC opened up about bullying in her old school, social anxiety and things that cause her stress. Following these sessions, AC has enjoyed filling in her gratitude journal. We have also been exploring thinking errors, during which she opened up about her inner thoughts. She does seem to view herself negatively and has said that sometimes she thinks having ADHD stops her but is starting to realise that it is not necessarily a hindrance. We also discussed and explored the positives she has achieved and the importance of focusing on them. She also acknowledged that she has lower expectations of herself but that she can do it even though people around her don't let her concentrate. Within sessions, we have been using her experiences as foundational elements for the empowerment of resilience and behaviour change, by setting SMART targets. AC has been struggling not to get in trouble in school. We agreed that she would try to achieve 3 merits per week, choosing to focus on the positive rather than dwelling on the negative. This positive choice has been followed by her becoming a part of the anti-bullying monitoring team at school. She also recently enjoyed being able to make her own chocolate toastie, as she has never been able to do so before at home, and cooking isn't a subject open to her in school at the moment.

“BECAUSE OF THE YOUTH ZONE, I WANT TO BECOME A SOCIAL WORKER OR YOUTH WORKER.”

- NATASHA AKHTAR,
YOUNG PERSON



Aspirations, SKILLS & PROGRESSION

Now in its third year, Youth Hub has undergone significant growth and evolution, cementing its role as a vital resource for the local youth community. The Youth Hub has diversified its offerings to address the needs and interests of local young people. This includes the introduction of new partnerships with local businesses, educational establishments, and non-profit organisations.

This year, we have spent time working on solidifying the Youth Hub further. With a focus on the development of a 5 tier support system supporting those on the cusp of NEET while supporting those furthest away from the labour market we aim to put in tools for consistent support across the programme. In addition, we have introduced the co-location of other agencies to the youth zone, for the future development of the Fusebox while continuing to increase our presence amongst the Darwen Youth Hub.

“DARE TO DREAM HAS HELPED ME BUILD UP MY SELF-CONFIDENCE AND TAKE A POSITIVE STEP TOWARDS ENTERING THE WORLD OF WORK. THE VOUCHER’S INCENTIVES WERE A GREAT HELP TO ME DURING MY TIME ON PLACEMENT; THERE ARE NOT MANY INCENTIVIZED WORK PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES AROUND.”

- CM, DARE TO DREAM PARTICIPANT

Activities Offered 2023-2024

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| CV Workshops | Anxiety Workshops |
| Galentine's Event | Careers Fairs |
| Interview Skills | Schools Fairs |
| Badminton | Life Skills |
| World of Work Tours | Mentorship |



Partnerships:

In 2024, we had the ability to work with over 13 partnership agencies, trusts, and foundations. These included: Princes Trust, New Directions BwD Adult Learning, National Careers Service, Lancashire Mind, Department of Working Pensions, Lancashire Skills Hub, Blackburn College, Aldridge Academy, North Lancs Training Group, Training 2000, UCLAN, and Star Academies.

Our partnership approach to aspirations, skills, and progression has been highly impactful, creating synergy among organisations by merging resources, expertise, and networks. This collaborative effort has significantly enhanced our ability to deliver comprehensive support services and maximise positive impact across the borough. By working together, we have become more effective in identifying and addressing diverse educational, employment, and mental health needs, ensuring a holistic approach to progression and development.

UKSPF

Emotional Health & Wellbeing Support funded by The Henry Smith Charity

UK Youth- Hatch programme

Dare to Dream- Care Leavers Initiative.

KEY MEMBERSHIP DATA:

2,300 HOURS OF 1-1 SUPPORT (INCREASING FROM 800 THE PREVIOUS YEAR)

20 CAREER & ASPIRATIONS FAIRS WERE ATTENDED

69 YOUNG PEOPLE MOVED IN TO EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION & TRAINING

159 ATTENDANCE
Number of young people who attended programming

1,132 ENGAGEMENTS
Number of overall interactions.



Detached and outreach

The detached and outreach programme is an essential support to young people across Blackburn & Darwen Youth Zone. This programme aims to reduce barriers to inhouse programming by meeting young people where they're at and include our Street Zone and Community Zone programming offers.

As the programming offer continues to grow, we have provided outreach support to 2,071 members over the last 12 months, providing a rich and diverse level of support, including:

- Aspirations, Skills & Progression
- Positive Engagement & Mentorship
- Support Referrals

Volunteering:

The volunteer programme across Blackburn & Darwen Youth Zone has now been firmly embedded within both our offer and our culture. We have a large team of dedicated volunteers whose continuous support has become essential as our membership grows.

Our volunteers have donated an impressive 6,882 hours over the last 12 months, providing a rich and diverse level of support, including:

Corporate Volunteers: Our Corporate volunteers have come from 17 different businesses. Out of the 17 businesses, over 200 volunteers served over 1,600 hours supporting both the Blackburn & Darwen Sites. From supporting master classes such as birdhouse building and baking workshops, our volunteer network gives interactive workshops utilising their specialty skillset to provide opportunities directly to our young people. Corporate volunteers also support through a multitude of support services such as present wrapping, event support, and additional young people support during school holiday time.

Young Leaders: Our Young Leaders programme has geared up this year and we already have 49 who have spent 1,755 hours supporting full and part-time youth workers in the delivery of sessions across both of our centres. Our support for volunteers also includes facilitating ten work placements totalling 2,035 hours.

CASE STUDY YOUNG PERSON TURNED YOUNG LEADER

Jo-Ann, (Jojo to her friends) has been with us since July 2022 and Youth Zone is her 2nd home. Jojo enjoys spending time with her friends and is very sporty, playing both football and rugby. She is also a shark when it comes to pool and likes nothing more than challenging all comers to a match!

In her early days with us, her behaviour could be somewhat challenging as she struggled to find her voice. In February, she took the bold step to apply to become a Young Leader and was accepted onto this very challenging course. She faced the challenge head on and this had an immediate effect on her behaviour within sessions.

Jojo completed the Young Leaders course with flying colours and has become a great asset to junior club sessions where she now volunteers her time. She is brilliant in managing challenging young people and leading by example. Jojo now wants to ace her GCSEs and continue her education at college, with the view to studying sport.

“Sometimes you just need to stand up to yourself and realise that you get out of things what you put in. I tell our juniors all of the time to be proud of who they are and most of all, believe in yourself. I do.”

- Quote from Jojo





Fundraising & INCOME STREAMS

For every £1 of commission funding received from Blackburn with Darwen council to support the delivery of universal youth services for the borough, we raise a further £14.49. This is derived from a combination of unrestricted financial support from our local business Patron network, grants, trusts and foundations support from local and national organisations and income generated from the hire of our facilities.

Our Business Development has been reconfigured within the reporting period to position the charity financially for the future. We have developed a funding strategy that has a range of funding areas and targets which are now more needs-led. Our funding strategy outlines derived income targets from the following sources:

- Business Patron support (unrestricted funding)
- Grants, trusts and foundations support (restricted funding)
- Other donations
- Facilities hire
- Campaigns and events

Grant, Trust & FOUNDATION FUNDING

£1,595,136

WITH GRANTS, TRUSTS OR FOUNDATIONS

A major source of income for the charity in 2023/24 was derived from Grants, Trusts or Foundations. This amounted to £1,595,136 during the reporting period (59.3% of our total income) and included £227,198 from the Youth Investment Fund for the Fusebox project. The following Grants, Trusts or Foundations supported us in the 2023/24 financial year:

Clothworkers' Foundation	Shepherd Street Trust	Burberry Foundation
Leathersellers	UK Youth- HATCH	Henry Smith Charitable Trust
UK Shared Prosperity	John Lewis Foundation	UKH Foundation
Eric Wright Foundation	Holiday Activity Fund	OnSide Impact Fund
UK Youth Futureproof	BBC Children In Need	NCS
BwD Council	UCLAN	Million Hours Fund
The Big Give	The Casey Trust	W M and B W Lloyd Charity
DCMS (YIF)	Amazon	Tesco Community Grant
Barclays Community Football Fund	Prudence Trust	MPT Steps
D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust	Masonic Trust	Peter Harrison Foundation

EVENTS, GIFT AID & COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

Fundraising Events continue to be an important income stream for the charity with a total of £130,705 being raised. Our biggest fundraising event continues to be the very popular Blackburn Beer & Gin Festival which raised income of £54,603 whilst the Big Give raised an additional £26,696. Fundraising on behalf of the Youth Zone by third parties raised £24,479 and we are very grateful to the organisations involved.

FACILITY HIRE

Due to the uncertainty of access to the building caused by the refurbishment project, we did not promote the use of our facilities to third parties. However, as a result of existing commitments we did raise £8,918 during the year. Once the refurbishment is complete in early 2025 we will be promoting the use of the facilities more and hope to raise substantial funds in the future.

Patron Involvement:

Blackburn & Darwen Youth Zone continues to be supported by a network of business Patrons. Their giving is predicated on unrestricted funding, which equals £758,078 (30.7% of our total income (Excluding YIF)). This list is inclusive of all patron supports from April 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024:

£758,078

WITH PATRON SUPPORT

Graham & Brown
Bowland Charitable Trust
Naphthens Solicitors
Star Academies Trust
Herbert Parkinson
ESF
Prometheus
Mergon
Brookhouse Aerospace Limited
Panaz
Cardboard Box Co
Dobson + Beaumont
Rosslee Construction
Promethean
ACG Renewables
Pendle Doors
MK Illumination

PM+M
Forbes Solicitors
Blackburn College
Accrol Papers
Fagan & Whalley
Blackburn Chemicals
Sales Geek
Peter Cummings
WEC Group
Kay Group
Symclean
Hadgraft Electrical
Lee Banner Electrical
Murray Building Services
J&A Kay
Gordon Taylor OBE
AMRC

Senator
Pets Choice
Totally Wicked
Barnfield Construction
Emerson & Fenwick
Staci
Northern Industrial- Radwell
Multevo Ltd
S. T. Murphy Limited
Watson Ramsbottom Limited
Trevor Dawson
Perspex
IN4
Crown Paints
Wellocks
Cube Funder
Blackburn Round Table

Brian Mercer Charitable Trust
BAE Systems
AMS Accountancy Group
Nybble
Businesswise Solutions
JDS Trucks
Kingswood Homes
FMGS
Vampire Vape
Suez Recycling & Recovery Ltd
Cummins Mellor
Catchpoint
Darwen Terracotta
Sales Geek
Elgra Furniture
Bright Blue Foods

In-Kind Support:

£92,135

IN IN-KIND SUPPORT

During the year, we have received £92,135 in In-Kind Support. We are grateful to the below Patrons & supporters who have provided this:

- Staci - Boxes of Lego, Children's bedding, Glasses
- Finch Bakery - Brownies and Blondies
- Cardboard Box Company - Cardboard Boxes
- Morrisons - Pumpkins
- Promethean - Office Equipment
- Forbes Solicitors - Christmas Trees and Lights, Vouchers
- Bright Blue Foods - Mince Pies
- Accrol - Toilet Rolls
- Collection Cosmetics - Various make-up items
- Rock FM - Christmas Toys
- Various Patrons - Christmas Toys
- Flavour Warehouse - Football Boots
- Multiple Companies - Easter Eggs

WE ARE ONCE AGAIN GRATEFUL FOR THE CONTINUED SUPPORT OF OUR PATRONS, WITHOUT WHOM WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE VITAL HELP AND SUPPORT TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN.



Plans FOR THE FUTURE

Fusebox Development

Following last year's exciting news that we had secured £3.1 Million from the Government's Youth Investment Fund (YIF) we have spent the last year planning and designing the new facilities. The main contractor was appointed towards the end of the year and construction commenced in April 2024. The project will be completed in early 2025.

The funding will support the development of our iconic Fusebox, one of the first electricity generating centres in the United Kingdom, as an advanced world of work centre. This will house our Youth Employability Hub and provide essential facilities for young people to explore a range of skills in preparation for the future. We aim to retain the unique quality of our building whilst transforming it into an inspiring place for young people to dream the dreams they deserve to dream.

Alongside the Fusebox development, the funding will also enable us to upgrade our reception and outside area to make them more engaging and usable for young people.

We are extremely grateful to the DCMS and the Youth Investment Fund for supporting our work with this substantial investment which will help and inspire young people for many years to come.

Five year strategy

After an extensive consultation with stakeholders, we have created a 5 year strategy This strategy will serve as a roadmap of vision and reflects our unwavering dedication to fostering a nurturing environment that utilises youth voice to create a holistic approach to programming. Our strategy serves as a guiding compass, steering us toward a transformative journey of positive impact and growth.

In pursuing our purpose to empower and uplift the youth of Blackburn and Darwen, we have identified six key priorities that will serve as the foundation for all our endeavours and aligned goals.

- Priority 1: To ensure young people are at the heart of our delivery and decision making.
- Priority 2: To extend our reach and influence into the wider community
- Priority 3: To be an organisation that builds and invests in the workforce of the future.
- Priority 4: To work in partnership to enhance services
- Priority 5: To be a sustainable organisation that has a long term positive impact on young people and the local community
- Priority 6: To refurbish the Blackburn & Darwen Youth Zones & relaunch services



Increased Presence in Darwen

Our Darwen presence has made an immediate impact on the 10,000 young people who live in those communities. Our work, in many ways, has only just begun. We are currently configuring a new consortium of youth sector providers, Together Darwen and have already received support for this initiative. We have secured significant 3-year funding for the provision of sports-based activities across the town and plan to appoint a sports and physical activities manager to oversee the development of this partnership programme through Blackburn with Darwen Council's Together an Active Future programme.

Increased 'Street Zone'

Over the past year, we have introduced our Street Zone provision throughout Darwen. Ensuring that we reach high-need areas on a recurring basis while creating positive impressions amongst young people has been the main goal. With 468 hours served across both Blackburn & Darwen, we aim to make strong connections with young people while steering them towards provisions. Through a Darwen based trust, we have been able to secure a bus which will be reconverted and brought to a series of locations in Darwen with an aim to reach more young people by meeting them where they are at and helping them towards where they want to be. With this addition, we aim to provide a 7 day provisional offer with designated staff focused on supporting the neighbourhoods of Darwen.

Enhance our Emotional Health and Wellbeing Offer

Our emotional health and wellbeing offer does not match the demand for this type of service. We plan to expand our existing offer incrementally over the coming years to ensure that all local young people's needs are met in this vital area of youth work. Our long-term aim is to have a fully integrated emotional health and well-being service which supports the NHS and local borough council in providing high-quality early intervention for young people showing the early signs of emotional distress. Our focus for the next period is to secure sufficient funding to support communities that have been historically underrepresented in accessing this type of care.

Internal Restructure for Growth

With a large amount of growth and change within the organisation, we have become increasingly aware of the need to restructure the internal operations. This has included reviewing internal HR systems, organisational structure, strategy development and the streamlining of service strands to futureproof the services we provide. With increased financial support, we plan on increasing the amount of full-time staff on our roster, diversify staff to represent the communities we serve, and analyse and improve our employee retention rate while introducing supports focused on supporting employees during their tenure with the organisation.

OUR SUPPORTERS AND FUNDERS

