

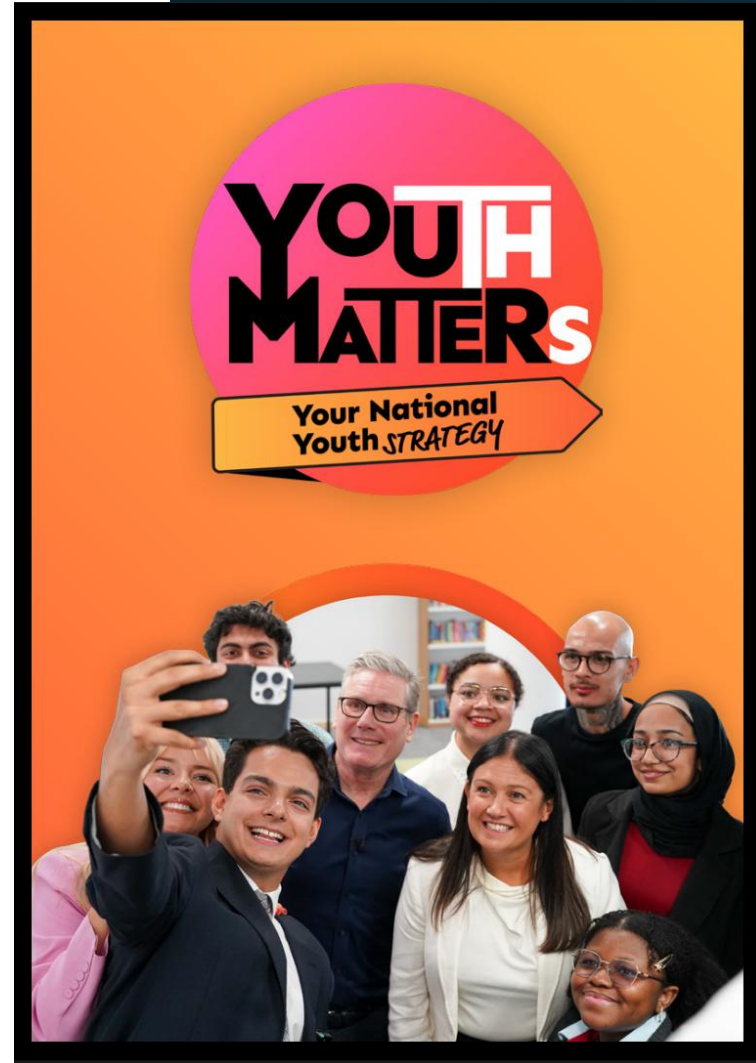
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Digging into the National Youth Strategy

Tuesday 6 January 2026

What we'll cover

1. Analysis of key features of National Youth Strategy
2. Opportunities for influence – locally & nationally
3. Breakout rooms discussion to shape UK Youth's future advocacy



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Key features of the National Youth Strategy

National Youth Strategy: Youth Matters

What time period does the Strategy cover?

10 years

What is the State of the Nation report?

The State of the Nation report accompanies the Strategy and focuses on the challenges young people are facing identified in the Deliver You consultation.

What are the strategy's key principles?

The Strategy aims to achieve three big shifts:

- From National to Local
- From Fragmented to Joined Up
- From Excluded to Empowered



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What did young people say?

Based on responses from 14,000+ young people informing the National Youth Strategy:

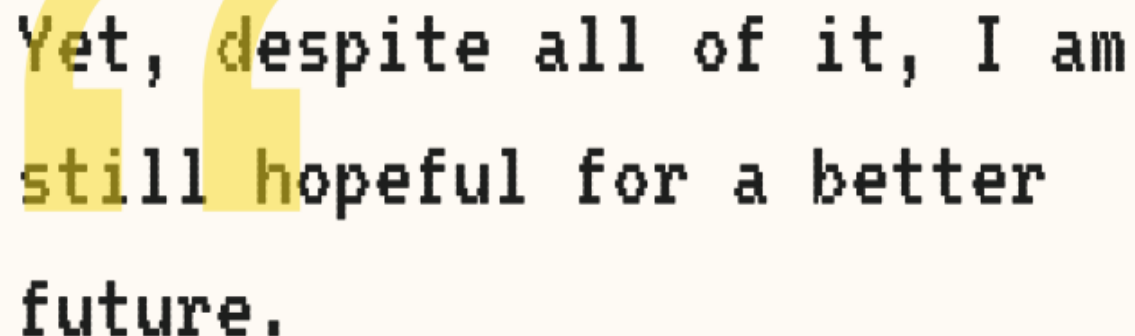
Young people face overlapping pressures – mental health, cost of living, safety, and access to opportunities are deeply interconnected, intersectional thinking is key.

Belonging is under strain – fewer safe, affordable places to go has increased loneliness and weakened community connection.

Future readiness is unequal – young people want practical life and work skills, but access to opportunities varies widely by place and background.

Mental health support is insufficient – demand far outstrips provision, with long waits and limited early and non-clinical support.

Young people don't feel heard – they want genuine influence over decisions that affect their lives, not tokenistic engagement.



Yet, despite all of it, I am
still hopeful for a better
future.

Govt's main promises to young people

Reverse the decline in **local government spending** on young people

Give half a million more young people **access to a trusted adult** outside their home

Equip young people with essential skills, such as how to protect their mental health or how to manage their online safety

Halve the gap in who gets to do **meaningful activities outside school** between richer and poorer families (enrichment)

The Strategy commits to 10 actions to achieve these promises, split across three chapters:

- People who care
- Places to go & things to do
- Being seen and heard

Funding: New Announcements

£60m Richer
Young Lives
Fund

Revenue funding
for youth work in
under-served
communities

£350m
expansion of
Better Youth
Spaces Fund

Capital funding
for up to 250
new or
refurbished
facilities and
equipment for
c.2,500 orgs

£15m to recruit
and train youth
workers

Increased
funding for
training bursaries
and recruitment
schemes

£5m to strengthen
local youth sector
partnerships and
digital

Exact focus TBC
– in addition to
Local Youth
Transformation
Pilots with Local
Authorities

Not just 'how much'
but also 'how'

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Funding: Re-Announced

£820m Youth Guarantee

Employment and skills training for NEET young people

£22.5m for Enrichment

Linking schools and providers of enrichment activities

£600m for Holiday Activity Fund (HAF)

Continuing out-of-school food & activity provision

£70m for Young Futures Hubs

Multi-agency support for mental health and violence prevention

£132.5m Dormant Assets Funding

Tackling inequalities in access to youth services, art, drama, and sport

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“A strategy is only a promise. Young people will judge success by what is delivered, not what is written. Today’s announcements are a welcome down-payment, but long-term change demands long-term investment.”

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Rosie Ferguson OBE
CEO, UK Youth



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Deeper Dive into the National Youth Strategy

Reflections: did it meet UK Youth's 10 tests?

Cross-government



Identify youth work as a solution



Specific approaches to tackle problems



Co-produced with YP



Clear on role of Westminster gov in relation to youth sector



Clear outcomes & accountability



Influential voice for youth workers



Recognise role of youth sector infrastructure



Implementation plan published



Increased allocation for youth work



What's still missing?

Outdoor Learning

- The Strategy misses an opportunity to promote Outdoor Learning more strongly
- Some commitment as part of Enrichment funding and new 'Access to Nature' initiatives

Links with other govt strategies

- Government has recently published:
- VAWG Strategy
 - Homelessness Strategy
 - Child Poverty Strategy
 - Curriculum and Assessment Review
 - Post-16 Education & Skills White Paper
 - Enrichment Entitlement

Detail on accountability

- The Strategy is heavily reliant on local authority delivery but does not set out:
- Shared expectations for LAs re: youth provision
 - Duties, standards or benchmarks for youth services (beyond broad commitment to explore reviewing statutory duty)

The National Youth Strategy is a landmark moment. It rightly recognises youth work as the glue binding a fragmented system together and gives young people a stronger voice than ever.

The Government's own research shows the stark reality young people have faced as vital support was stripped away. Fifteen years of cuts have left deep scars – this Strategy is an important first step towards healing, but true recovery will require sustained commitment.

More to come!

- **Regional Roadshows:** We're collaborating with DCMS, NYA and Regional Youth Work Units to convene events in all 9 regions across England to support youth workers and allied professionals to understand National Youth Strategy and discuss how it can best be implemented in their area
- **Detailed analysis & '10 test' score card:** We will be sharing our more detailed analysis of the strategy's implementation and its funding
- **Influencing with Parliamentarians and officials:** We will work closely with civil servants and politicians to ensure that the National Youth Strategy commitments are implemented in full and there is clear accountability – with young people and youth workers leading the way

What you can do right now

- Shape how UK Youth supports you & influences government (breakout discussions coming up)
- Write a letter to your MP using the template on the UK Youth website
- Join a regional roadshow to discuss local opportunities & implementation



Break out rooms

- **What do you like about the National Youth Strategy?**
- **Do you think it will change the way the sector works? Will it lead to better support and outcomes for young people?**
- **To make the strategy truly work in practice, how do we need to work differently together?**
- **Do you have any concerns about the National Youth Strategy?**
- **Is there anything else you'd like UK Youth to share with government?**

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Summary of key themes (Menti)

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Thank you!

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