



**Winchester Youth  
Counselling**

**DOES YOUR ORGANISATION STRIVE  
TO BE SUCCESSFULLY YOUTH-LED?**

**HERE ARE OUR TOP TIPS ON HOW TO  
SET UP AND RUN A YOUTH BOARD!**

MARCH 2025



# OUR MISSION AS A YOUTH-LED CHARITY



As part of our charity mission here at WYC, we aim to continue to build on our position as a youth-led organisation, advocating for positive outcomes in mental health for young people.

In line with our charity values, we continue to increase our community networks and partnerships, spotlighting our youth board. We will engage with the local and national community to examine and broadcast the importance of youth mental health.

In recent months, we have been approached by other local charities asking for help and advice in setting up and running a successful youth board. In response to this, we have created these top tips! It is worth bearing in mind, that there is not a 'one size fits all' that works for all organisations and you may choose to adapt the below to suit.

# WHY SHOULD WE SET UP A YOUTH BOARD?



Organisations should consider what they want to get from establishing a youth board, but also how the young people will benefit from participating. Youth boards, advisory groups, steering committees or shadow boards are successful platforms to listen to young people, and to enable young people to share their thoughts, experiences, opinions or concerns within an organisation. Allowing youth voice gives young people greater accountability within their community.

A youth board provides benefits for the young person too. Our youth board members gain learning and skills-building opportunities, they are given the opportunity to share lived experiences and are given a platform to engage directly with the staff, leadership team and trustees within the organisation. Our youth board are able to see the direct impact their feedback has; creating positive impacts on wellbeing and motivation and confidence that WYC is acting in the best interests of the local community of young people. Our youth board receive support and training, additional skills for their CV, references and days out/food as a thank you!

# WHAT CAN THE YOUTH BOARD GET INVOLVED

## IN?



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Our youth board influence WYC decision making, engage in key processes, such as strategy and governance, review and advise on current services. They can take part in and create fundraising opportunities, collaborate with local partners and assist with recruitment of internal staff and trustees. Our youth board members are invited to staff events, including strategy days and professional/social team get togethers.

### **THE IMPORTANT STUFF:**

- Youth board members must read and sign a voluntary agreement.
- Youth board members must read and agree with the confidentiality policy.
- If taking part in online video/photo content creation, members must read and sign a consent & release form.
- Organisational recruitment processes must be followed and references obtained prior to appointment.
- Youth board members do not have any direct contact with clients.

# HEAR FROM OUR YOUTH BOARD



‘I see first hand how crucial it is for young people to have a voice in shaping decisions that directly affect us. Our youth board is not just a formality, it is a vital part of WYC to ensure initiatives are relevant, inclusive and representative of the needs and perspectives of the youth. Working with the youth board, I have gained valuable insights into the power of youth leadership and the importance of empowering young people to make real, lasting change within our community.’

Charlotte, Youth Board Chair

‘With our continuing involvement, we hope to achieve empowerment for young people by ensuring that WYC services in initiatives are tailored to meet the needs of young people. We continue to influence decisions and advocate for the resources that the youth interact with, fostering an environment where young voices are heard and perspectives are valued.’ Olivia

‘Our aims for the coming months include having an active role within the local community to increase awareness and understanding around youth mental health.’ Iona

# HEAR FROM OUR STAFF TEAM



‘The Youth Board have been really useful in reviewing policies, in particular checking through our safeguarding policies to think about usability. They’ve also worked to approve our business plan and fed into our organisational values. Having the Youth Board included at a strategic level has made sure that our charity is truly being Youth Led’. Hannah, CEO

‘Our Youth Board continue to be at the core of everything we do at WYC. Their valuable opinions, experiences and knowledge are pivotal to ensure we provide the best possible services, accessible to young people in our community.’ Katy, Youth Lead

‘The Youth Board plays a vital role at WYC because it helps us to see everything we do from the perspective of young people, and therefore of our client group.’  
Rose, Co-Clinical Lead



# WHEN YOU HAVE SET UP THE BOARD, HERE ARE SOME ADDITIONAL TIPS:



## 1. BUILD TRUST

Young people need to feel heard and have a power within the organisation and local community, therefore establishing trust is fundamental when working with members of the youth board. We ensure a safe space is created where their voices are genuinely listened to and respected. Building trust takes time and thought.

## 2. GOOD COMMUNICATION

Effective communication between youth board members, staff members and the trustee board can be challenging. It is vital to be engaging, trusted and approachable with youth board communications. At WYC, our programmes manager suggests topics for our youth board's input at monthly meetings. Input and suggestions are then fed back regularly to our team members at staff meetings. Our programmes manager then ensures action points are followed up. Our youth board chair provides feedback on main discussion points at bimonthly trustee meetings.

## **3.DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

Our youth board is a diverse and representative group of young people. This ensure a wide range of perspectives and experiences. Organisations must consider how to enable participation of marginalised and underrepresented young people in our community e.g. members of the LGBTQIA+ community and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Creating an inclusive space for all young voices to be heard and valued will lead to comprehensive and representative decision making.

## **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

- What is the purpose of the youth structure?
- What area's of your organisation do you want the young people to contribute to?
- Which young people are going to be a part of the youth structure?
- How often will you meet?
- How long will their term be? 1year/2years?
- How often will they change roles within the board?
- How will the young people benefit from participating?



**TO FINISH:**



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To meet our current youth board, please visit:  
<https://winchesteryouthcounselling.org/meet-the-team/youth-board/>

For more information, please contact us on  
01962 820 444  
[katy@winchyc.org](mailto:katy@winchyc.org)

## **THANK YOU**

As an organisation, WYC gains much valuable insight and knowledge from our youth board members. We are very grateful to all of our youth board members, past and present for their invaluable contributions and commitment.

# WYC 2025-26



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## **PRIORITY OUTCOMES:**

**Priority One:** To help more children, young people and their families with high quality therapeutic support, addressing evolving needs.

**Priority Two:** To build on our position as a youth-led organisation, advocating for positive outcomes in mental health.

**Priority Three:** To recognise and share our responsibilities in promoting a healthy planet in conjunction with healthy lifestyles.

**Priority Four:** To develop diverse strategies to generate more funds that allow us to support and sustain our team and our work.

**Priority Five:** To focus on demonstrating our impact through evidence, upholding strong governance and transparency, ensuring the highest levels of accountability and public trust.