



Shrewsbury Town Council Youth Strategy

1. Purpose of this Strategy

This strategy sets out the framework for delivering high-quality, targeted youth services across Shrewsbury through “**Young Shrewsbury**”, the youth service arm of **Shrewsbury Town Council**. It supports the ambitions of the **Education Act 1996 (s507B)**, providing positive, engaging activities to improve youth well-being and ensure access to appropriate services.

The strategy will:

- Enable **collaboration** with schools, community groups, and agencies.
- Establish a **countywide youth work alliance** to reduce duplication and improve reach.
- Contribute to the **Shrewsbury Town Council’s Strategic Vision**, the **Shrewsbury Big Town Plan** and **Shropshire Council’s strategic objectives**, including education, safeguarding, skills development, and place-making.
- Develop the role of the **Youth Council** as a key advisory and delivery partner.

2. Vision

Our vision for young people in Shrewsbury is

2.1 To Feel Safe

To support young people to feel safe and secure, it is important that qualified staff and volunteers provide trusted relationships from safe and young people-friendly premises.

2.2 To be Treated Fairly

Staff and volunteers will use a trauma informed approach delivery for children, young people, and families in Shrewsbury.

2.3 To have a Voice

Ensuring that young people's voices are embedded in decision-making process. It is important that young people are involved in decision making and scrutiny at all levels, to shape policies and inform services including the location, design and delivery of activities that reflect what young people want. To create a positive impression of young people and their achievements. Shrewsbury Town Council have developed a "Youth Council" which sits direct below the main Town Council.

2.4 To have Access to Qualified Youth Workers

To offer support, advice, and guidance to young people that is informal, engaging, and interactive. Some Young People prefer to be in larger groups with their peers, while others would like the opportunity to communicate ideas one-on-one.

2.5 To access Space & Place

Young people need to have access to a space they can call their own and this can be achieved through having a consistent area for young people to meet with each other and with their youth workers. This approach contributes to enhancing their safety and sense of belonging at a sometimes-vulnerable time in their life.

3. Strategic Aims

Shrewsbury Town Council's Youth Strategy supports five strategic priorities:

1. **Responsive and Targeted Services:** Ensuring accessible, inclusive services that support young people's aspirations.
2. **Youth Voice and Empowerment:** The Youth Council will enable real influence over local decisions.
3. **Partnership and Community Engagement:** Effective coordination with voluntary groups, businesses, councillors, and services.
4. **Reduction in Challenges:** Interventions to address NEET status, exclusion, mental health, crime, and anti-social behaviour.
5. **Safe Spaces and Belonging:** Create youth-friendly spaces to build confidence, security, and a sense of place.

4. Alignment with National Policy and Legislation

Section 507B of the Education Act 1996

The act requires councils to provide "positive leisure-time activities" for youth. Young Shrewsbury meets this duty through:

- **Open Access Youth Clubs**
- **Alternative Curriculum Provision**
- **Detached and Outreach Work**
- **Youth-Led Projects and Events**

National Youth Agency (NYA) Vision Alignment

Access for All: All young people have access to quality youth work and youth services, including clear, statutory basis for open-access youth services, which are detached and targeted.

- Qualified youth workers and youth support workers alongside trained volunteers.
- Provision of detached and outreach youth work, digitised youth work and transport where needed.
- Young people will be involved in co-design and development of services in their locality.

Distinctive Education: Recognition of youth work as non-formal education (e.g., Alternative Curriculum).

Professionalism and Training: Accredited youth work pathways and CPD for all staff and volunteers.

4. Young Shrewsbury's Provision

4.1 Youth Clubs & Sports Activities

Young Shrewsbury offers youth provision for young people aged 9 - 16 years in the form of Open access Youth Clubs and Sports Activities in a variety of identified locations.

Youth workers provide young people with every opportunity to achieve the best possible experiences and positive outcomes to fulfil their potential. Youth services delivered across all our localities and are free to access, in a safe environment (physical or otherwise) to safeguard the welfare of all young people. This model offers supportive informal learning and diversional/recreational fun activities in targeted areas of need, it also provides places where young people can gather with their peers, safe from physical and emotional harm, or where they can disclose/share concerns to the youth workers.

Provision is **trauma-informed** and **place-based**, with local risk awareness (e.g., proximity to river/rail lines).

4.2 Alternative Curriculum

Local schools are supported by Young Shrewsbury's Alternative Curriculum for students. This covers both informal & formal education and has extensive experience in providing inclusive provision for Young People with an EHCP, MOP, SEN or at risk of permanent exclusion/NEET (not in education, employment, or training).

4.3 Detached & Outreach Youth Work

The Council Youth Workers shall meet young people where they are – in parks, streets, and online – to build relationships and deliver informal support and signposting.

4.4 Youth Council

Shrewsbury Town Council have developed a Youth Council which sits directly below the main Town Council. It will do this by hosting the Youth Council for Shrewsbury and facilitating diverse and meaningful discussions between the young people and Councillors, leaders & volunteers in the town.

The Youth Council will provide a forum for young people in Shrewsbury to have their voices heard and raise ideas and challenges that may not have been considered previously. The Youth Council will then be the young people's conduit for information and links between the Town Council and their Schools & Communities.

The Town Council will support projects and events that the Youth Council will recommend if feasible and if budgets allow. With the support of the Town Council and its officers, and other organisations, these projects will be primarily led by young people.

Proposals for larger activities or projects should arrive from the activities of this strategy to be recommended to Full Council or other appropriate bodies for progression and enhancement of facilities for young people in public places and to increase employment and educational opportunities in Shrewsbury.

4.5 Safe Spaces

The Council shall Identify and protect youth-dedicated spaces and prioritise consistency of venue access to ensure trust and belonging.

5. Safety, Safeguarding, and Rights

5.1 Contextual Safeguarding

Increasingly, Shropshire County Council (local authority) and partner agencies have developed an effective response to Contextualised Safeguarding that has led to a significant increase in the number of children being considered by the contextual safeguarding child exploitation operational Teams. It is therefore crucial that training

is also available for the wider community workers in this area which has been now partly undertaken by STC.

5.2 Martyn's Law (Protect Duty)

The Council recognises its duty to protect the public at large and shall embed **RUN HIDE TELL** within PSHE-linked sessions and council youth activities. The Council shall co-ordinate and co-operate with emergency services to ensure appropriate safety planning in youth venues and events.

5.3 Rights and Equity

Young Shrewsbury embraces Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: "The right to be listened to and taken seriously." When the Council and its partners make decisions that affect young people their views should be sought and young people should be supported to give their views in a way that is best for them. Youth voice is embedded throughout governance and delivery, and services are designed around fairness, dignity, and inclusion.

6. Technology and Communication

- Expand digital youth work and online engagement.
- Improve communications using social media, apps, and video tools.
- Explore how youth can **co-produce** online resources and campaigns.

7. Workforce Development

7.1 Staff and Volunteers

Young Shrewsbury provide well trained, staff with continuous professional development, accredited training structures and strong practice-based learning approaches working with children and young people, mapped against the National Youth Agency's 10 Year Strategy:

- Support youth work qualification opportunities working with other organisations and relevant youth sector providers, to enrich and make accessible youth work qualification opportunities.
- Champion pathways for local Young People to become young leaders and gain Youth work qualifications.
- Enable shared training and professional development opportunities such as safeguarding, mental health first aid, mental wellbeing, equalities and inclusion, cross-cultural communication, and intersectionality to upskill staff, volunteers, and young people.

7.2 Pathways for Young People

Develop a “Young Leaders” scheme providing accreditation and experience in community leadership and peer mentoring.

8. Partnerships and Governance

- **Countywide Youth Work Alliance** to align provision, funding bids, and shared training
- Partner with schools, health services, housing, police, and VCSE sector
- Governance by a cross-sector Youth Strategy Steering Group, reporting to STC and Youth Council

9. Finance and Sustainability

- Young Shrewsbury shall be funded through the Council’s core budget during annual budget setting and precept levying
- Additional external funding shall be sought through grant funding or co-commissioning
- Youth Council and community groups shall be supported in writing funding bids

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

It is important to understand what success looks like in developing a youth service. This shall be monitored in the following ways

- Annual **Youth Impact Report** which shall feature outputs, outcomes, and young people’s stories
- Involve Youth Council in evaluating impact and setting next-year priorities
- Benchmark activity against NYA Quality Standards Framework

11. Conclusion

This strategy sets out a robust, values-driven framework to ensure that Shrewsbury’s young people are supported to be safe, confident, connected, and heard. It combines **policy alignment, youth empowerment, and community collaboration** to create a sustainable youth offer that meets the needs of a changing town and its future generations.