PROSECURE2000 INVOLVEMENT IN THE SHREWSBURY TOWN-CENTRE MILLION HOURS YOUTH PROJECT 2026

DELIVERY REPORT AND LESSONS LEARNED

Prepared by Prosecure2000

1. Executive Summary

The Shrewsbury Town-Centre Million Hours Youth Project was established to provide positive activities and early intervention for young people, particularly those at risk of anti-social behaviour, crime, disorder or exploitation.

Shrewsbury Town Council received £96,260 to deliver a 26-week programme focused particularly on the Quarry and Coton Hill area and the wider town centre.

The project combined the services of detached youth workers and the Shrewsbury Town Rangers who had received specialist training in youth work for the project which organised positive activities, early intervention and partnership working.

The programme has provided substantial opportunities for young people to participate in free activities, engage with trusted adults and access support. It has also strengthened relationships between Town Rangers, youth workers, the police, community safety partners, venues, schools and community organisations.

Operational reporting recorded approximately 1,500 positive youth interactions in an average week, together with significant repeat engagement. The project also generated opportunities for earlier safeguarding intervention and recorded a reduction in ASB during periods of delivery.

The project has not, however, been without challenges. Measuring engagement consistently has proved difficult, particularly in distinguishing unique young people from repeat contacts. Some intended outcomes, particularly wellbeing, confidence and skills development, have not yet been measured sufficiently to demonstrate impact. The project has also had to respond to changing demands, locations and patterns of youth congregation. This lead to the implementation of a town centre HOT SPOT mapping system to identify congregation zones for the youth of Shrewsbury allowing for more intensive engagements in these areas.

Overall, the experience has demonstrated the value of having trusted adults engaging with young people in the places where they naturally spend time. It has also provided important learning about how future youth provision should be designed, delivered and evaluated.

2. Project Background

Shrewsbury Town Council secured £96,260 for a 26-week Million Hours Youth Project.

The programme was focused on the Quarry and Coton Hill area and young people at risk of ASB or exploitation, while recognising that the town centre attracts young people from across Shrewsbury and beyond.

The publicly advertised local programme was primarily aimed at young people aged 12–18.

The project was delivered through a combination of:

- detached and street-based youth work;
- enhanced Quarry and Town Centre Ranger engagement;
- organised positive activities;
- targeted early support;
- safeguarding and referral;
- partnership working.

The approach deliberately used a range of locations and venues rather than relying upon a single youth centre**. In a format of taking the message and engagements to the streets and being proactive in seeking out and working with the young people in a strategy of promoting better outcomes and social cohesion for the young people of Shrewsbury**

3. What the Project Set Out to Achieve

The project sought to:

- provide young people with free and accessible positive activities
- engage young people in the places where they naturally gather
- provide trusted adult relationships
- divert young people from ASB, crime and disorder
- identify safeguarding concerns at an early stage
- provide routes into specialist support where necessary
- improve social connection and participation
- give young people a voice in determining the activities provided
- strengthen partnership working around youth provision and community safety

4. What Was Delivered

Prosecure2000 was commissioned to provide additional Youth Ranger capacity as part of the Million Hours project.

The Youth Rangers operated between 16.00 and 20.00, Sunday to Thursday, undertaking their Town Ranger duties while placing a particular emphasis on engaging with young people in the town centre and surrounding areas.

The role was not to replace the Town Council's Youth Workers. Rather, the Youth Rangers provided an additional visible and approachable presence, using their existing Town Ranger role, knowledge of the town centre and the young people who frequent the Town Centre area. This was achievable as the Rangers have built up over the years, they have been operating in the town centre a positive and constructive working relationship with the young people of Shrewsbury. which allowed greater integration for the Town Councils youth workers in engaging with them

- engage informally with young people;
- build and maintain relationships with young people encountered during their patrols;
- identify young people who might benefit from additional support;
- direct and encourage young people towards Town Council Youth Workers and organised youth activities;
- promote diversionary activities taking place as part of the Million Hours programme;
- provide reassurance within the town centre;
- identify emerging issues and concerns;
- support early intervention and safeguarding where appropriate; and
- work alongside the wider network of Town Council staff and partners.

This was an important feature of the project because the Youth Rangers were able to engage with young people as part of their normal presence and duties within the town centre, rather than operating solely through scheduled youth sessions.

Supporting Youth Service Delivery

In addition to their core Youth Ranger role, Prosecure2000 also provided additional support where the Town Council Youth Service was unable to provide Youth Workers for planned sessions.

On these occasions, Prosecure2000 Youth Rangers helped to backfill sessions sometimes at very short notice, so that activities could continue and young people were not simply turned away because the planned Youth Worker resource was unavailable.

This demonstrated considerable flexibility on the part of Prosecure2000 operational staff and helped maintain continuity of provision during the project.

However, it is important to distinguish this additional support from the core purpose of the Youth Ranger role. The Youth Rangers were commissioned primarily to provide street-based engagement and signposting, rather than to provide a replacement Youth Service.

5. Engagement with Young People

A key feature of the Prosecure2000 contribution was the opportunity to engage with young people in the places where they naturally spent time.

The Youth Rangers' existing Town Ranger duties provided a practical platform from which to undertake this engagement. They were already visible within the town centre, understood the local environment and had experience of dealing with a wide range of situations and behaviours.

Their role was therefore to use these existing relationships and their presence in the town centre to engage young people positively and, where appropriate, connect them with the wider offer available through the Million Hours project.

This included directing young people towards:

- Town Council Youth Workers;
- organised sports and recreational activities;
- creative and music activities;
- gaming and other structured activities;
- diversionary activities;
- opportunities for social interaction; and
- further support where a concern was identified.
- Provide a direct on the streets point of contact

The approach meant that engagement with young people did not depend entirely on young people choosing to attend a formal youth-work session. The Youth Rangers could make the initial connection and then encourage young people to access more structured support or activities.

6. What Went Well – The Good Things

6.1 The Right Role for the Town Rangers

One of the strengths of the project was recognising that the existing Town Ranger role provided a strong foundation for engaging with young people.

The Town Rangers are already streetwise, visible and familiar within the town centre. They had established trusted relationships with many young people and understood the different locations and circumstances in which young people congregated and socialise.

Prosecure2000 Youth Rangers were therefore able to operate within an established Town Ranger environment rather than creating an entirely new and unfamiliar presence.

This was particularly valuable because the Rangers could engage naturally with young people while undertaking their wider duties, building relationships over time and identifying opportunities to connect young people with the Youth Service and diversionary activities.

6.2 Youth Awareness and Safeguarding Training

The Youth Rangers also undertook Youth Awareness Training and Safeguarding Training.

This strengthened their ability to engage appropriately with young people and complemented their existing experience of working in the town centre.

The combination of streetwise experience, existing relationships and additional training gave the Youth Rangers a stronger understanding of how to engage with young people and when issues might need to be referred or escalated **to partner agencies**.

6.3 Connecting Young People to the Wider Youth Offer

The project worked particularly well where the Youth Rangers acted as a bridge between young people encountered in the town centre and the wider youth provisions.

Rather than simply engaging with young people and moving on, the Youth Rangers were able to encourage them to access activities, Youth Worker support and to listen to their service delivery suggestions so they felt part of the project.

This helped ensure that the investment in the Million Hours project was not simply about increasing the number of staff visible in the town centre, but about creating a route into positive activities and more structured youth support.

6.4 Flexibility to Support the Youth Service

The willingness of Prosecure2000 Youth Rangers to backfill Youth Service sessions when Town Council Youth Workers were unavailable was another positive feature of the project. This provided continuity and ensured that planned activities could continue on occasions when the intended Youth Worker resource could not be provided.

While this was not the primary purpose of the Youth Ranger commission, the flexibility demonstrated by the Prosecure2000 team was beneficial to the overall project.

7. What Didn't Go So Well – Challenges and Areas for Improvement

7.1 Youth Ranger and Youth Worker Roles Were Not Always Delivered as Originally Intended

The Million Hours model was intended to bring together Youth Rangers and Town Council Youth Workers, with the Rangers providing additional street-based engagement and directing young people towards Youth Workers and diversionary activities.

In practice, there were occasions when the Town Council Youth Service was unable to provide the Youth Workers required for planned sessions.

Prosecure2000 then had to provide additional Youth Ranger capacity to backfill those sessions at very short notice at times.

While this ensured that activities could continue, it meant that the Youth Rangers were sometimes required to undertake work beyond the core purpose for which they had been commissioned.

7.2 Pressure Created by Youth Worker Availability

The experience highlighted the importance of ensuring that the different elements of the project have sufficient and reliable staffing.

The Youth Ranger model was effective because Youth Rangers could engage young people informally and direct them towards specialist youth provision. However, that model works less effectively if the Youth Worker resource is not available when young people are referred or when activities have been planned.

The project therefore identified a need for clearer coordination between the Youth Ranger provision and the Town Council Youth Service, including clear arrangements for planned sessions, staffing and communication when staffing is unavailable.

7.3 Backfilling Was Effective but Should Not Become the Normal Model

Prosecure2000 ability to backfill sessions was valuable in maintaining continuity, but it should not obscure the distinction between the two roles. The Youth Ranger role and the Youth Worker role are complementary rather than interchangeable.

The Rangers bring visibility, local knowledge, street-based engagement and established relationships. Youth Workers bring specialist youth-work skills and the ability to provide more structured interventions and support.

The experience of the Million Hours project demonstrated the value of having both resources available and working together, rather than relying on one to compensate routinely for the absence of the other.

8. What We Have Learned

The Million Hours project has demonstrated the value of using the Town Ranger presence as a platform for youth engagement.

The Youth Rangers were able to engage young people during their normal town-centre duties, using their existing relationships and knowledge of the area to make connections and direct young people towards the wider Youth Service and diversionary offer.

The project also demonstrated that Youth Rangers and Youth Workers perform different but complementary functions.

The most effective model is therefore one in which:

- Youth Rangers provide a visible, street-based presence;
- Youth Rangers engage and build relationships with young people;
- Youth Rangers encourage young people towards positive activities and Youth Workers;
- Youth Workers provide specialist youth-work support and structured sessions;
- both teams communicate regularly and understand their respective roles; and
- there is sufficient staffing within each part of the service to deliver its intended role.

The willingness of Prosecure2000 to provide additional cover when Youth Workers were unavailable was an important practical benefit during the project. However, the experience also demonstrated that this should be viewed as contingency support rather than the basis of the delivery model.

9. Evidence of Impact

The project generated significant levels of engagement between Youth Rangers and young people. Weekly reporting indicated approximately 1,500 positive youth interactions in an average week.

The strongest evidence from the Prosecure2000 element of the project relates to:

- the visibility of Youth Rangers within the town centre;
- engagement with young people;
- development and maintenance of relationships;
- signposting towards Youth Workers and positive activities;
- support for diversionary activity;
- the ability to maintain provision when Youth Workers were unavailable; and
- the contribution of trained Rangers to early identification and safeguarding.

The project also highlighted areas where future evaluation could be strengthened, particularly in distinguishing between individual young people and individual interactions and in measuring longer-term outcomes arising from the relationships established.

10. Overall Assessment

Prosecure2000 contribution to the Million Hours project provided additional Youth Ranger capacity at a time when there was a clear need for increased engagement with young people in the town centre.

The principal value of the model was the ability to combine the existing Town Ranger presence, local knowledge and established relationships with the wider Youth Service and diversionary activities funded through the project.

The Youth Rangers provided a visible and consistent point of contact for young people between 16.00 and 20.00, Sunday to Thursday, and were able to engage young people as part of their normal Town Ranger duties.

Where appropriate, they acted as a bridge into the wider Youth Service, directing young people towards Youth Workers and organised activities.

The additional flexibility provided by Prosecure2000 in backfilling Youth Worker sessions was also valuable in maintaining continuity of provision and structure.

The principal lesson is that the greatest benefit comes when the Youth Rangers and Youth Workers functions operate alongside one another, with clearly defined and complementary roles.

11. Looking Forward

The Million Hours project has demonstrated the proven value of retaining a youth-focused element within the Town Ranger function.

Any future arrangements should, however, preserve the distinction between the Youth Ranger and Youth Worker roles and ensure that each element of the service is appropriately resourced.

The experience also provides a useful foundation for the Town Council to consider how its existing Town Ranger, Youth Service and wider community resources can work together more effectively to maintain positive relationships with young people and support early intervention all leading to improved social cohesion for the young people of Shrewsbury.

This review of the Million-hours project is submitted for your review.

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