



wayuk.org

Impact Report 2025

About Us



Who are we

We are a young person-led charity based in Swindon, dedicated to creating lasting change in the lives of children and young people who face disadvantage.

Our Mission

We address the challenges facing children and young people by enabling them to overcome barriers, find belonging, reach their full potential and gain the skills and confidence to drive positive change in their communities.

Our Approach

We partner with young people, the public sector, and the wider community to co-produce high-impact, sustainable projects that deliver positive outcomes for children, young people, and the wider community.

Our Young Person-Led Commitment

WAY was co-founded by local young people and remains committed to being co-led by young people, with 50% of trustees being young people.

All projects are co-produced with young people, supported by a strong mentoring culture that enables long-term development and leadership pathways within WAY.

We believe meaningful change happens when young people are involved in decision-making throughout, alongside subject experts, ensuring projects reflect their lived experiences and real needs.



Our Work in 2025



Overview

In 2025 we continued to engage children and young people at crucial moments, build trusted relationships, build community through strength-based activities, and create opportunities for them to shape and lead on projects. Key headlines:

- Launched and moved into The Base, a £4m youth centre co-designed with young people.
- Supported 295+ children and young people through our core projects
- Delivered 3 major youth-led reports and 1 manifesto, influencing local and regional strategy and practice.
- Launched our Alternative Provision offer for young people at risk of exclusion or with low school attendance.

Our Core Projects



WAY Beacons: Supporting children and young people within hospital, connecting them to support in their community



WAY Mentors: Long-term 1-to-1 mentoring through a diverse group of local volunteer mentors



WAY Studios: Music studio-based programmes and creative enterprise, empowering children and young people through creativity



WAY Sports: Inclusive sports programmes for children and young people who face disadvantage



WAY Changemakers: Youth social action and leadership, empowering young people to drive lasting change



2025 in Numbers

670

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE REACHED

295

Through our
5 core
projects

232

Through digital
support and
signposting

143

Through
youth-led
research

119

Through
hospital-based
support

68

Through
sports -based
sessions

31

Through
creative
projects

37

Through
long-term
mentoring

21

As Young
Changemakers

19

Through
music-based
mentoring

26

Partners
signed up to
be Child First

116

Alternative
provision sessions
delivered

102

Sports
sessions
delivered

8

Creative
projects
delivered

6

Internships
provided



**C, 13 - Supported through WAY Beacons
and now a Young Changemaker**

"I got a lot of support overall; it helped me improve a lot as a person and learn to become more myself again" - M, 14



WAY Beacons

Supporting children and young people within hospital and connecting them to support in their community



119 Children and young people supported

62% were repeat attenders, of those:

75% have not re-attended since receiving support from WAY Beacons.

46% were helped to access further support in their community.

Summary

In 2025, WAY Beacons continued to break the cycles of repeat hospital attendance by engaging children and young people (10–25) at moments of crisis within the Great Western Hospital and connecting them with ongoing support in their communities. We also partnered with local charity Changing Suits, who specialise in breaking down cultural barriers, to intentionally improve access to support for young people experiencing health inequalities linked to their ethnic group.

Lucy's Story *name changed

Lucy (15) was met by a WAY Beacon in the Hospital Emergency Department following a self-harm admission. This came during an extended period of instability in her education and home life, including school suspensions and a complex family situation. These challenges impacted her wellbeing, resulting in four mental health-related hospital attendances in 12 months.

Lucy shared that she needed a safe, consistent space to be heard without judgement. A week after being discharged, Lucy met the WAY Beacon in her favourite café, where time was taken to build trust and ensure she felt listened to and understood. The WAY Beacon then supported Lucy to access mentoring, which has lasted over 10 months, providing stability during a turbulent time. Since then, Lucy has seen improved school attendance and has had no further hospital admissions.



**Joe Haney, one of
our WAY Beacons,
working regular
evenings at the
hospital**

"WAY Beacons are there for people, when someone
listens, it shows someone cares." - O, 16



WAY Mentors

Providing long-term 1-to-1 mentoring through
a diverse group of local volunteer mentors



39 Children and young people Mentored

12 Volunteer Mentors

100% said they now feel they have skills for the workplace

82% said that mentoring has helped them build more positive relationships with others

Summary

In 2025, WAY Mentors continued to provide long-term mentoring for local children and young people through a committed group of local volunteers. Our mentoring takes a relational and tailored approach as we journey towards positive outcomes in 4 key areas:

1. Increasing engagement in education
2. Enabling access to employment
3. Reducing involvement in crime and violence
4. Improving mental health and wellbeing

Theo's Story * name changed

Theo was first supported through our WAY Beacons project after being admitted to hospital for self-harm and suicidal ideation, during a period of high stress linked to college exams and lack of support. He then chose to work alongside a WAY Mentor, meeting regularly at times and locations that suited him.

Through consistent one-to-one support focused on confidence, coping skills and practical problem-solving, Theo stabilised and completed his exams. He later joined WAY Changemakers, forming friendships and growing in confidence, before successfully moving into employment at the hospital with the support of his mentor. Theo shared: "I now feel like I can use my ideas and experience to make a difference".



F, 19 - Supported
through WAY
Mentors; he has
since started work

"You actually want to understand. People before didn't want to understand, and I felt like no one cared about me" - A, 16



WAY Studios

Music Studio



Enabling lasting change in the lives of children and young people through music.

19 Young people accessed music studio-based mentoring

90% Are at risk of school exclusion

68% Have been involved in anti-social behaviour and crime

90% Have never accessed music-based opportunities before

85% Said they grew in being able to make positive choices

Summary

WAY Music Studios launched in May 2025, with a focus on supporting young people (10-18) who are most 'at-risk', through music studio-based mentoring including beat making, songwriting, music recording and production.

We ran 2 programmes:

- **Alternative Provision:** Music studio-based mentoring for young people at risk of exclusion.
- **Positive Diversion Mentoring:** 1-to-1 music studio-based mentoring and support for young people at the edge of the criminal justice system.

Moses' Story *name changed

Moses (15) came to the studios through Alternative Provision due to immediate risk of permanent exclusion and involvement in anti-social behaviour. Although he had always written lyrics at home, he had never been given the chance to record his music.

Moses, who has a hidden talent for music, has since written and recorded multiple tracks, using his raps to tell his story and share positive messages with other young people. As we move into 2026, we are preparing to record the final version of one of his songs and partner with a local video company to bring it to life through a music video.



I, 16 - Writing and recording tracks in the Music Studio

"WAY Studios has given me the opportunity to do something I enjoy and am good at, instead of being stuck."



WAY Studios

Creative Studio



A young person-led social enterprise creating high-quality and values-based creative solutions

31 Young people accessed Creative Studios Projects

4 10-month creative internships provided

8 Creative projects delivered with young people

232 Accessing digital support and signposting webpage

Summary

In 2025, WAY Creative Studios continued to operate as a social enterprise working on real-world projects, whilst creating opportunities for young people to gain skills in the creative industry.

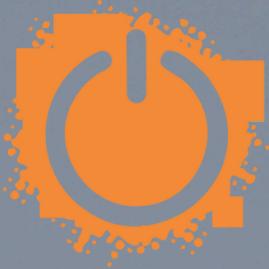
Projects included:

- Branding for The Base Youth Centre and Young Swindon and Wiltshire
- Beacons of Hope Mural and Digital Signposting
- Video for SBC's supported internship programme (launching in 2026)
- Designs for multiple reports commissioned by SBC.

Beacons of Hope Project

Beacons of Hope used creative design and digital signposting to build on the hospital-based WAY Beacons project, raising awareness and improving access to support for young people and families. Working with a local artist, Dario Santos, Swindon Youth Justice, and WAY's Young Changemakers, young people co-produced two murals, one at Great Western Hospital and one at The Base youth centre. The murals include QR codes linking to support services and symbolise resilience, giving young people a visible role in strengthening their community.





O, 19 - Painting the Beacons of Hope mural at the Great Western Hospital

"Being able to talk without being judged. Someone who would sit there and listen. It might seem overwhelming but it will be the best thing that ever happened to you. WAY brought me out of my shell." - E



WAY Sports

Inclusive sports programmes for children and young people who face disadvantage



68 Children and young people accessed WAY Sports sessions

102 Sports sessions delivered

4 Programmes delivered

2 10-month sports internships provided

76% Are eligible for free school meals

78% Accessed physical activity outside of school for the first time.

Summary

In 2025, we built on the success of our school's-based and community-based sessions to launch 3 new programmes, tailored to the needs of children and young people aged 8-18.

We ran 4 tailored programmes:

- **Rooted**: Sports for Afghan refugees focusing on inclusion and community cohesion
- **WAY United**: Inclusive football for children and young people from low-income backgrounds
- **HAF**: Summer Holiday Sports Activities for young people from low-income households
- **Alternative Provision**: Sports and fitness-based mentoring for young people at risk of exclusion

Zane's Story * name changed

Zane joined his local WAY United inclusive football club based in Park North (in the top 10 most deprived wards in the country) after hearing about it through school. Having never had the chance to take part in activities outside of school, he was eager to get involved.

At home, Zane helps care for his mum, who lives with a long-term illness. She says that attending the club “is doing him a world of good” as he navigates the challenges of home life. Now, the club gives Zane a space to have fun, build confidence, and take a break from his daily responsibilities.



**R, 11 and A, 11 at
WAY United**



"Doing WAY Sports helped me see positive
change in being good at school." - T, 14



WAY Changemakers



Youth social action and leadership, empowering young people to drive lasting change.

25 Young Changemakers involved

5 Young person-led social action projects

143 Children and young people engaged through youth-led research

26 Partners signed up to be 'Child First Committed'

70% Of Young Changemakers were originally supported through our hospital-based project WAY Beacons

90% Said they felt more hopeful about the future

Summary

In 2025, we continued to support Swindon's Young Changemakers who were commissioned to work on 5 projects including, The Base youth centre co-design, Swindon's 2024 Health Needs Report Launch, and:



Greener Swindon Report

In partnership with Swindon Borough Council, young people led on capturing the views and voices of local young people on the local environment and green spaces. [READ HERE](#)



Child First Swindon Manifesto

The Child First Manifesto, developed for Swindon's Safeguarding Partnership, invites local organisations to adopt a "Child First" framework. Our mission is to ensure every child in Swindon can thrive, regardless of their circumstances. As of 2025, 26 key partners have already committed to this vision. [READ HERE](#)



Swindon Skills Report

Through developing a young-person-led report, we helped Swindon Borough Council shape a skills strategy that puts the lived experiences of young people at the heart of local policy and practice. [READ HERE](#)





L, 19 and N, 13 being interviewed by the BBC about their role in co-designing The Base youth centre



"It's a great opportunity to have
your voice heard." - R, 19



About The Base

In early 2025, we continued to lead on the youth participation and co-design element of the newly renovated £4m youth centre in Park North, Swindon. In March 2025, we moved in, following a launch event planned by one of our Young Interns.

We continue to be located at The Base, working in close partnership with Young Swindon and Wiltshire (formerly SMASH) and STEP. WAY's section of The Base includes a Creative Studios, Music Studio, Indoor and Outdoor Sports facilities, and group rooms.

Alternative Provision

Since launching at The Base, we have set up an Alternative Provision offer to schools in partnership with Young Swindon and Wiltshire (SMASH), providing a range of activity-based mentoring opportunities for young people at risk of exclusion or with low school attendance. Our provision uses a strength-based and collaborative approach for young people who struggle in a traditional educational environment. This year we delivered **116 sessions** in total with **16 young people**.





"WAY motivates me to be more
positive." - T, 15

THANK YOU!

Our Volunteers

Thank you to our volunteer mentors for the time, patience and energy you give, committing yourselves to the children and young people we support.



The WAY Circle

Thank you to our community of monthly givers making WAY possible, ensuring that everything we do is free to access for children, young people and their families.



Join the
WAY Circle
[HERE](#)

Funding Partners

Thank you to our funding partners who enable us to have lasting impact on the lives of local children and young people.



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our quarterly
newsletter
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