



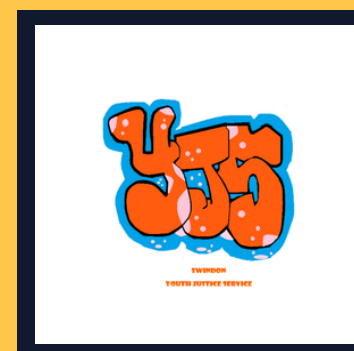
WAY
Beacons



Impact Report

July 2023 - June 2026

Three years of reaching young people in crisis
and changing the direction of their future.



WAY UK - Charity no: 1206597 - The Base, Lyndhurst Crescent, Swindon, SN3 2RW



Executive Summary

What if the growing need of children, young people and young adults repeatedly attending emergency care due to mental health crises and violence-related admissions isn't a failure of clinical care, but proof that medical intervention alone can't solve it?

We know that the health system is under significant pressure, with clinical services often asked to respond to needs ultimately rooted in social isolation, lack of belonging, trauma and community disconnection.

What if hospital could become the beginning of a community journey (rather than the end of a clinical episode) helping young people build the relationships, resilience and ongoing support they need to prevent future admissions?

WAY Beacons is an award-winning*, evidence-based project that does exactly this. At a critical hospital-based “reachable moment”, we connect young people into long-term, relational, strengths-based community support, complementing clinical services and reducing the strain on the wider system.

This report demonstrates how over the past three years WAY Beacons has:



reduced admissions from frequent attenders by 70%



connected 48% of admissions into long-term community support



an estimated cost avoidance to the NHS of £227,500–£273,000

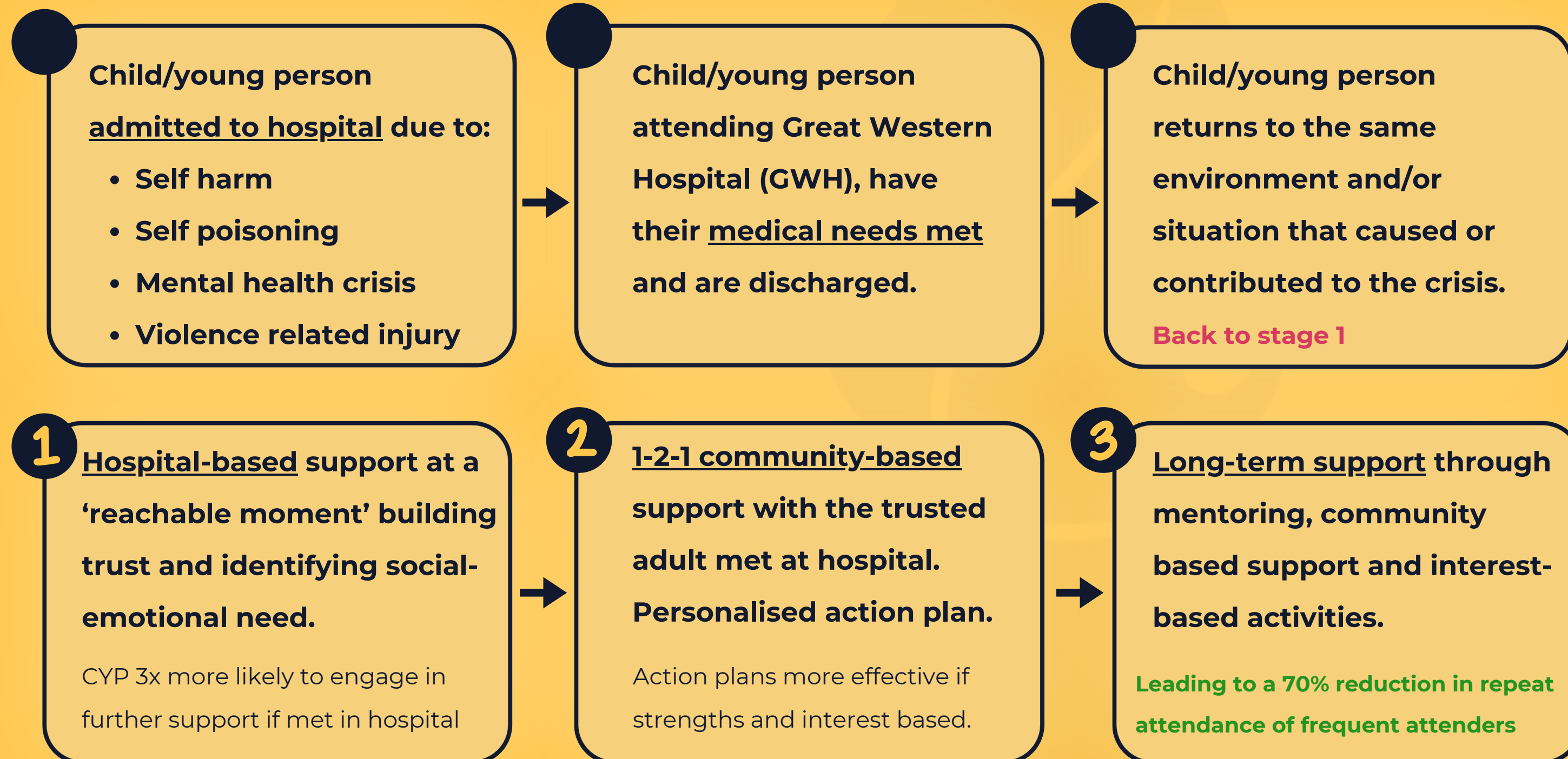
**NHS England, South-West, IPC Awards*

Why WAY Beacons Exists

High hospital re-attendance in Swindon highlights an overly medicalised system, one that overlooks the social and emotional root causes of young people's crises, while failing to offer the ongoing, relational support they desperately need.

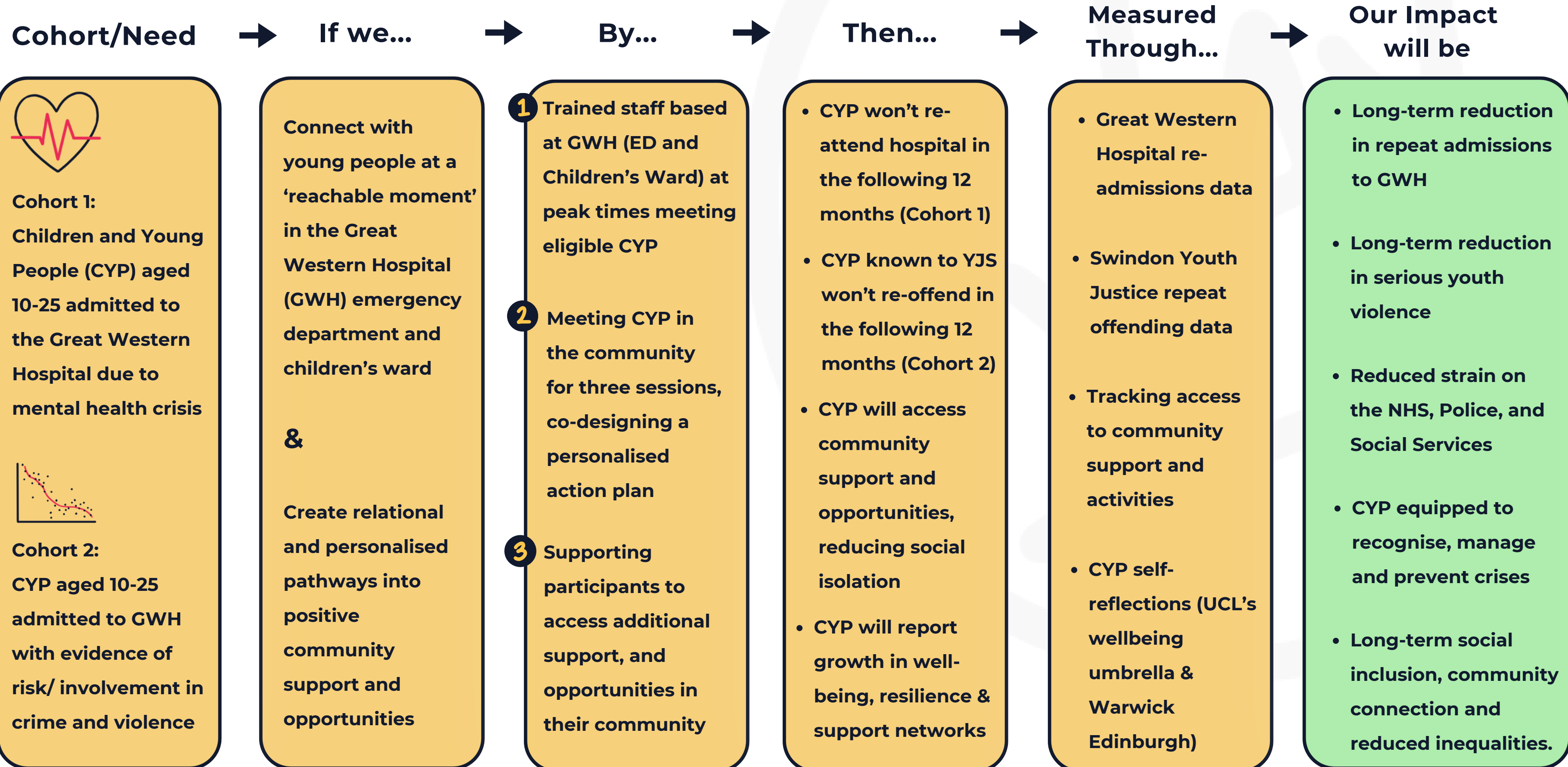


Current cycles of repeat attendance



WAY Beacons Model

Theory of Change: **WAY Beacons**



Three Years in Numbers



284

Children and young people supported

208

Met in hospital by a WAY Beacon

76

Supported following an 'out of hours' referral made by the hospital

132

Supported to access ongoing support within their community

41%

Were frequent hospital attenders - *2-4 admissions in 12 months*

19%

Were high intensity users - *5 or more admissions in 12 months*

6%

Have previously offended and are known to Swindon Youth Justice

Why WAY Beacons Works by Children and Young People

Through feedback, fortnightly participatory groups, and Swindon Borough Council's Children and Young People's Health Needs Report co-produced with Children and Young People who accessed WAY Beacons:

Having someone with the time to listen within the hospital

"You're there in a time of need. You actually listen. When someone listens, it shows someone cares."

Access to long-term support

"Short term support makes things worse, it ends just as I've learned to trust someone new."

Meeting in an informal environment within the community

"Meeting with a Beacon in a coffee shop is easier than going to a sterile counselling room. I always leave feeling better."

Personalised action plan that factors in interest based activities

"Talking while doing something I enjoy is easier."

Who We Reached

Reason for Admission

• Substance Misuse / Suicidal:	40%
• Mental Health Crisis:	15%
• Self-Harm:	11%
• Suicidal / Risk to Self:	10.5%
• Substance Misuse / Risk Taking:	5%
• Eating Disorder:	3.5%
• Assault Related Injury:	2%
• Violence Related Injury:	1.5%
• Other:	12%

Support Needs

• Mental Health Struggles:	94%
• Drug and Alcohol Misuse:	50%
• Learning Difficulty / Disability:	30.5%
• Receiving Additional Support:	24.5%
• Risk of Violence:	20%
• Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB):	17.5%
• Evidence of Exploitation:	10%
• Physical Disability:	8%
• Homelessness:	4%

Gender

• Female:	65%
• Male:	30%
• Transgender / Non-Binary:	5%

Age

• 10–15:	50.5%
• 16–17:	31%
• 18–25:	18.5%

Local Authority

• Swindon Borough:	69%
• Wiltshire:	18%
• Gloucestershire:	5%
• West Oxfordshire:	3.5%
• West Berkshire:	2%
• Vale of White Horse:	0.5%
• Unknown:	2%

Ethnicity

• White British:	79%
• White Irish:	0.5%
• White Roma:	0.5%
• White Other:	1%
• Black Caribbean:	2%
• Black African:	2%
• Asian Indian:	1.5%
• Asian Other:	1.5%
• Asian Chinese:	0.5%
• Asian Pakistani:	0.5%
• Asian Bangladeshi:	1%
• Mixed White & Black Caribbean:	1%
• Mixed White & Asian:	0.5%
• Mixed White & Black African:	0.5%
• Mixed Other:	1%
• Other Ethnicity:	0.5%
• Not Disclosed:	2.5%

Addressing Health Inequalities

An analysis of the residential postcodes of children and young people supported by WAY Beacons indicates that a substantial proportion live in neighbourhoods experiencing higher levels of socioeconomic deprivation.

We intentionally offer community-based support directly within these areas, including at our local hub, (The Base Youth Centre in Park North) located in one of the UK’s top 10% most deprived wards.

	Number	Percentage
Postcodes/LSOAs within the most deprived 20% nationally	87	31%
Postcodes/LSOAs within the most deprived 20-30% nationally	34	12%
Postcodes/LSOAs within the most deprived 30-40% nationally	34	12%

Outcomes



Improving Health & Well-being

- 70%** of frequent attenders with no readmission recorded within 6 months
- 18%** of high intensity with no readmission recorded within 6 months
- 85%** said they felt more hopeful about the future

* Data provided by the Great Western Hospital (GWH)



Reducing Crime & Serious Violence

- 100%** of CYP who have previously offended have not re-offended within a 12 month period
- 50%** reduction in violence related hospital admissions between year 1 and year 2
- 75%** said they were more able to make positive choices

* Data provided by Swindon's Youth Justice Service and GWH



Increasing Social Inclusion & Connection

- 48%** accessed community-based support through WAY Beacon's community pathways
- 80%** said they feel more part of their community
- 95%** said they feel more motivated to try new things

Community Pathways by WAY

Addressing social-emotional needs and reducing isolation through strength-based, personalised pathways that connect young people to open access activities, long-term relational support, within their local community.



Mentoring

47 accessed weekly 1-to-1 mentoring for over 12 months, providing practical and social-emotional support



Music-based

18 accessed 1-to-1 and group music sessions, including therapeutic songwriting, beat-making, and sound engineering



Sports-based

2 accessed our newly launched sports and fitness project using physical activity to support mental health and well-being



Changemakers

24 engaged with Young Changemakers - a youth participation and social action group that uses lived experience to shape policy and practice



Other Support

56 have accessed additional activities, targeted services, and community groups beyond WAY UK

Case Study: Meet Freddy

Freddy's Journey

Freddy (17) was a frequent attender at the Great Western Hospital due to mental health struggles.

- **Feb 2025:** Met in hospital in Feb 2025 due to mental health crisis
- **Mar 2025:** Met in the community & co-designed an action plan
- **Apr 2025:** Accessed long-term mentoring (12 months)
- **May 2025:** Accessed youth social action project (Young Changemakers)
- **Aug 2025:** Not re-attended hospital in 6 months
- **Feb 2026:** Not re-attended hospital in 12 months
- **Jun 2026:** Supported in the planning and delivery of SBC's CYP Health's summit including recording a podcast on the theme 'self harm'
- **Present:** Continuing to access support, accessed employment and is an ambassador for young people's mental health in Swindon using his lived experience to shape change

[Watch Freddy's Video Here!](#)



Financial Impact

£227,500 – £273,000

Estimated cost avoidance to the NHS
by reducing repeat hospital admissions.

Patient Data

Frequent Attenders (2–4 prior admissions in 12 months):

- 41% of cohort
- 70% with no readmission recorded within 6 months

High-Intensity Users (5+ prior admissions in 12 months):

- 19% of cohort
- 18% with no readmission recorded within 6 months

Calculations

1. Avoided Admissions:

Assuming a conservative baseline of 1 avoided admission per successful intervention

2. Cost Avoidance: Based on standard local NHS unit costs of £2,500 – £3,000 per admission

Evidence and Caveats

Sources: (£2,500–£3,000) sourced from the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care System (BSW ICS)

Classification: Figures reflect estimated potential value based on a conservative model (avoided admission per successful outcome), rather than confirmed cashable savings

Data sample: Percentages are worked out on sample size of 132, where we can measure attendance rates after 6 months from date of admission

Key Learnings



Reachable moments matter

When young people are met by a WAY Beacon in hospital, they are three times more likely to engage with community-based support, in comparison to 'out of hours' referrals. A moment of acute crisis opens a rare window for reflection, and opportunity to build trust in that vulnerable moment.



Community and belonging addresses root causes

By creating spaces for peer support grounded in shared experiences and interests, children and young people build lasting relationships with both peers and trusted adults. This directly addresses underlying social and emotional needs such as combating loneliness, reducing social exclusion, and restoring a sense of purpose and joy.



REAL co-design leads to stronger outcomes

By partnering with young people, subject matter experts, and public sector professionals, this project removes the barrier of mistrust in systems and institutions to significantly boost engagement. Core input from young people into the model from the start, including sustained long-term support, personalised action plans, and approachable branding and communication has driven significant, measurable reductions in hospital readmissions while creating a lasting impact on social inclusion.

The Future

To address the growing need, WAY Beacons aims to secure funding for:

1

Sustained Delivery

Continue delivering the tried-and-tested model deeply rooted in the community

2

Scaled Delivery

Expand provision to 5 evenings a week and grow our 1-to-1 mentoring programme

3

Replication

Identify underserved hospitals in the South-West and replicate WAY Beacons

4

Evaluation and Economic Modelling

University partner to evaluate project outcomes and conduct an extended cost-benefit analysis

5

Community Partnerships

Build broader community partnerships to offer further tailored, free to access pathways

6

Co-designed Solutions

Identify gaps and co-design initiatives alongside CYP

Without funding: Children and young people (CYP) will remain stuck on long waiting lists or receive short-term interventions that lack lasting community roots. As a result, young people will stay socially isolated, their struggles will escalate, and the strain on public services will continue to grow.



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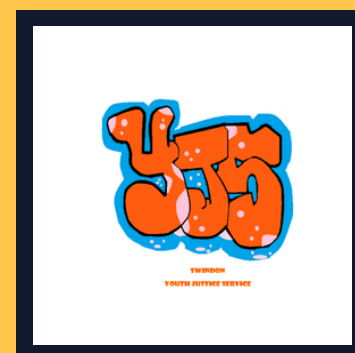
You were there from the
start when no one else was

YP aged 16

”



By Young people. For Young People.



wayuk.org

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