

Wakefield Youth Work Alliance

Principles of Collaboration

Background

Wakefield Youth Work Alliance is the coming together of local VCSE organisations that deliver youth work in the district with colleagues in Wakefield Council to change how we work together. From the start, we have been clear that our intention is to create much more than a forum or contractual partnership. Our aim is to develop a much deeper form of collaborative alliance.

We think that only a genuinely collaborative alliance of voluntary and statutory agencies can provide the change we will need to deliver on the needs and aspirations of the young people of Wakefield going forward. We are in no doubt that a strong alliance must be built on strong principles of collaboration. So that all future alliance members can join us with confidence and with clarity of the expectations that membership will bring, we have set out these principles of collaboration.

Our collaboration values

The Youth Work Alliance is founded on a set of core collaboration values that guide our collective efforts and relationships. These values reflect our shared commitment to inclusivity and mutual respect among all members, ensuring the Alliance remains a cohesive and effective partnership

Trust

Trust is fundamental to the successful functioning of a collaborative alliance. It underpins every other principle, attitude, and behaviour outlined in this document and serves as the foundation for our partnership. Trust is both the starting point and an ongoing expectation, with all members expected to uphold and demonstrate these collaborative principles in all aspects of the alliance's work. Members are encouraged to approach interactions with an open, trusting attitude towards their colleagues.

Shared vision

We can only collaborate when we share a clear set of ideas as to what we are trying to achieve together. Alliance members are expected to contribute to the ongoing work of keeping our shared vision meaningful and fit for purpose and to be guided by it in their work.

Respect

Respect, like trust, is essential between alliance members and is similarly built on adherence to the other principles of collaboration. The alliance recognises that each organisation and individual colleague contributes a unique set of skills and experiences to our shared work. Respect is how we show the value we place on the richness and diversity of those skills and experiences.

Co-operation

Co-operation is a core driver of the alliance and one of our most valued outcomes. Members are expected to actively embrace co-operation and seek it wherever possible. In practice, this means members should consider opportunities for co-operation in the planning and creation of all activities, and as a potential approach to addressing any challenges or issues that arise.

Accountability

Alliance members are accountable to each other for their actions and for the spirit in which they engage with fellow members. All members should be prepared to account for themselves when asked and to attend alliance meetings and events ready to represent their organisations effectively.

Voluntary Involvement

No one should feel compelled to join our alliance. We assume that all potential members join freely, seeing the alliance as a positive opportunity for collaboration, support, and shared resources. Knowing that members have chosen to participate voluntarily is crucial, as it enables others to expect their full commitment to these principles.

Our standards

The Youth Work Alliance upholds a set of rigorous standards that ensure the integrity and effectiveness of our partnership. These standards are essential for maintaining high levels of professionalism and impact across all our collective efforts.

Governance

All organisations joining the alliance must be a formally constituted body with a recognised legal structure, able to produce a valid controlling document that clearly sets out the organisation's ownership and who has legal responsibility for what it does. Alliance members must also be able to demonstrate that they are able to take independent decisions as part of their alliance work, that are not subject to agreement by any third party or national body.

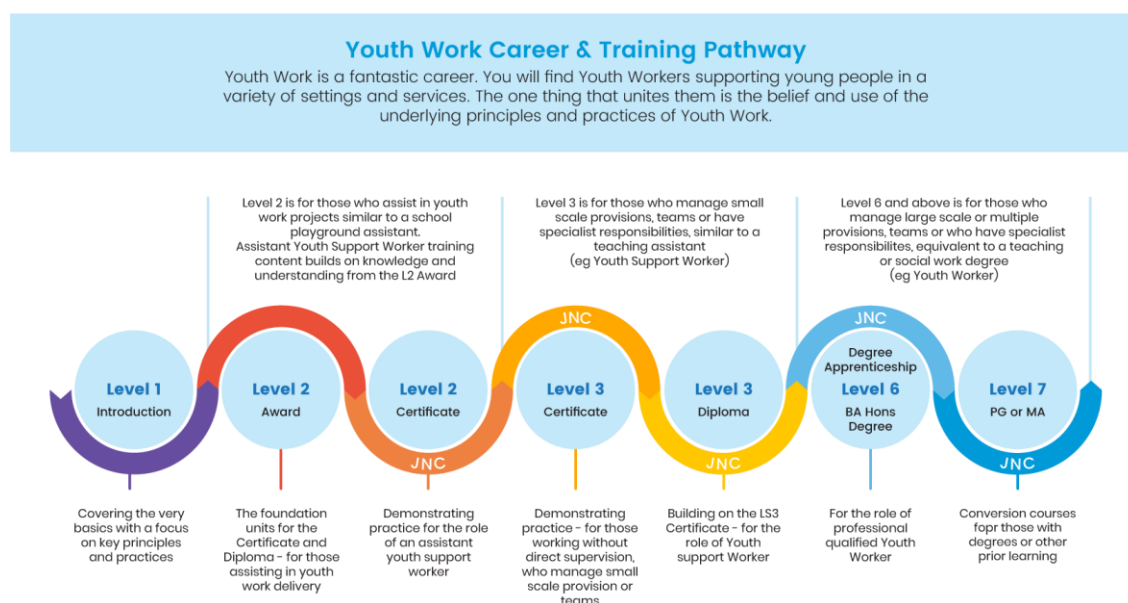
Alliance members must have all relevant policies in place, and these must be regularly reviewed and adopted by their controlling body. At a **minimum**, these must include policies for health and safety, safeguarding and equality, diversity and inclusion. All members must have insurance cover in place that is set at a sufficient level. This must include public liability insurance in all cases and employer’s liability insurance where appropriate.

Quality

All organisations joining the alliance must be wholeheartedly committed to the delivery of high-quality youth work and the provision of high-quality services for young people. This commitment should extend to an openness to continual improvement, the demonstration of impact and fitness for purpose, as well as the implementation of any quality standards that the alliance may develop or adopt.

Workforce

It is expected that alliance members will be proactive in the development of staff and volunteers and will help other alliance partners in the development of their workforce too where appropriate and advantageous.



Member organisations must have at least one qualified member of staff, (paid or volunteer), who is JNC qualified to level 3 or above. There is an expectation that all frontline youth work staff will be qualified to JNC level 3 or above over time and the alliance expects to support prospective members in the training and qualification of staff where needed.

All volunteers and staff in a youth work role should receive regular supervision from an experienced (and ideally qualified) line manager. Alliance member organisations that employ staff should pay at least the current living wage and aspire to pay youth work staff at JNC rates or an equivalent.

Participation

Organisations in the alliance should be expected to show that young people have meaningful involvement in decision-making at programme and strategic level and that processes and structures exist within the organisation to facilitate their participation. Where required, alliance members will help young people they are working with to be involved in the decision-making and strategic direction of the alliance.

Safeguarding

All alliance members are expected to be diligent and proactive in their approach to safeguarding. As well as having a satisfactory and comprehensive safeguarding policy in place, members will need to ensure that all staff and volunteers are trained in its application and aware of their responsibilities, including a trained and responsible safeguarding officer who is identified in the policy. Staff and volunteers must be familiar with all safeguarding procedures.

Members must have robust procedures for assessing and managing risk in all their activities.

Key attitudes and behaviours

The Youth Work Alliance expects its members to uphold a set of key behaviours and attitudes that reflect our collective ethos and enhance the effectiveness of our partnership. These behaviours and attitudes are fundamental to maintaining a collaborative, respectful, and impactful environment within the Alliance.

Commitment

We expect all members to commit fully to the work of the alliance. Members should anticipate contributing as well as receiving, and to compromise at times in the greater interest of the group. A lack of commitment will undermine the alliance's work, and members should be prepared to account for their levels of commitment.

Openness, Honesty, and Transparency

It is essential that all members feel confident that colleagues in the alliance are being open and honest with them. Opportunities should be shared, opinions expressed respectfully, and any interests clearly declared. Within the scope of these principles,

we value the open, honest input of a critical friend as part of our ongoing improvement. Members should strive for transparency in all aspects of their work within the alliance

Dependability

It is essential that members follow through on their commitments within the agreed timeframes. Attending alliance meetings and events, and being a reliable contributor to our shared work, is crucial. Successful collaboration depends on everyone doing their part and fulfilling the roles on which others are relying.

Empowerment, Encouragement, and Generous Leadership

Our goal is to meet the long-term needs of Wakefield's young people, which requires supporting each other's growth and development. There will be times when members may feel they are giving more than they are receiving, and this is part of a truly collaborative alliance. Sharing knowledge and resources with colleagues in need allows us to expect that our own needs will be recognised and supported when required. Generous leadership is essential, as we have chosen to succeed together rather than to compete individually.