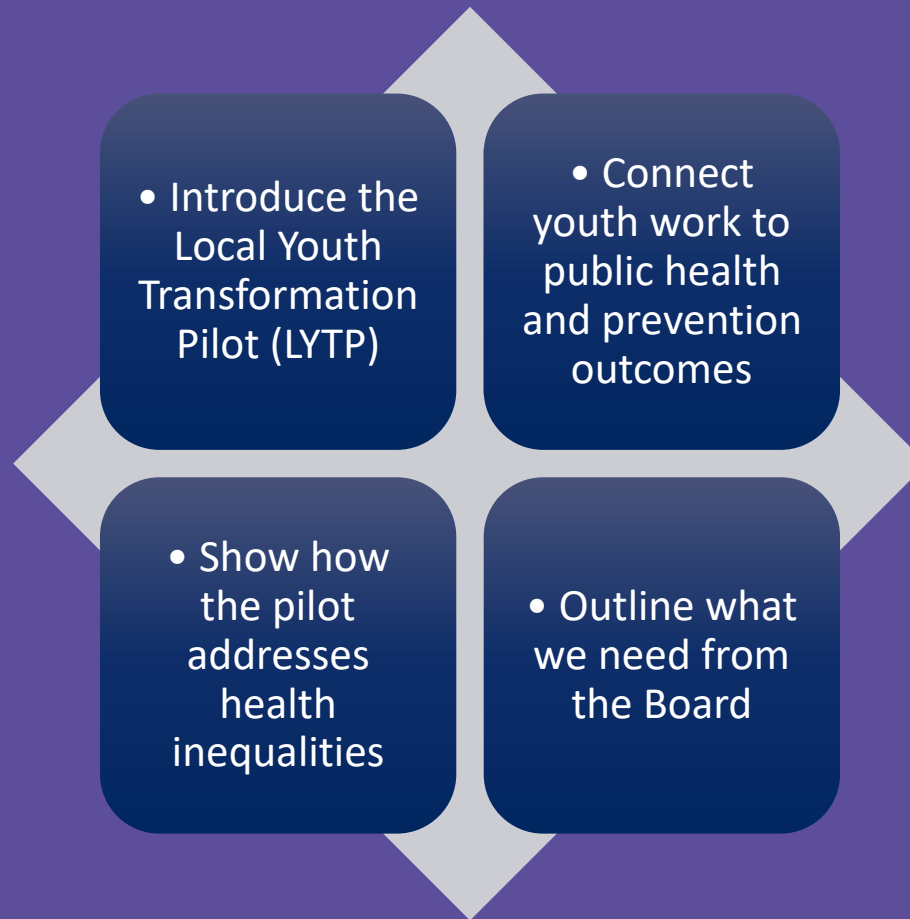


Youth Work as Prevention: Building a Healthy Future for Shropshire's Young People

Health and Wellbeing Board – November 2025
Helena Williams, Youth Support Team Manager

Purpose of this Item



Why This Matters for Health

- 98% reduction in youth funding since 2010 → fragmented system
- 71% of 11–18s say they don't leave home in their leisure time
- JSNA highlights youth mental health and isolation as top concerns
- The health of our youth system directly affects the health of our young people

The Local Youth Transformation Pilot

1 of 12 national pathfinders funded by DCMS

Focus: rebuild statutory youth offer and workforce capacity

Delivery: Sept 2025 – Aug 2026

7 Workstreams:

1. Culture Change
2. Youth Governance
3. Local Youth Partnerships
4. Infrastructure
5. Workforce Development
6. Youth Work in Schools
7. Programme Management

The Statutory Duty

- Section 507B, Education Act 1996:
- Local authorities must secure sufficient leisure-time activities and facilities for young people that promote wellbeing and personal/social development.
- LYTP reframes this as a health and prevention duty.

Statutory Duty → One Youth Offer → One Youth Offer Plan (The 'Golden Thread').

Addressing Inequalities

LYTP tackles four key inequalities:

- Geographic – access in rural and isolated area
- Socioeconomic – cost and opportunity barriers in deprived communities
- Health & wellbeing – early intervention for mental health and isolation
- Structural – youth voice and representation in system leadership

The New Youth Work Team Structure

Before:

- Detached-only model, unsustainable coverage, workforce loss
- Now:
- Full-time locality Youth & Community Workers
- Group work in schools and targeted youth hubs
- Contextual safeguarding and early help alignment
- Professional development and career pathways
- Outcome: Sustainable, skilled workforce delivering prevention at place.

Youth Voice: A Three-Tier Model

- 1. Local Youth Partnerships – young people shape decisions in their area
 - 2. Area Youth Assembly – shared priorities and peer leadership
 - 3. Strategic Youth Partnership – representation or input to system boards.
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- Youth voice runs through every layer of governance – shaping, not just informing, decisions.

The Role of the Health & Wellbeing Board

Asks of the Board:

- 1. Endorse youth work as a public health intervention
- 2. Nominate a Health representative for the Strategic Youth Partnership
- 3. Participate in the Culture Change workstream
- 4. Align LYTP evaluation with JSNA prevention indicators

Shared Outcomes

LYTP Workstreams → Health & Wellbeing Priorities:

- Youth Work in Schools → Mental health, early help
- Local Youth Partnerships → Reducing inequalities
- Workforce Development → Skilled prevention workforce
- Youth Governance → Youth voice in health system
- Infrastructure → System sustainability

Next Steps

Pilot delivery: Sept 2025 – Aug 2026

- Local Youth Partnerships tested in 2-3 areas
- Youth Democracy Worker recruitment underway
- Co-produced Youth Offer Plan due Summer 2026
- Evaluation: RSM / National Youth Agency

Closing Reflection

“If the system can hold youth work, youth work can hold young people.”

Embedding youth work in the prevention system strengthens every part of our shared ambition — healthier, safer, more connected communities.