



Executive Summary

I would like to start by thanking Didcot Town Council for their consistent support of Didcot TRAIN. And our approaches to supporting young people within the town and surrounding areas. Young people in Didcot, face a range of challenges, including youth-related crime, mental health and well-being concerns, and economic hardships. Like many communities, youth-related crime can pose safety concerns and affect their overall quality of life. Mental health issues are a pressing concern, with academic pressures and limited access to support services contributing to stress and anxiety. Additionally, economic challenges, such as the high cost of living and limited job opportunities, can create financial instability for young people and their families. These challenges underscore the need for robust community support systems, mental health resources, and initiatives to provide opportunities and guidance for young people in Didcot. This is where Didcot TRAIN can use their expertise to reduce these challenges with early interventions. And collaborative work within our network of professionals.

Youth work Update

Firstly, Didcot TRAIN have seen some changes to the team. Our long time and hard-working Chair of trustees Brian McNamee stepped down. Which has seen our also long time and hardworking, treasurer Nicole Guest step into the Chair role. Brian has been a great advocate for TRAIN and its services. He will continue to support TRAIN in his new ambassador role. With change in Chair this has required the need for new trustees, so far, we have added two new trustees. And likely to have another two joining shortly. These additions have strengthened the organisation greatly. Also, within the last few months, we have welcomed back Lisa Harold as Senior Youth worker. Lisa had previously worked with TRAIN whilst doing her youth work degree. She rejoins TRAIN bringing a wealth of experience and expertise.

Throughout the last year, we have worked tirelessly with young people and the local community to providing meaningful and impactful interventions. Ensuring the basis of this work is youth led, and young people feel ownership within Didcot TRAIN's offer. So how have we achieved this?

Schools/ Mentoring

Didcot TRAIN takes pride in it's positive relationships with the schools within its catchment area. And supports with our offer of group and 1:1 mentoring.

Both group mentoring and one-on-one mentoring offer invaluable benefits to young people in their personal and social growth. Group mentoring provides a supportive space where young individuals can connect with peers facing similar challenges. It encourages the exchange of diverse ideas, the development of teamwork skills, and the building of a network that can last well beyond the mentorship program. On the other hand, one-on-one mentoring offers tailored guidance and a focused mentor-mentee relationship. This personalized attention allows for in-depth discussions, targeted skill development, and the opportunity to receive advice specific to one's unique circumstances and goals. Both forms of mentoring provide young people with role models, skill enhancement, and a safe space for personal exploration, contributing significantly to their confidence, self-awareness, and overall development. This offer has been significant in supporting a diverse range of young people. And something the schools and parents do value. The offer to schools does not end there. We have been key in developing a project with the local council. To promote healthy relationships and raise awareness of violence against women. This has been a positive project and one we aim to share informational videos, that have been created by the young people we have engaged with at Aureus Secondary school. We have also played a key role in the delivery of mental health carousel days at Didcot Girls School. These have been an excellent opportunity to share impactful information with young people. To promote the supporting of their mental health and well-being



Youth work apprentice Yasmin supporting a mentoring young person on a team building day out.

Youth Club

Twice a week we offer youth club sessions for young people from 11-18years old. This is a popular provision of ours. With high numbers attending. The most seen on a youth club evening was 100, split across our older and younger sessions.

This open-access youth club offers a multitude of benefits that positively impact the lives of young individuals and their communities. By providing a safe and welcoming environment, it becomes a space where youths can gather and engage in constructive activities, thereby reducing instances of antisocial behaviour and substance misuse. The club serves as a haven for young people, fostering a sense of belonging and security while minimizing their exposure to risky situations. Through organized programs and interactions, positive relationships are cultivated between youths and supportive mentors or peers. These relationships empower young individuals, nurturing their personal growth, social skills, and emotional well-being. Ultimately, our open-access youth club contributes to the overall development of responsible, resilient, and connected young members of society.



Detached and Outreach

Didcot TRAIN roots go back to our first youth workers meeting young people through detached and outreach youth work. This is something we continue today.

Detached and outreach youth work offers unique advantages by meeting young people in their own environments. This approach builds trust and rapport by engaging with youths on their terms, whether in local parks, streets, or community spaces. It bridges gaps between young people and Didcot TRAIN youth workers, providing a non-intrusive platform for guidance and assistance. Through these interactions, detached and outreach youth work enables the identification of specific needs and concerns that might otherwise go unnoticed. This approach is particularly effective for reaching marginalized or disengaged youth. By meeting young people where they naturally congregate, detached and outreach youth work fosters authentic connections, empowering youths to access resources, develop life skills, and make positive choices in their lives. Didcot TRAIN staff are currently out within the local community on detached and outreach sessions at 9 hours week. With additional hours provided during school half terms and summer holidays.

Currently we have been using this style of work to engage those hanging around the Cornerstone building. These young people use this space regularly, detached has supported us in building a rapport. Which recently has seen them now attending youth club and other sessions/ activities. This can be a slow process, but once we have these relationships, we can see the benefits to the local community and young people.

School non term time trips and workshops

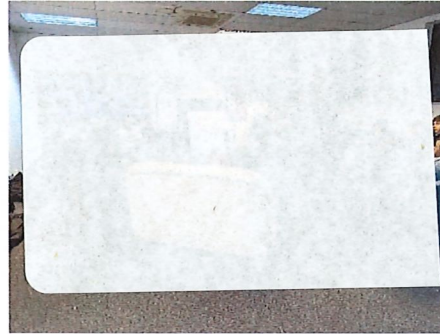
School holiday trips and workshops are crucial for young people as they provide a constructive and engaging way to spend their free time. These activities serve as diversionary tools by offering exciting opportunities for exploration, learning, and skill development during school holidays. They keep young minds occupied, reducing the chances of getting involved in negative or risky behaviours. Furthermore, these experiences expose youth to new ideas, cultures, and interests, broadening their horizons and fostering personal growth. Overall, school holiday trips and workshops not only offer a break from routine but also serve as powerful tools for keeping young people motivated, engaged, and on a positive life path. Examples of trips and workshops provided have been:

- Water park trips
- Crazy golf
- Bowling
- Trip to Oxford Castle
- Fire station visit
- Sport in local leisure centre
- CV workshops
- Smoothie and healthy living workshops

Group sessions (Dinner and debate/ Shout! LGBTQ+)



We have found that our Dinner and Debate/ Shout! group sessions offer distinct advantages by tailoring sessions to specific needs while utilizing strategic engagement methods. These sessions create a focused platform for addressing shared challenges or interests among young people, promoting a sense of belonging and shared identity. Through targeted discussions and activities, youths can exchange ideas, learn from one another's experiences, and develop vital social skills. Incorporating food into these sessions serves as a powerful incentive, as it creates a relaxed and inclusive atmosphere that encourages participation. Sharing a meal breaks down barriers and fosters a comfortable space for open dialogue, enabling young individuals to express themselves more freely. This is why we find our relationship with our local Greggs to be vital to this process. As they provide us with the warm food for those young people to eat, up to 3 times a week. This approach not only promotes engagement but also nurtures a supportive and informal educational environment where lasting friendships can flourish, ultimately enhancing the personal growth and well-being of participating youths.



Our Shout! youth work sessions provide crucial support and empowerment for LGBTQ+ young people. By focusing on their unique needs and experiences, these sessions create a safe and affirming space where participants can openly discuss challenges, share stories, and find solidarity among peers who understand their journey. Engaging young LGBTQ+ individuals in this way fosters a sense of belonging, helping them navigate issues such as identity, acceptance, and mental health. Through tailored activities and discussions, these sessions build self-confidence, interpersonal skills, and a stronger sense of self. Additionally, they can serve as a gateway to community resources, mentorship, and advocacy opportunities, empowering LGBTQ+ youths to thrive in a supportive environment that recognizes and celebrates their identities.

Participation Pathway and Base Council

Our youth participation work plays a pivotal role in both empowering young people and strengthening their links with the local community. By actively involving young individuals in decision-making processes, community initiatives, and social projects, it not only gives them a voice but also fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for their surroundings. This engagement provides opportunities for personal growth, skill development, and civic education, equipping young people with the tools they need to become responsible and active citizens. At the same time, it brings together fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and energy into community development efforts, ensuring that programs are more inclusive and responsive to the needs of all residents, ultimately fostering a stronger and more vibrant local community. Ways in which we have already supported the local community are:

- Inter generation activities such as, organised bingo and games afternoons at a local care home.
- Providing lunches for young people in post16 supported living.
- Providing drinks at a local community centre open event.
- Organised fundraising quiz night in the Berro Lounge
- Read stories with younger young people at the local library.

Participation work has been important work for Didcot TRAIN for a number of years. And it's importance of providing a youth voice especially. With that in mind Didcot TRAIN now has a youth

TRAIN Chairman: Nicole Guest Registered Charity No. 1176258

t: 07458306358 e: info@didcottrain.org.uk www.didcottrain.org.uk

council, that we call the “Base Council” named after our youth space. The Base council is a dedicated group of young people who collaborate with their peers and youth workers to represent the voices and interests of our young people. This engagement offers several benefits to the charity, including gaining valuable insights into the needs and aspirations of the young people, ensuring the programs/ interventions are relevant and effective. Additionally, the council can contribute fresh ideas and perspectives, infusing creativity and innovation into the charity's projects. Furthermore, involving young people in decision-making processes is fostering leadership skills, empowering them to become active contributors to their community and the charity's mission. Ultimately, the Base council strengthens the charity's impact and inclusivity, creating a more dynamic and responsive organisation. This has now been in action for several months and is also providing young people a better understand of the work that goes on in the background, even at trustee level.

Explore More

At the beginning of September 2022, we embarked on our first Explore More programme since 2019. This amazing experience saw 7 young people travelling to Querubi. Querubi is an active Olive farm, that also doubles as an outward bound’s residential venue. Explore More is an extraordinary and inspirational week-long, which thanks to the support and generosity of philanthropist Willem Van Voort. Willem provides the flights, accommodation and food. So that TRAIN can take a group of young people who on this intensive personal development programme. The programme started in the summer to begin preparing 8 young people for the trip of a lifetime. This amazing experience would consist of hiking mountains, farm work, high diving, coast steering, abseiling and canyoning. With such physical and mentally exhausting challenges it was important to prepare young people and staff for this experience. During the summer the young people attended 2 Saturdays of walking across the Ridgeway (9miles) and Didcot to Wittenham Clumps and back. Swimming lessons, that the costs were covered by Emma Freeman and the Get Active team with SODC. These lessons were hosted and led by the staff at Didcot Wave and gave young people the skills and confidence for open water swimming. We also worked with the Fitness and Wellbeing hub, who provided the space and personal trainers to improve the young people’s physical fitness. And a day trip to Youlbury Scout centre, to help young people get use to heights on the Jacobs ladder. This trip also consisted of team building activities such as night rope, orienteering etc. 7 out of the originally selected 8 completed the activities. Meaning sadly, one was unable to travel, due not being prepared and having lots of issues at home making them very distracted and unable to go. With these activities complete it was onto France and the group took an early morning flight from Birmingham to Perpignan. Whilst in France the young people became involved with the running of the olive farm, doing activities such stone picking, manure spreading etc. These activities provided an opportunity of grounding young people and having important conversations around their aspirations, worries and plans when they get back to normal life. Along with these important conversations were the opportunities to push themselves and overcome fears, as the afternoons consisted of physical challenges. All that lead towards the completion of an overnight stay on a mountain with a hike to the summit. 6 out of the 7 that travelled to France made the peak. All the



The above photo is from the summit of the mountain. This is our young people and Matteo the Querubi outward bounds lead.

TRAIN Chairman: Nicole Guest Registered Charity No. 1176258

t: 07458306358 e: info@didcottrain.org.uk www.didcottrain.org.uk

young people had a great sense of achievement. We would like to thank Willem and his team at Querubi for providing this amazing opportunity. Willem's generosity has made a massive difference to the lives of our young people.

Performance indicators

Throughout the year, Didcot TRAIN measure all these important interventions against key impact indicators. Below, you can see the data demonstrating all this positive work in the last year.

Targets	
No. of young people engaged	857
No. of improved mental health interaction	1892
No. of interactions that substance misuse has been reduced	1693
No. of interaction that have improved confidence	2302
No. of interactions that anti-social behaviour has been reduced	1459
No. of young people supported with Group/ 1:1 mentoring	157

Using these numbers, we have been able to work out the average number of times our performance indicators have been achieved per young person.

Target	Average number of times this target has been achieved per young person.
Improved Mental Health	2.2
Reduced Substance Misuse	2
Improved Confidence	2.7
Reduced ASB	1.7

Next Steps

Over the summer Didcot TRAIN has extended its reach, by replicating our detached and outreach offer to the neighbouring town of Wallingford. And we plan to add our mentoring services there shortly too. There has been an ask for several years from the community in Wallingford. And we feel with the stable structure of a base for TRAIN and proven interventions. We can successful make that step forward.

Case studies

1:1 CASE STUDY- YP X

Didcot TRAIN received a referral for a young person named X who presented themselves as having little social skills, impulsive behaviour, and low confidence. It was suggested by a parent that X may have autism and is waiting on a referral for X to be diagnosed. A time to meet was agreed.

Initial meeting:

During the initial meeting, X come across as anxious, breathing heavily in between sentences and fidgeting. X begun to feel more comfortable as the conversation developed and it was agreed that the plan going forward will be to provide X with support around combatting their impulsive behaviours.

1:1s

Initially the conversation in the 1:1s begun with talking about 4 segments of Xs life – social, home, school, personal. These were explored to identify where the problems of impulsive and dysregulated behaviour may occur more frequently.

X engaged well from the beginning and was always eager to both ask and answer questions about their behaviours and why they may do something, or why they may feel something.

As the sessions become more intense, speaking openly about Xs problems at home and socially, the work begun to be more directed at Xs actions. This was to enable X time to reflect, and to also allow space for X to correct themselves and challenge their own behaviours.

X begun to make progress coming into week 3 and made the claim that they had stopped shoplifting since having it explained to them that the small, local shops are owned by families. X was able to understand that the families will have people to look after and can see why stealing from them can be detrimental. This showed X had developed their ability to self-reflect.

The work being done with X was visual and tangible. It was discovered that X responds very well to things they can see and feel. On one occasion, X was presented with balancing scales and some objects to place into them. One bowl on the scales would represent positive, the other bowl would represent negative. X was asked to explain their week, and when they shared a story, they were asked to put an item into the bowl to recognise whether their story was positive or negative. X did this and once they had explained their week, they were able to identify that their week had been more positive, and better than they had initially thought.

X has developed well with their ability to think before they act and has mentioned how they have been able to articulate to children's parents at the Skate Park that their child is annoying them, as opposed to just lashing out and starting a fight with the young person. Towards the end of sessions, leading into week 5, X had become a little more comfortable when engaging with staff.

On one occasion X had spoken about how the night before they had grabbed their belt with the intention of harming themselves but was able to think and hand the belt over to a parent. This was received with further news that X had recently put a knife to their sibling's throat. In response to this, it was explored what could have been done to prevent that incident from happening. It was identified that at some point in the day, X had been aggravated and did nothing to fix this. It is likely that this earlier problem could have influenced the later annoyances. With this, X was aware that challenging frustrations when they arise, can and does prevent them from escalating.

attending SHOUT! from the very beginning, engaging, contributing, and thriving every week. Their confidence has grown immensely from a young person who was frightened to say who they truly are, to a young woman who is dressing how she wants, saying who she is and standing up for what she believes in. She finds SHOUT! not only a supportive, friendly group network, where she is able to explore her worries and stresses, gender expression, questions, and passions but a place that she “deserves” and belongs in. From the support of the group, she now goes to school wearing a skirt, has ‘come out’ to all her family and goes by the name she has chosen for herself.

LGBT+ youth groups like SHOUT! are a vital part of our communities. While the experiences of LGBT+ young people in Britain have improved significantly in recent years, youth groups continue to provide a lifeline for those who cannot access the support, understanding or information that they need at home or at school. For many, an LGBT+ youth group will be the first place they truly feel that they can be themselves. That in itself is no small achievement. Young person S should be extremely proud of themselves with how far they have come to be their true self.

Testimonies

Below is testimony from young people attending Shout!

“I started coming to SHOUT so I had a safe space to feel welcomed and express myself with people that understand. I like SHOUT because I have many friends there and I can be myself, everyone is really loving, and it allows me to be myself. I think it's important so other individuals like me can express themselves and that's why SHOUT is amazing”.

Parent Testimony of young person who attended group mentoring.

*“ ***** really enjoyed her time with TRAIN. Her self-esteem has improved, and she is happier and more confident. Making new friends and now looking forward to going to the girl's school. Whereas before she was really worried.”*