



AN INTRODUCTION TO
ON-SIDE YOUTH ZONES





INVESTING IN **YOUNG PEOPLE**

A SOCIAL CRISIS

It is apparent that where you are born can still determine where you get to. Despite attempts by successive governments, the social divide is widening. Young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods are still more likely to get worse grades, earn less, and live shorter lives. This waste of young people's potential is having serious and lasting consequences, both for the individuals themselves and for local communities, as is apparent from increasing levels of youth violence and levels of mental health issues amongst teenagers.

Unless something is done to broaden the aspirations and opportunities for these young people, there is a real danger that they will become a 'lost generation', ill-equipped for the demands of the modern workplace, with many trapped into negative and often dangerous life choices.



ONSIDE: A NATIONAL NETWORK

OnSide exists to provide all young people, and particularly those living in poverty, with an equal opportunity to build their confidence and develop their passions and interests, enabling them to positively transition to adulthood and live fulfilling lives.

OnSide is giving young people safe, affordable and inspiring places to spend time away from home and school. We do this through our network of 21st century, sustainable youth provision, known as Youth Zones.

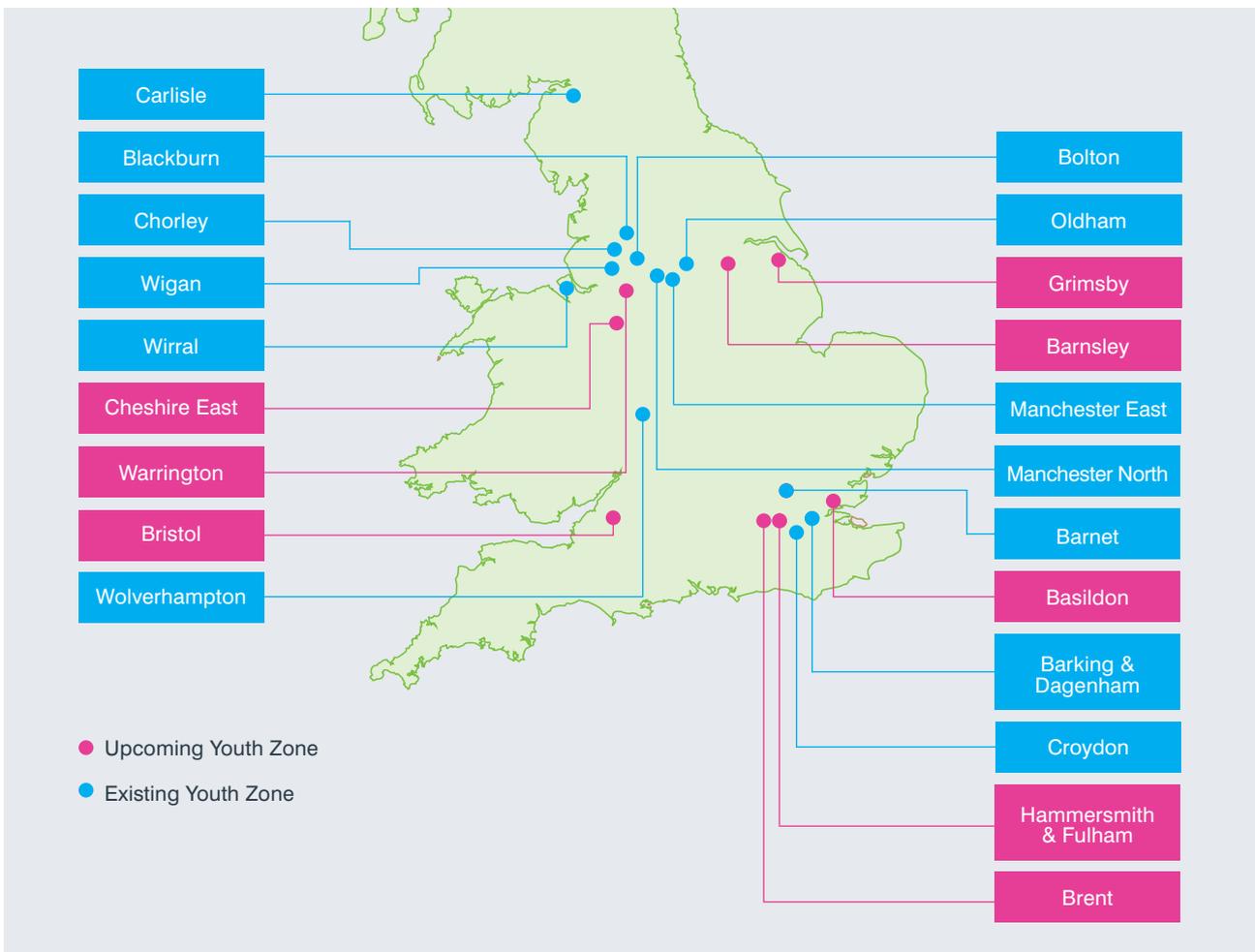
Over 50,000 young people from some of the country's most disadvantaged communities visit OnSide's open Youth Zones across the country.

With the impact of Youth Zones established, from reductions in anti-social behaviour of up to 77% and 91% of local businesses feeling a Youth Zone has improved the local environment, we are extending the network with 8 new sites currently in development.

“

The thing that makes Mahdlo (Oldham's Youth Zone) stand out for me isn't actually that it's a youth centre, rather it's a centre for young people. It covers their emotional wellbeing, their social wellbeing; it gives them confidence, it raises their ambition, it gives them support and it brings together the wider community.”

Jim McMahon MP,
former Leader of Oldham Borough Council.



WHAT IS A YOUTH ZONE?

All Youth Zones are independent, local charities, set up exclusively for the benefit of young people. They provide state-of-the-art facilities for those aged 8 – 19 (or up to 25 for those with additional needs), 7 days a week, throughout the year, for 50p entry and £5 annual membership.

Well over 4,000 young people become members of each Youth Zone in the first year, with 150-250 attending every night. Located in prominent, accessible and neutral locations, each Youth Zone is easily reached from some of the country's most disadvantaged communities.

Youth Zones provide social, sporting and artistic spaces, including a 3G all weather pitch, large sports hall, climbing wall, dance studio, music and multimedia suites, employability and enterprise rooms and a large recreation area and café. And the building is just the start:



- **Youth Zone are “Always There for Young People”.**

Open 7 days a week, we will run at least 20 sports and arts activities every day – always supported by trained staff.

- **Youth Zones are proven to prepare young people for the future.** 85% of Youth Zone members say their Youth Zone helps them prepare them for the future, and 72% report better marks in class. Youth Zones also deliver the National Citizen Service and OnSide's national 'Get A Job' employability programme through which 84% of participants find work, training or education.



- **The Youth Zone will be a hub for community cohesion, through which other youth services can deliver their work.**

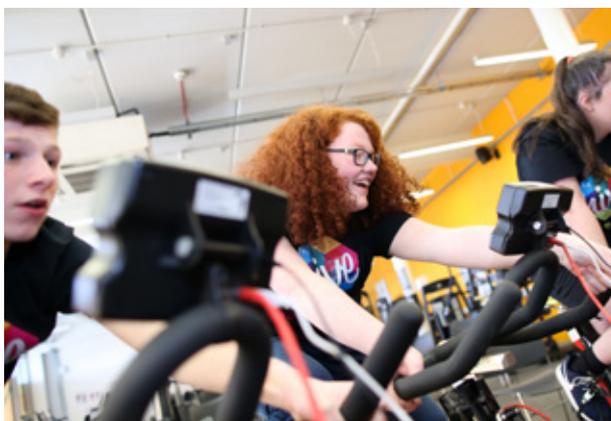
Youth Zones break down societal barriers. Partnership with local clubs and services, including the police, help other organisations achieve greater impact.

- **The Youth Zone will provide positive outlets for young people to channel their energy.**

An independent study of existing Youth Zones by Amion Consulting found anti-social behaviour around the Youth Zones reduces by between 30 and 77%.

- **The Youth Zone will benefit young people's physical and emotional wellbeing.**

Amion's research into how Youth Zones impact young people's physical and emotional wellbeing found significant benefits, with emotional intelligence and resilience increasing by 26% over the 12-month period of the study. 89% of young people say they are more confident since joining the Youth Zone, and 90% say they get on better with people.





HOW ARE THEY ESTABLISHED?

Working with local authorities, communities and businesses, OnSide puts in place the five key foundations for a sustainable and effective youth organisation:

1. Owned by local young people and the community

– young people are involved at every stage of a Youth Zone's development, including designing the brand, informing the design & layout, and recruiting the staff. Local community organisations become partners, working alongside the Youth Zone's staff and volunteers to deliver to young people. The Youth Zone becomes a true community asset as a result.

2. Run by staff and volunteers with the right values

– recruitment of each Youth Zone's 50 staff and 100 volunteers is values-driven, seeking out individuals who are ambitious for and respect young people, and who embrace the scale and impact that a Youth Zone can have on a community.

3. Strong core leadership – A new trustee board is established to lead each Youth Zone, made up of leading local figures from the business, community and public sectors. This provides a unique mix of business focus, sound financial planning, local knowledge and partnerships to each Youth Zone.



4. A professional operating model – the business focus is seen in how each Youth Zone operates. From a focus on monitoring & evaluation, the use of best-in-class membership databases and financial systems, to the training of staff and volunteers in a network-wide Talent Academy, all Youth Zones benefit from a professional, road-tested operating model, which frees staff and volunteers to focus on supporting all young people who enter through the doors.

5. Sustainable core funding – and finally, Youth Zones' unique funding model, providing a sustainable base on which to deliver this scale of activities and support for young people, as described below.



HOW ARE THEY FUNDED?

In the face of increasing financial pressures faced by local authorities, the creation of a Youth Zone offers a viable, alternative way to deliver high-quality universal services for young people. Each Youth Zone is typically funded through a partnership between:

1. OnSide, which commits to raising £4.35m one-off capital investment and £900k p.a. revenue funding for 3 years, predominantly from private donors including local and national businesses, philanthropists, charitable foundations and other organisations.

2. The local authority, which contributes the remaining £4.35m one-off capital¹ and £400k p.a. revenue for the first 3 years, as well as granting a long-term lease at peppercorn rent for the land for the Youth Zone.

This shared initial responsibility ensures that each Youth Zone starts from a sound financial footing and can concentrate solely on its offer to young people.

¹A Youth Zone formally approved by autumn 2022 will cost £8.7m to build, depending on where it is in the country. With inflation, capital costs anticipated for projects formally approved in subsequent years are: £9m - 2023; £9.3m - 2024. We always ask the local authority to contribute 50% of the capital costs and OnSide will fundraise the remaining capital amount required.



YOUTH ZONE SITES:

OnSide Youth Zones provide flagship facilities for young people in prominent positions in the heart of town and city centres. They are landmark buildings which make strong visual statements and are finished to a high internal specification, with the best equipment, and a clear focus on the quality of the environment and facilities.

A significant feature in the success of Youth Zones is their carefully chosen location with three key criteria considered:

- **Accessibility** – close to areas of deprivation and easily accessed by young people on foot, bike or by public transport
- **Prominence** – a prominent site not only increases attendance because everyone knows where and what the Youth Zone is, but also makes an important statement to young people, letting them know they are valued and that a significant investment has been made for their benefit

- **Neutrality** – we avoid locations with territory issues or considered as ‘someone’s patch’ as this would make the Youth Zone very popular to those living in the locality but completely inaccessible to others

Town centre locations or in cities with distinct townships, high street or other central sites are often the best choice and provide an immediate benefit in areas with fading high streets or retail areas, where anti-social behaviour and young people gathering is causing issues: footfall increases, youth crime reduces, and, local businesses report increased feelings of community safety and pride in their environment.

In short, the search is for available, safe and affordable sites which will, with the right design, construction, facilities and staff, support the participation of the largest possible number of young people, especially those living in poverty and/or experiencing disadvantage.

New Youth Zones are currently being developed in across Yorkshire and Humberside, London and in our first ‘seaside’ city.

IMPACT OF YOUTH ZONES:

In addition to the universal, open access sessions delivered by every Youth Zone, each facility also delivers bespoke projects targeted to meet the needs and priorities of young people in the local community. For example, tackling knife crime, self-harm, substance misuse and/or teenage pregnancy, plus many more.

From our experience of the 14 Youth Zones operating across the network, OnSide can confidently predict the following outcomes for young people and communities:



Analysis by Amion Consulting, Economic, social and regeneration specialists, have conducted assessment of the social impact generated by the Youth Zones, using the Housing Associations Charitable Trust (HACT) social value methodology. Results show, on average, £2.03 of social value generated for every £1 spent on running a Youth Zone.

To hear more about these new, life-changing facilities for young people, please contact:

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