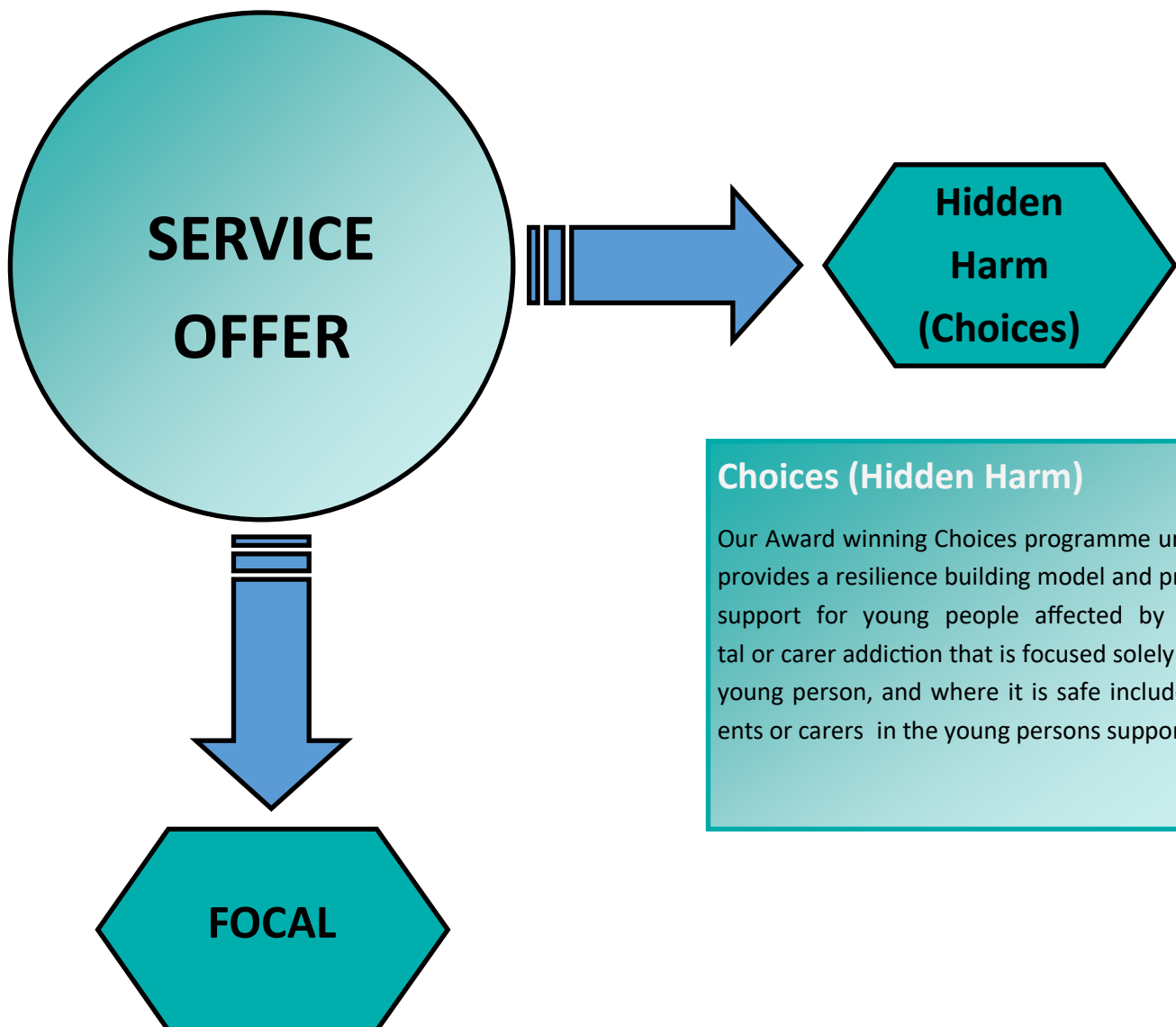




## Aquarius Young People's Substance Misuse Service



### Choices (Hidden Harm)

Our Award winning Choices programme uniquely provides a resilience building model and practical support for young people affected by parental or carer addiction that is focused solely on the young person, and where it is safe includes parents or carers in the young persons support plan.

### Birmingham Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service (Focal/Core service)

Working closely with our partnerships this enables mental health, child exploitation, youth homelessness screening and support to be provided to all young people we work with alongside substance misuse support. Additional funding from OHID has allowed us to invest in more staff, enabling us to provide enhanced criminal justice & mental health support and build on networks for young people. Through OHID we are now able to deliver additional targeted outreach and group work to reach more young people and engage them into treatment. Through OHID we are now able to extend our young peoples support programme to young people aged 18 –25, ensuring they can access age appropriate support and a smooth transition into adult treatment if required.



## Aquarius Young People's Substance Misuse Service

- From the point of access into treatment a menu of provision, support and aftercare is provided to the young person, and they can access this support at any point throughout their treatment. For example, this may be to access support from mental health provisions or to access specialist advice regarding exploitation or homelessness.
- Our team work with a systems approach. Putting the child first means for us, offering flexible hours to accommodate the young person, also changing the way we approach work with individual young people, to accommodate their learning styles i.e. Incorporating Play therapy, accommodating Kinaesthetic learning styles, at referral acknowledging any additional learning need.
- If a young person disengages or does not engage immediately upon referral, time is given to seek further support and guidance this can entail seeking assistance from partnership organisations including statutory services. We work hard to encourage engagement and cases in our team remain open to us to accommodate this.
- If a young person is referred into our service and is deemed high risk, a member of the team will contact the young person within 24 hours of receiving the referral and discuss an appropriate package of support immediately.

At the point of referral our team source the best way to engage young people this could be :

At point of engagement  
meeting the YP with  
someone they are com-  
fortable with present i.e.:

A friend or sibling  
A trusted Adult

Accommodating joint  
engagement visits : A  
young person is more  
likely to engage if they  
visually see who they  
are been referred to

Meeting the young  
person in a setting they  
feel comfortable in.

Note : Interventions  
will only take place in a  
confidential setting



## Aquarius Young People's Substance Misuse Service

- We have seen an increase in referrals for Nitrous Oxide. As a service we believe this may be due to a raised profile of Nitrous Oxide in the local and national media, and better knowledge and awareness of Nitrous Oxide from professionals making the referrals : i.e., they know what to look out for.
- As a service we made a conscious effort to accept referrals for Vaping. This is due to referrers not knowing what Young People are vaping— there is always the possibility of young people vaping THC. Additionally we know from experience and data that at the point of referral young people often only disclose 1 substance and during treatment young people further disclose multiple drug use. We are unable to refer to smoking cessation as vapes are provided as an alternative to smoking, so our focus is given to addiction awareness & total cessation is sought.
- We saw a peak in referrals for Alcohol use after the lockdown restrictions had been lifted and referrals for alcohol continue to be higher than in 2018. We have also seen a rise in cocaine use in young people and cocaine use is still often associated with poly drug use—Alcohol & Cocaine use. As a service we recognise the dangers to vital organs—Coca ethylene is produced and we will continue to raise the profile of this danger.

An increase from 1.9%  
(2018- 19)  
to 8.1% ( 2022-23)  
In referrals for Nitrous  
Oxide

An increase from  
0 (2018– 19)  
to 77 ( 2022-23)  
In referrals for Vaping

An increase from  
1.6% (2018– 19)  
to 4.3% ( 2022-23)  
In referrals for Cocaine

We received 309 referrals for cannabis in 2022-23 , interventions with young people often result in poly drug use disclosure.

33.5% (174 young people) Disclosed Multiple Drug Use ( more than 3 other substances ) in treatment last year.



## Aquarius Young People's Substance Misuse Service

Measure— YPOR - Young Peoples Outcomes	Definition	Number	%
Number of service users who have reduced their drug/alcohol use after 12 Weeks in Treatment	the number reporting a reduction their on their Review YPOR	121	64 %
Number of service users who have reduced their drug/alcohol use upon Successful Exit from Service	the number reporting a reduction on their Exit YPOR	64	58 %
Number of service users reporting abstinence from drug/alcohol use upon Successful Exit from Service	the number reporting abstinence on their Exit YPOR	21	19 %

In treatment a young persons outcome are measured using Outcomes Stars ( Internal evaluation systems ) and using YPORS— External National Young Peoples Outcomes Recording System .

We measure a young persons progress at assessment, 3 monthly intervals ( More frequent if significant change has occurred )and at exit.

Because we are client led, we aim for significant change behaviour and know that a young person does not always seek abstinence.

We know by using the Treatment Outcomes Stars , which looks holistically at all contributing factors that may feed substance use, that significant changes in behaviour will result in reduced substance use or abstinence.

Measure — Treatment Outcomes Star.	Definition	Number	%
Alcohol - Positive change or Stabilised	number reporting stabilisation or positive change on their latest Outcome Star	123	79
Drugs - Positive or Stabilised number reporting stabilisation on their latest Outcome Star	number reporting and an increase or stabilisation on their latest Outcome Star	131	86
Emotional Health - Positive or Stabilised	number reporting and an increase or stabilisation on their latest Outcome Star	127	85



## Service Provider Specialisms

In 2022—2023 155 young people in service disclosed they were affected by family members substance use.

For Young people who present to our service as affected others, the parental substance use of choice is often Alcohol use followed by Opiate use. We continue to use our award winning Choices model when working with children and young people impacted by parental substance use.

Young people who use substances are often exposed to intergenerational substance use. Our staff are able to uniquely combine the choices programme with motivational interviewing, harm reduction and Drug awareness to delicately acknowledge family behaviour patterns and support in breaking the cycle of a young persons substance use.

In addition our Staff are training with MPACT to compliment our existing 5 step model which works holistically to support the whole family unit.

In 2022 –23 34 young people disclosed they were impacted by CCE - Child Criminal Exploitation , 111 that they were involved in crime, and 20 young people disclosed gang activity

We have an integrated pathway of support with Birmingham Youth Offending teams (YOS) across Birmingham. We support the VRU and are part of the AP Taskforce. We are part of the EMPOWERU hub exploitation daily briefings and have referral pathways for exploitation with The Children's Society & Red thread.

Our staff attend regular CCE—Child Criminal Exploitation & CSE—Child Sexual Exploitation training refreshers and are trained to screen & refer for CCE & CSE. Our team are able to deliver low level Child Exploitation interventions with consultancy from our integral service offer- Barnardo's Exploitation Worker. We stay connected in local and national Exploitation working groups and provided some consultancy for the Children's society—gender bias and exploitation report.

In 2022– 23 , 140 young people in service reported they had a mental health need.

83 young people at referral reported a mental health need

We have an integrated pathway of support in service with FTB Substance Misuse.

Our staff are able to access mental health resources and consultancy through both our Richmond Fellowship and Forward Thinking Birmingham partnerships .This consultancy alongside our fundamental methodology of CBT, Motivational Interviewing and behaviour change theory allows our staff to support with a young persons low level mental health need and their journey into accessing mental health Treatment providers if needed. We are currently working in partnership with Manchester Met University and supporting with compiling research into their mental health and substance misuse report & findings will assist with piloting mental health resources that can be used in service with our staff.



## Integrated Service Offer

### PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

Partnerships continue to be ground-breaking, not only for our organization but also for our partners, and for encouraging skill-sharing and joined-up working across Birmingham and beyond. We continue to pride ourselves on having integrated service offers as listed below, and also a wide local network of Aquarius added value projects and Partnered projects.

Additionally we are part of the national Recovery Focus Network, and we can draw upon this network for expert Mental health, Domestic Abuse and Gambling advice and services.

#### **Barnardo's**

We work closely with Barnardo's. The Young people who access our Substance misuse and Barnardo's exploitation services have direct 1-2-1 support & Consultancy from a specialist worker who specialises in both substance misuse and exploitation.

#### **St Basil**

Building on our existing partnership working with St Basils. We work with team leaders across St Basils to ensure our referral pathways are still accessible to young people in St Basils properties and when they are referred into homelessness direct access services and need our support. We are additionally working within formal partnerships on the Transitions Hub Integrated Offer.

#### **Forward Thinking Birmingham**

Our staff immediately screen young people for mental health needs and FTB services are discussed if suitable. FTB also provides monthly consultancy sessions to our team and hold regular skill shares and further mental health learning to our staff. When a young person needs mental health support, to aid engagement into mental health services the FTB team are invited to get involved with outreach and joint visits with our staff

#### **Youth Offending Team**

young people accessing criminal justice are screened for substance misuse support and if identified a referral is made into our services, our team attend ODOC and triage meetings to discuss new referrals and the wider support needs of young people entering the criminal justice route. We work with YOS officers to ensure the substance misuse services we provide compliments criminal justice interventions.





## Added Value

### THE GROW PROJECT

The Grow project is led by young people who are affected by substance misuse whether their own substance use or a relative's. The project utilizes the garden space at Bristol Road to enable young people to develop life skills and is a welcome addition to our main service. The sessions have provided outdoor activities, healthy eating, building, and upcycling materials to a substantial number and broad spectrum of young people.

### AQUARIUS CARES PROJECT

This project includes our award winning 12 session choices programme, these resilience building sessions and targeted group sessions are available to Children & Young People in care, care leavers up to 25, the wider family of children and young people and young people residing with kinship carers, who are affected and impacted through parental substance misuse.

### PATHFINDERS & ALTERNATIVE PROVISION TASKFORCE

We are successfully part of the pathfinder project which works in over 40 schools in Birmingham & the COBS—(City of Birmingham Schools ) Alternative Provision ( AP ) Taskforce project. Specialist substance misuse workers from our Aquarius team work as part of multidisciplinary teams including the children's trust, school staff, mental health workers & mentors, in the AP Taskforce ( Funded through the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit ) & Pathfinders ( BCT Funded ) supporting families and pupils to improve lifestyle and attendance at school. Our staff members provide substance misuse consultancy to the team and deliver addiction / drug awareness services to family support workers & school staff, whilst also continuing to provide 1-2-1 substance misuse and affected others support to young people and family members and refer into the wider young people's team when needed.

### TRANSITIONS HUB

Our specialist substance use worker remains in post at the St Basils transition's hub linking in with the wider transitions team. The Aquarius practitioner is providing intensive and consistent support to young people using substances based under transitions. Most recently this has included supporting YP accessing food banks, urgent medical treatments. Supporting YP into accessing recovery services and housing, facilitating access to mutual aid meetings (AA/ NA). We are utilizing a similar package of care across the wider transitions team.



## Added Value

### EVOLVE—SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Evolve is our social enterprise (Café, Events Space and catering Offer) which enables and equips some of the most disadvantaged young people with the opportunities and skills to succeed in employment. In Digbeth you can find Evolve @ The Adam and Eve, this facility is staffed by young people who have been affected by issues including mental ill health, substance misuse/addiction, family breakdown, homelessness, offending and NEET. Young people who would struggle to thrive in a regular workplace receive paid and volunteer tailored employment opportunities and training in a supportive environment. Specialist 1-2-1 support ensures they are accessing all the services they need. After placement our young people move on to Education, Employment or Training. Outside operating hours our Evolve café is utilised by our Young Peoples team and becomes a safe additional space for our young people to engage in group work and events facilitated by us.

### AQUARIUS CONSULTANCY & TRAINING

Our team provide substance misuse related training sessions to professionals we partner with. In the last year we have delivered sessions to the Children's trust, Family Support, social workers, GP Surgeries, Homelessness prevention services and school staff who are partnered with us through COBS & Pathfinders. In addition to delivering training our staff have access to training and consultancy internally from our Richmond Fellowship services covering, Domestic Abuse & Mental Health.

### AQUARIUS & GAMCARE

Aquarius & Gam care provides Gambling Support Services throughout the West Midlands, In addition Aquarius is part of the English Gambling Hub—Partnership consortium Delivery with Gam care as the lead to prevent and reduce gambling harms among young people through early intervention and prevention and to bring all gambling education and prevention services for young people in England together as a network.

Aquarius also deliver the Young Persons' Gambling Harms Prevention Programme (YPGHPP) to professionals across the West Midlands.





## Aquarius Young People's Substance Misuse Service

### WIDER PATHWAYS

- Over the years we have maintained a presence with schools, colleges and alternative education provisions throughout Birmingham. Our team continue to attend a large proportion of our 1-2-1 appointments in an education setting, working closely with the pastoral teams.
- BCT— A large proportion of our referrals are received from Birmingham Children's trust, we are well established in safeguarding, locality and family support BCT teams across Birmingham.
- We have successfully continued to embed our services with other Young peoples provisions including, Umbrella, the Princes Trust, BCC & Charity Youth Clubs, Grass roots projects and community initiatives providing opportunities for engagement with young people who may not engage through mainstream referral routes.
- Our Staff recognize that a good way to engage young people is to connect with a young person's existing professional pathways. We are adaptable in our approach and welcome outreach and In reach joint working opportunities to engage young people.

## Hearing our Young People

Our steering group - Aquarius Stars has grown in strength & numbers

Meetings take place fortnightly where members attend meetings which are staffed by our Youth Participation workers & volunteers. They have attended consistently since the group was re-established post lockdown.

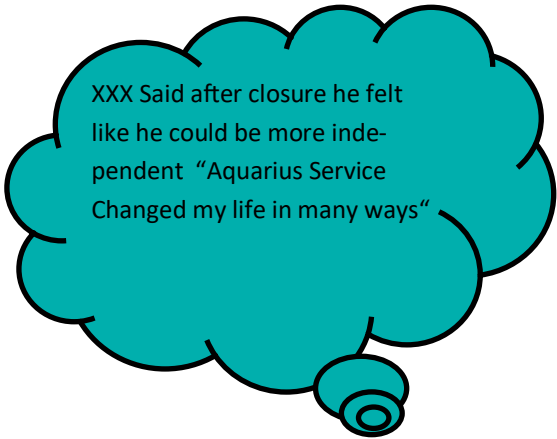
Aquarius provisions and wider substance misuse services are discussed, and these discussions are taken to the team, and wider senior management team.

Stars members have made some positive suggestions around our provisions as they sit on interview panels when we recruit staff, and recently were apart of the panel that distributed funds for activities to young people accessing our services through the Barclays awards fund. Members who have joined are committed and willing to engage and share their ideas and experiences of Substance misuse provisions, both internally and have grown in confidence to represent our service at external provider conferences and panels.


Young people who are ready to move on from the steering group have the option to volunteer with us or undertake the OCN Qualification in peer mentoring and support or wider team.

We are currently just starting up an additional steering group to support transition aged young people from the ages 18-25.

Additional to our steering groups, our Youth Participation workers are an integral part of the team, their 1-2-1 sessions with young people accessing our service are interwoven into a young persons package of care. With the support from our Youth Participation workers, young people can readily identify any external additional activities and groups they would like to attend to assist with their recovery capital.



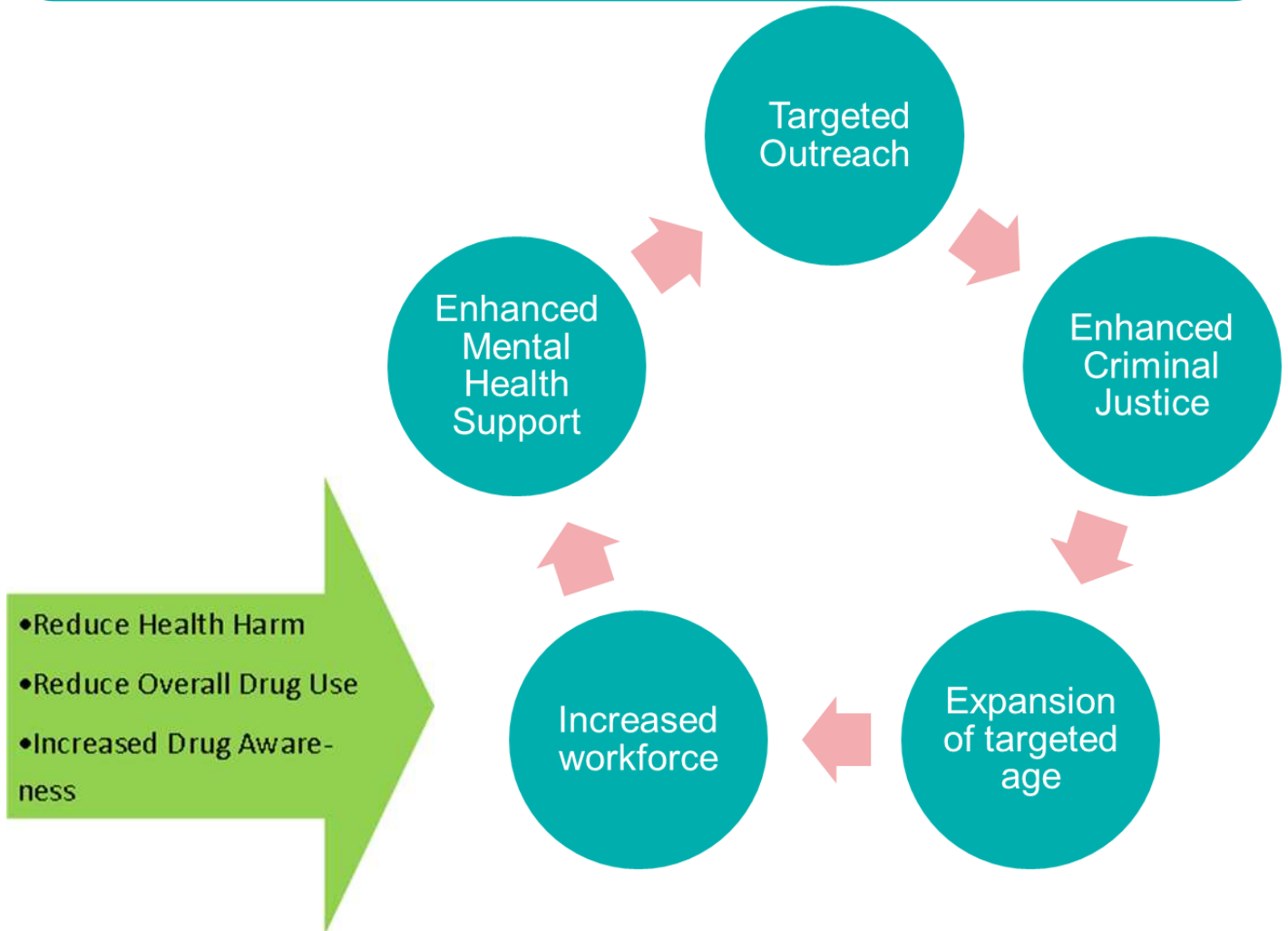
XXX Said after closure he felt like he could be more independent "Aquarius Service Changed my life in many ways"



We monitor quality & assurance

Regular feedback during treatment & after case closure is obtained from the young people that use our service & from professionals making the referrals & supporting cases

## OHID Extended Offer

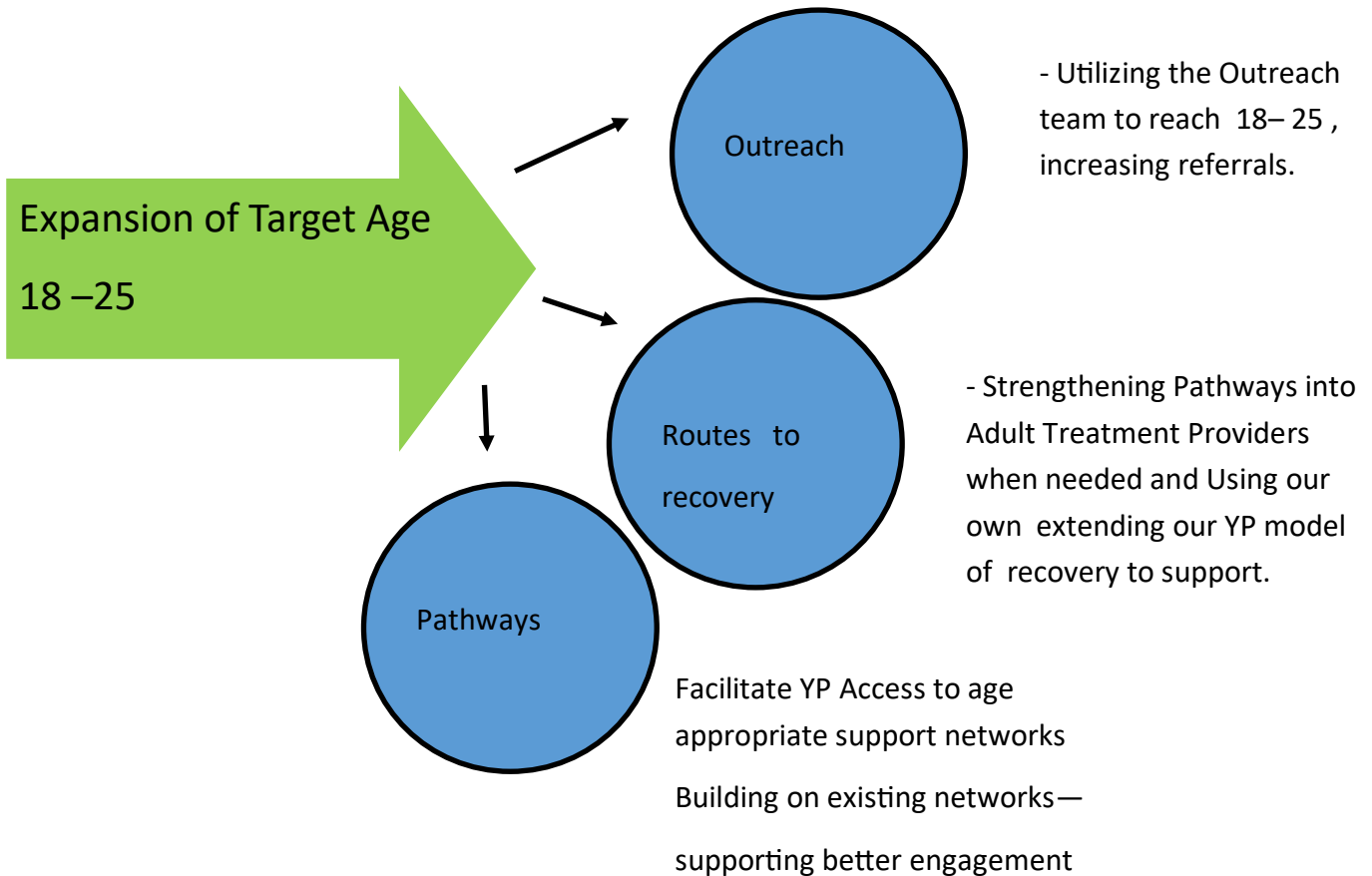


With the additional OHID uplift we are working on key areas from the Harm to hope strategy & the Dame Carol Black report. Increasing our workforce has enabled us to focus on:

- Enhancing our existing youth Justice integrated offer and building in more targeted criminal justice work
- Creating a transitions team that aims to Marginalize the gap between Young people exiting the YP substance treatment at 18 and accessing support 18 +
- Creating a team that can deliver Early interventions in group work settings, targeted drop ins and enable engagement into treatment opportunities through assertive and targeted In reach & Outreach.
- Improving mental health provision in house and improved pathways into external Mental Health Treatment Providers.



## OHID Extended Offer



Evidence from our partner agencies suggest there is a need for a transitions service for young people aged 18-25. With the knowledge our service has we have been fortunate that with the OHID uplift we now have a team of transitions workers that compliment existing staff, who are working hard to engage with young people aged 18-25.

Since opening the doors to receiving referrals for this 18-25 yrs cohort in February we now have 15, 18-25 yr olds engaging in treatment, and expect this to continue to increase further.

We have strong links with homelessness providers , direct access hostels and St Basils and continue to work closely with their outreach teams across the city, and are a regular face at lets feed brum, to further engage the hard to reach cohort of young people.

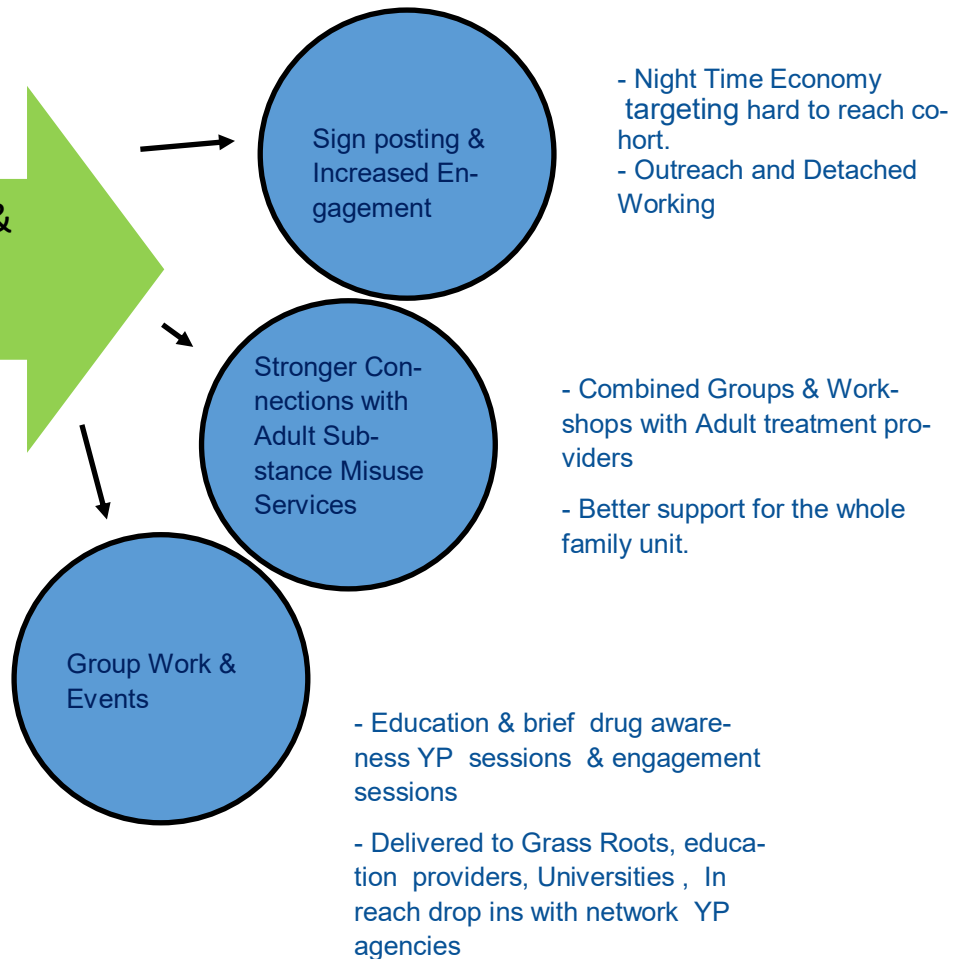
Additionally we are placing focus on raising awareness of Substance Misuse support and how to engage young people accessing further education, universities and employment placement providers.

We are working with adult treatment providers to provide a clear pathway for young people of transitional age to access adult provisions if they need prescribing support and offering our own unique engagement for young people to engage with our substance misuse services and mental health support.



## OHID Extended Offer

### Assertive Outreach & Early intervention



- Our staff get involved with local & national initiatives – i.e. the Rough Sleepers Count, Violence reduction County Lines operation Awareness week, Raising the profile of the impact of addiction and substance use to the wider community and young people. We partner up in the community with Neighborhood Policing Teams St Basils, Trident & the Rough Sleepers team to engage our client groups.
- Utilizing the Ohid funds has enabled us to enhance the way we engage young people into service and broaden our opportunity to engage— we have recently secured opportunities to engage with young people frequenting the hurst st area at the weekend reaching out to the night time economy.
- The Outreach Team has delivered and is delivering Outreach, Events, drop Ins, Targeted drug awareness sessions across the city to many local providers, at these events opportunities are created for young people to access further support on a 1-2-1 basis from our service or are signposted to other provisions if required.



## OHID Extended Offer

### Criminal Justice

#### Young Peoples Work

- Increased capacity in Youth Offending Services 1-2-1 provisions
- improved presence at YOS Hubs improving substance use consultancy to YOS staff

#### Group Work

- Increased group engagement with Young People not engaging with YOS who are receiving an order and using substances
- The edge of offending behaviour i.e. ASB

#### Wider Links

- Presence at YOI Institutes
- Wider links with neighbourhood policing teams
- Continued pathways with exploitation services & VRU team

We have connected with YOI's and we are delivering group sessions and 1-2-1's through YOI In reach to provide specialist substance use support upon a young persons release and reduce the risk of substance related crime. This quarter we have seen an increase in Post Custody Referrals.

Our staff are attending multi agency Drop In's facilitated by Youth Offending

We provide Restorative Justice provision at our Bristol Road Hub & Garden space which also enables substance misuse targeted sessions.

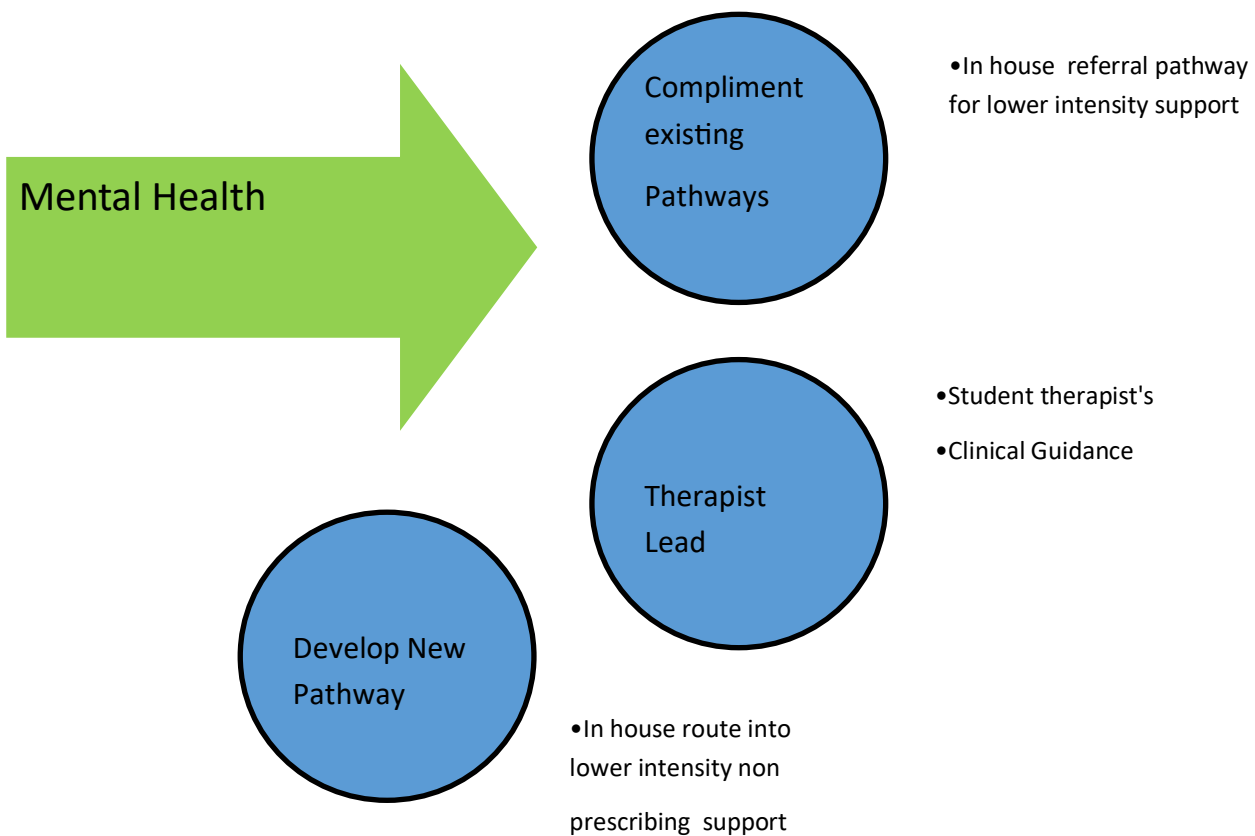
We have worked closely in the Health Taskforce Working Group with YOS Healthcare provisions to review current health offers in the Youth Offending System.

We are building better connections with local neighbourhood police teams to keep updated with crime hotspots to help tackle substance related crime.





## OHID Extended Offer



Staff Quotes“ Complexities in the transitions team are quite high and hard to navigate at times as most have complex mental health conditions, diagnosed and some undiagnosed, for example, schizophrenia, psychosis, paranoia, hallucinations, bipolar and personality disorders, depression and anxiety. due to the level of substance misuse its near impossible to get their mental health addressed. Most of the time their substance misuse is a symptom of their mental health, a coping strategy. “

“Some young people are still rough sleeping regularly and it can be very difficult to get them to engage in any meaningful activities, however this is where joint outreach with partner agencies is beneficial”

“Very little trust in services and professionals, the most vulnerable, marginalised young people in Birmingham.”

We want to compliment Birmingham mental health provisions, utilising our engagement skills and our substance misuse knowledge with a better support pathway for our Young People, in particular supporting post 18 young people. We are developing an additional pathway that compliments our existing partnership with FTB, which includes in house therapist lead and additional recovery models.





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# Aquarius Young People's Substance Misuse Service

## Volunteering

Volunteers supporting our service are recognised as an asset to our staff and the young people accessing our service. We welcome new volunteers and appreciate those volunteers with lived experience in relation to substance use or those affected by substance misuse.

### Roles for Volunteers

- Events Promotion Volunteer
- Life Skills Volunteer (groups/awareness sessions to YP)
- Home & Community visit Volunteer
- Evolve Volunteer
- GROW volunteer
- Ambassador—Steering Group
- Outreach Support Volunteer

### Support for our volunteers

- Access to relevant training
- Attendance at team meetings and skill shares
- Supervision with a mentor from the young people's team
- Coffee mornings with the Wider Aquarius Services Volunteer Support Group Anchor.

### Activities for Volunteers

- Finding and attending events to advertise the service
- Supporting the GROW project activities
- Accompanying practitioners on 1:1 session's
- Accompanying staff with Outreach
- Supporting Aftercare groups
- Supporting the Steering group
- Supporting Group work delivery

**Dedicated Volunteer & Participation Worker**

