



THE BRIDGE

IMPACT REPORT

2022

OUR STRATEGY

Helping Young People Become Secure, Successful, Proactive & Independent

The Bridge Youth Centre exists to create opportunities for young people. Helping them succeed as they grow.

The core elements of our programme are:

- Sessions
- Young Volunteer training
- Mentor Support

All our staff and volunteers love working in The Bridge environment to support young people. Everything we do sits within a core curriculum, which helps to guide how we respond to the young people who attend our activities.

• Sessions

Our sessions follow a curriculum programme, which covers topics such as Alcohol, Drugs, Diversity, Sexuality and Belief.

In 2022 our sessions included holiday provision and a Saturday opening Cafe Project which ran throughout 2022.

• Young Volunteer Training

We actively promote a culture of serving within The Bridge. We teach the young volunteers how to communicate well, listen and how to run activities.

• Mentor Support

Mentor Support is provided in the community and through schools. Each member of the team is trained to offer support alongside the centre manager.

PROGRAMME	DETAILS	OUTCOME
Sessions	Tuesday, Friday sessions, covering years 6 – 11. Saturday opening and holiday provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 158 individual young people impacted.• 71 attended Holiday sessions.
Young Volunteers	Young people learning to serve, developing practical and youth work skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8 young people volunteered.• 2 took on session leadership positions.
Mentoring	Supporting the personal growth of individuals in school and in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8 young people mentored in conjunction with school, social services and early help.

SESSIONS

The Bridge is best known for its open sessions on Tuesday and Friday nights. This is when we get to know the young people the best.

The most important aspect of our session evenings is that the young people lead and guide what happens. This is true, not only in terms of games we play or food we eat, but also what the building looks like, what resources we have available, and also the things we discuss.

We have a curriculum, which we follow as the needs arise. The curriculum covers topics such as Alcohol, Drugs, Diversity, Sexuality and Belief.

During 2022 our sessions ran on Tuesday evening, Friday evening, Saturday lunch time and every major holiday. Our holiday provision was part funded by Shropshire Council.

We collect a range of statistics about sessions. These statistics help us understand attendance, our impact and how the young people are progressing as they grow.

- **158 individuals attended on Tuesday & Friday night.**
 - 54 individuals attended Tuesday
 - 138 individuals attended Friday.
 - **34 attended both sessions.**
- 30 young people registered for **Easter** holiday trips.
- 32 young people registered for **Summer** holiday events.
- 9 young people registered for **Christmas** holiday events.
- An additional 122 (approximately) attended 4 events on **Crown Meadow and Lodge Lane** during the summer.



"This is my safe place. It's where I **don't** feel anxious."

THE CALM CAFE

This year we introduced a brand new Saturday Cafe initiative to The Bridge. We named it The Calm Cafe. The plan was to provide a safe, welcoming space for young people to use at the weekend.

Much research and planning went into the cafe, including the decor, its name and the opening times. Unfortunately, the cafe wasn't as successful as we had hoped. Still, we're thrilled with the renovation of the cafe space. In addition, the entire centre has benefitted from a year of focusing on how we provide food for young people.

As a trust, we must try to keep up with youth culture trends. Sometimes we won't get it right, but in this case, our building and young people have benefited in ways we couldn't have predicted.

Saturday opening has stopped, but the Cafe still operates within sessions.



"I just wanted to thank the Dry Bar Trust for putting on the Open Day at The Bridge. I thought it was a great idea and it enabled local people to see what amazing things happen behind the door.

Congratulations on getting The Calm Cafe off the ground: I am sure it will provide a vital safe space for young people in Bridgnorth. Thanks for letting me join you!"

YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

There's a rich history of young people giving their time to help run The Bridge. Once a younger attendee sees an older young person they look up to helping out; they can't wait to do the same.

For some young people they're fulfilling the requirements of schemes like the Duke of Edinburgh award. For others they see The Bridge as a second home; either way, it's not unusual for young people to treat the building with a high level of care and attention.

In 2022, many of our young volunteers took on responsibilities, which included activity provision and food service in the Calm Cafe.



“Being a young volunteer at the Bridge has been a great experience. It has opened up lots of opportunities for me, increased my confidence, encouraged and developed my leadership skills and taught me valuable life skills such as good communication and supporting young people through their issues. We appreciate all the staff and how they've supported us and given us opportunities to learn and grow.”

MENTOR SUPPORT

We love helping young people find avenues for success in their lives. Sometimes young people will need special attention and guidance. At times that guidance might look like a simple conversation and a listening ear; however, some young people will need a mentor to help them overcome the challenge they're facing. We have a small team, but we try to be available in school and the community as needed.

Here are four stories which have come from our mentoring focussed programme.

1

New Volunteer

In September, this young person joined our Young Volunteer programme and they have been incredibly successful. They respond well to task-focused direction and are immensely proactive, ensuring that no young person is left alone or left out. They recently ran a baking activity during a Friday session, where they decorated cupcakes with young people. They led every step of the way, planning the session, organising resources and running the activity.

2

Personal breakthrough

This student has had a rough time in mainstream education and has struggled to understand the consequences imposed on them. We've mentored this student for a while, and at Easter, there was a major breakthrough which signified real success for the student. This is of course, down to their determination and commitment. We've been thrilled to see the student take on strategies introduced in mentoring with us.

3

The Calm Cafe

This young person started attending this year. They were very quiet and sat alone during every session. When we spoke, it was clear they had a good time, but everything they took part in was suggested first by a team member. When we established the café as part of sessions in the spring, this young person started getting involved. Serving gave them the confidence they needed to start conversations, and they have also learned some new skills.

4

Learning to belong

When we first met this young person during the HAF programme this summer, despite being a younger member, they presented many challenges. They were antagonistic, easily frustrated with a quick temper and pushed every boundary we set. Weeks on they have become an integrated member of the group. Their responses are much less explosive, and they have a much deeper understanding of themselves and a growing understanding of others.

PARENTS REFLECT

It's important to recognise that many young people wouldn't find us without the support of parents and carers. There are many reasons why we speak to parents and carers; often, it's simply to ask how they feel about the activities and support we offer.

From time to time, parents and carers will get in touch just to let us know how things are going and it's not unusual to find that The Bridge is providing valuable support.

"My child has seemed to be improving since they have started seeing you. They seem determined to mend their ways, and seem to be settling down to school work and managing social relationships extremely well. We have been really pleased with the progress"



"My son attends the Bridge and my eldest son also attended for many years.

Thanks to Mr Prockter and his team both my children have found support with their mental health problems. They would not be the confident young men they are today if they had not attended the Bridge, they were accepted for who they are and felt inspired to help others."

WITH THANKS

As an independent local charity, The Bridge Youth Centre relies exclusively upon the generosity of a number of local individual supporters, local supporting business partners, and local grant making bodies, who join with us in our work to help young people become Secure, Successful, Proactive & Independent.

We want to extend our thanks for their ongoing support over many years to:

Our individual supporters

Libra Systems

Lowe and Fletcher

Torchbearers Trust

Also to the following for grants during 2022

The Hall Garth Foundation

Shropshire Council

Bridgnorth Town Council

Bridgnorth Lions

Thanks too, to our wonderful team of staff and volunteers without whom our work would be impossible.

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YOUR ONGOING
SUPPORT OF OUR
WORK WITH YOUNG
PEOPLE.