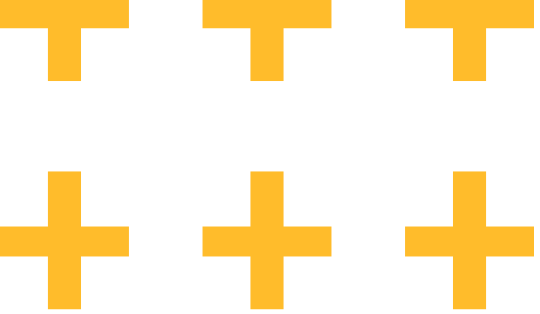




A YEAR
LIKE NO
OTHER

2020-2021



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SKILLS CREATIVITY COMMITMENT

INTRODUCTION

2020-21 was a year like no other – a year when the pandemic affected all of us and strangely united us in a common cause.

In normal times we open our doors to all young people in Coventry – everyone is welcome. During the pandemic, this principle didn't change, but the restrictions upon us meant that we provided support to those whose needs were greatest. It quickly became clear that the pandemic impacted some in our community much more severely than others.

This review looks at different areas of our work during the year, the impact that we had and how we responded to the needs of young people. It sits alongside a video review that includes interviews with young people and staff reflecting on the year and what we learned. This is available on the PYF website.

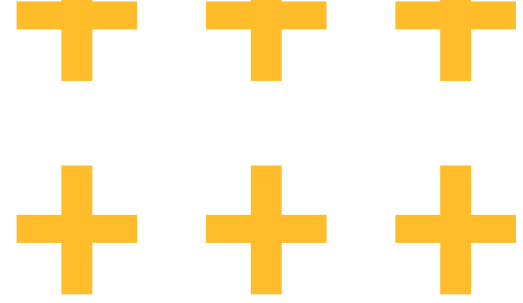


Watch our Impact Review online

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RESPONDING TO THE UNEXPECTED...



Our work during the year was all about how we responded to the extraordinary, unplanned restrictions imposed on us by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our main delivery centre, Hillfields Young People's Centre (HYPC), was closed for 25 weeks from 18 March – 6 September. For the rest of the year it re-opened for 1-to-1 and small group activities only. Our decisions about re-opening were guided by local advice from Coventry City Council and the National Youth Agency's Covid Guidance bulletins.

Altogether we worked with 445 individual young people in 2020-21. This compared to 2,319 the previous year, a drop of 80%.

However, this only tells part of the story. Even when HYPC was closed, and some staff were on furlough, we continued to run sessions online, on the phone and by visiting young people on their doorstep when we could do this safely.

In fact, we ran 2,274 youth work sessions during the year compared to 2,664 the previous year, a reduction of only 15%. Many of these were delivered online.

And because we worked with fewer young people, the intensity of our work increased significantly.

The average contact hours with each young person rose from 21 to 39hrs.

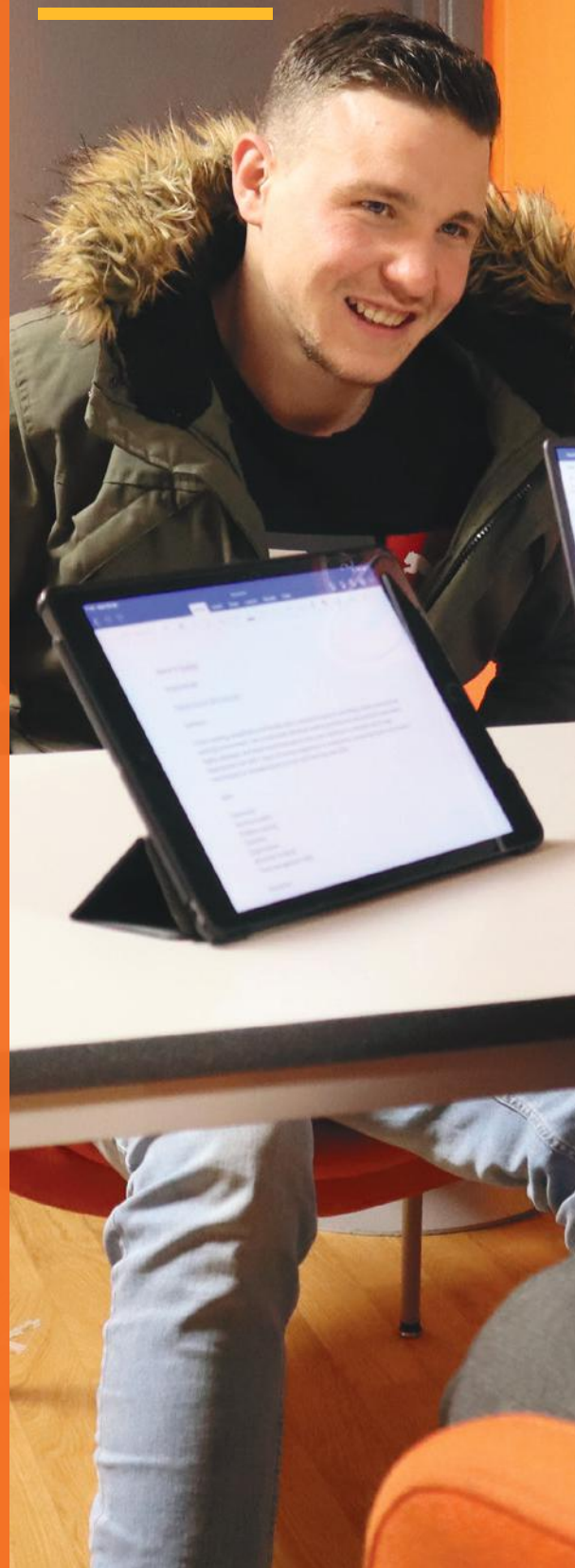
Our open access and sports activities, which attract large numbers of young people, only restarted in a limited form towards the end of the year. For most of the time we continued with targeted support work.



FIVE THINGS WE LEARNED ABOUT OUR WORK DURING THE PANDEMIC

- 1 Everything we do depends on the **skill, creativity and commitment of our staff and Board of Trustees.** Within 10 days of lockdown, we had set up an online timetable and in the weeks that followed we maintained contact with young people and found new ways to deliver our work on and offline.
- 2 PYF is fortunate to have the **resources and a business model** that gave us sustainability during these uncertain times. Our relationships with funders gave us stability and we made contact with each of them during lockdown to tell them about the impact of Covid-19 on our work.
- 3 We were able to **invest in tech and we found new and exciting ways to use it** and to make sure young people could do so safely. While many adapted easily to communicating with us online, some found it difficult for access or personal reasons. As we continued through lockdown, we realised the limitations of running everything online. Young people queued outside our youth centre when they heard it was opening again because they wanted to meet youth workers and friends face-to-face.
- 4 We started up bike riding groups and delivered laptops, sports equipment, and recipe ingredients to young people's homes. **We've learned a lot about the value of being flexible** in how we deliver, the benefits of working in smaller groups and communicating with parents where this is appropriate. Good youth work can take many forms.
- 5 **Covid-19 weakened existing fault lines in our communities** and many young people who were vulnerable, with lower-level anxiety and stress or difficulties at home, are at greater risk now. There is a greater demand for our work as a result and it has led us to think carefully about the impact of our work on young people's mental health and well-being. The number of safeguarding cases we are dealing with have increased since lockdown eased.

INCREASING THE INTENSITY OF OUR WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE



ADJUSTING OUR WORK DURING THE PANDEMIC

Setting up online was quick – technical issues were not a problem – and it quickly became apparent that PYF staff were a fantastic source of technical experience and skills.

They set up podcasts, recorded and edited videos, worked on social media and adapted technology so we could interact with young people.

However, we underestimated the amount of time needed to deliver activities online. It was not easy to sustain young people's interest for the same length of time as working face-to-face. Where we had an existing relationship of trust, young people took to online delivery well. At first there was a novelty in joining sessions on-line but a few weeks into lockdown attendance began to drop. Disrupted routines and sleep patterns meant we had to change session times from mornings to afternoons. We found it difficult to provide variety in online activities – the Zoom/ Teams format began to feel repetitive. Some things worked better than others, for example physical activities worked well when equipment was delivered to young people's homes, and they joined sessions on- line.

For some young people there were issues about access to IT equipment – mobile phones were not ideal for prolonged use, especially if they were shared in a household. Laptops and tablets were often shared too yet schools expected children to join classes online. In some cases, this was impossible and young people's learning suffered.

With financial help from Comic Relief and The National Lottery, we were able to provide 50 young people with laptops and data packages, including some young people from our Involved programme who arrived in Coventry as part of the Syrian Resettlement Scheme. Some had only

been to school for 2 months before the pandemic hit and lost the next 6 months of school. We know, because young people told us, that learning on-line and in small groups at PYF was really beneficial for them.

We supported others with food deliveries so young people could follow our cooking project online and share food with their family.

The value of getting out of the house into the fresh air was really helpful for young people.

We bought bikes and ran cycling trips into countryside where we could do this within safety guidelines. Some young people were exploring the countryside for the first time, and we have continued this into 2021 after lockdown.

WE DONATED 50 LAPTOPS TO YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS OUR PROGRAMMES



**OUR TEAM HAD
THE SKILLS THAT
ALLOWED US TO
CONTINUE TO
INTERACT WITH
YOUNG PEOPLE**



MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES

Despite the Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions on our work in 2020-21, PYF delivered a wide range of activities for young people through its distinctive work strands. Here are some of the highlights...



Our **Positive Futures** strand supports young people to stay safe and to find a positive direction in their lives. As we moved our services online, we found young people on many of our programmes, including Positive Futures, has mixed feelings about regular sessions that were largely built on Zoom or Microsoft Teams. We found ways to innovate, keeping the format fresh and engaging. When young people were referred to PYF we had the added challenge of supporting them without ever having met them face-to-face. For many this wasn't easy, but for a few like Darren it worked very well.

DARREN'S STORY

Darren was referred to the Staying Safe programme in March 2020 after concerns were raised about him becoming involved in criminal activity. He had also displayed threatening behaviour in school and faced exclusion, and school staff and social workers approached PYF to see if we could provide support to him.

Initially, the plan was to arrange a home visit to understand his interests and needs, however due to COVID-19 restrictions an initial meeting took place over the phone. I introduced myself and explained what the mentoring programme was about and why he was referred on to it.

During this call Darren was shy, quiet and not very vocal about his thoughts or opinions. He briefly expressed his passion for music.

With this in mind, I began setting him weekly musical challenges which focused on lyric writing and expressing his thoughts and feelings. Darren said he enjoyed these challenges and within just a few weeks he was in regular contact with us. He would send me lyrics weekly which touched on a variety of topics and gave him the opportunity to express himself. He wrote about lockdown, racism and bullying, expressing his opinion on these topics.

After consistently taking part in sessions for about 4 weeks I introduced Darren to our 'lockdown challenge' which focused on showcasing musical talent. This meant that Darren needed to compete with other young people for a chance to win a voucher by creating a song/poem or rap.

Darren won this challenge. His lyric writing and commitment stood out and this gave him a confidence boost. He became more vocal about his plans for the future: using music as the driving force, conversations became more positive.

He began to discuss openly his behaviour in school and the personal challenges he felt he was facing. Through the process of mentoring, we were able to identify these behaviours and help him to avoid making wrong choices and to work on ways to rectify mistakes.

Since joining the mentoring program, Darren has gone on to take part in another session on mental health and keeping a positive mindset. He would like to continue being creative and is focused on music from all angles, for example he has taken an interest in the business side of music.

Darren continues to join weekly mentoring session at PYF and contributes to online studio sessions supporting other young people.





PYF's **Involved** strand supports newly arrived young people to integrate successfully in Coventry. It was clear early in the pandemic that some young people couldn't participate fully with us or their school because they didn't have the right IT equipment. Relying on your Mum's phone doesn't really help with schoolwork: you need a laptop and access to Wi-Fi.

Funding from Comic Relief and The National Lottery helped us to provide IT equipment where it was needed and access to ESOL tutors so young people could catch up with English language support they had missed

when schools closed. Across all our programmes we donated 50 laptops to young people.

In January 2020 we convened an on-line round table with over 30 participants from across Coventry to explore newly arrived young people's mental health. The group included GPs, mental health professionals, teachers, nurses, MPs, councillors, funders, and staff from the city council's Migration Team. The most moving contributions came from young people who described their own experiences and the strains on their mental health.



I wanted to travel, visit different cities and make new friends. Since I arrived because of lockdown, I have not been able to travel, but I have made friends and learnt so much. I would never have thought that my English reading and writing skills would be this good, this quick, without even starting college. I have made friends through our Zoom sessions; some are from Syria like me, and some were born here. I have learnt a lot from them, and I am starting to understand their jokes. Why do British people always talk about the weather?

Young participant in our Involved programme

During the lockdown the Cabinet Office approached PYF to support the Government's Covid-19 public messaging. The department had seen our videos and posters aimed at young people in Coventry. We supported the public health message on social media and with targeted groups, including a video in Arabic for newly arrived young people.



Raising Aspirations Programme (RAP) supports young people to achieve their education and learning potential. The programme is supported by the European Social Fund and other funders.

There was a turning point for us early on in the first lockdown, after we had moved everything online, when we realised it wasn't working for some young people. The technology helped us to communicate but the engagement just wasn't there, particularly for those who find communication difficult in normal times.

Someone suggested we should contact young people by dropping some recipe ingredients off at their doorstep. It would show we were thinking of them, and it was a chance to have a socially distanced chat. Sometimes it also allowed us to say hello to parents. This approach worked really well, and we expanded the offer. For example, in our Building Better Opportunities programme we dropped off sports and exercise equipment so young people could join their mentors online and exercise at the same time.

Later, as restrictions eased, we encouraged young people to get outdoors again and to exercise. Going on bike rides into the countryside was really popular.



**WE ENCOURAGE
YOUNG PEOPLE
OUTDOORS**



HEALTHY ★ FUTURES ★

Healthy Futures community sports and well-being programmes are usually delivered year-round in local sports facilities, parks and outdoor community spaces where young people can access a wide range of activities that need no prior skills or experience.

We were able to adapt our National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund in a number of different ways, but particularly to support young women and their mental health.

Our lockdown 1-2-1 service offered the girls' group online support - an opportunity to have a conversation with somebody they trusted in a very difficult time. These sessions allowed the girls to relax, laugh and enjoy each other's company. They talked about their week, supporting each other with individual concerns or worries. They had the opportunity to express themselves, gain confidence, continue friendships and explore different topics such as emotional wellbeing.

We focused on self-care and the importance of having some 'you time'. PYF home-delivered beauty packages to try over Zoom and brought in a beautician who taught nails, facials and the art of taking time for yourself every day.

Lockdown was very difficult for all of them, but these sessions brought the group closer and provided a chance to de-stress.

RAGED
OPLE TO GET
S AGAIN

YOUNG PEOPLE USING CREATIVE FORMS TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES

Changing Trax helps young people to express themselves through music, dance and other creative forms.

During the pandemic the Changing Trax team introduced the Unplugged Series. This supported young people who were interested in creatively responding to matters affecting them, their peers and their communities. It also allowed us to support emerging professionals (commissioned artists under the age of 24).

Once lockdown had eased over the summer, Changing Trax developed two activity plans: an emergency Covid plan, and a blended approach offering both face-to-face activity plus online work. This way we felt ready for any national changes in social restrictions. In addition, it meant that as we started to develop work programmes for at-risk young people, we were safe in the knowledge that we could continue work even on a reduced level.

After a successful first Unplugged series (April 2020) we went on to run a second series (Dec 2020). Sixty young people were engaged in this online offer. Our music studio space in Hillfields continued to facilitate 1-2-1s throughout the year and 36 individual young people were able to access the studio, a mentoring offer, an opportunity to unwind and develop their artistry during the pandemic.





PYF Connect provides consultancy and support services for the youth work sector at a local, regional and national level.

The Positive Youth Foundation secured short-term Covid relief funding from the National Lottery to provide training for Coventry Youth Partnership (CYP) members, create regular discussions and planning between organisations, and

explore quality assurance for youth work. We also provided support in collecting data about the work we do across the city, and piloting new ways of measuring our impact.

Funding from the Heart of England Community Fund and Think Active allowed CYP to offer over £30,000 of small grants to 20 voluntary youth organisations in Coventry.



YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL ACTION

Young people's social action is a cross-cutting theme in our work that supports young people to raise their voices, creating platforms so their views and opinions can be heard in a positive way. The backing of Comic Relief and #iWill/UK Youth has allowed us to continue this work.

During the pandemic we were still able to work with smaller groups online and develop a training toolkit that supports young people's social action.

Although we experienced a lot of change in the way we deliver our programmes, talking and relationship building has remained at the forefront of our work.

Social action campaigning is a tool for personal development for young people, developing interpersonal skills and a mindset of activism which we hope they will keep for the future.

CREATING PLATFORMS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO HAVE THEIR VOICES HEARD.

OUR FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS IN 2020-21

We are very grateful to the following funders, trustees and patrons who supported our work during this difficult year.

Without their support our work with young people would not have been possible.



Funders



THANK YOU



substance.



Sir John and Julia Egan Foundation



Trustees

Cory Barrett

Amy Foster

Andrew Jack (Chair)

Vincent Mayne

Patron

Sir John Egan

Ambassadors

John Ledwidge

John Kiely



APPENDIX: MEETING OUR STRATEGIC AIMS

At the start of 2020-21 we developed a new set of strategic aims to help us measure progress and be clear about our priorities. We wanted this to be straightforward and clear for staff and trustees and to be considered as 'a work in progress', so we could learn as a whole organisation from the experience and improve. Our strategic aims are in two parts: the things we want to achieve for young people; and our organisational aims.

Our Strategic Aims 2020-2023

Young people who participate in our programmes will...

...improve their physical and mental health and help them to stay safe

...overcome adversity, maximise their potential and achieve positive improvements in their lives

...increase their chances of meaningful employment and training and stay on in education

...expand their creative skills and experiences

...experience a supportive and welcoming environment, wherever they are and whatever their background



Measuring progress against our strategic aims

5 measures we used to see how well we were doing overall. Each strand also collects evidence of progress against these aims.

01

How many young people do we reach and what are their characteristics; how many activities do we provide and do young people take part in?

▶ **Registration and session data (Views)**

02

75% of young people surveyed who attend PYF programme respond positively to questions that correlate with the Centre for Youth Impact's Theory of Change in youth work.

▶ **User Feedback Survey**

03

65% of young people who undertake a 'before and after programme' WEMWBS survey show an increase of 3-8 WEMWBS points in their overall well-being

▶ **SWEMWBS**

04

Annual staff survey shows 85% of staff rate PYF positively as an employer.

▶ **Annual Staff Survey**

05

In an annual survey, 85% of PYF's stakeholders identify PYF as a valuable and constructive partner and would wish to continue working together in the forthcoming year.

▶ **Annual Stakeholders Survey**

PYF will...

...provide an excellent working environment for our staff, trustees, partners and other stakeholders because we recognise the essential contribution they make to our success

...deliver higher quality youth work which we can benchmark against national standards

...raise the profile of our work and share our skills and experiences with others



The young people we worked with...

Although the total number of young people we reached in 2020-21 dropped significantly, the spread across our 8-25 age range remained very similar to the year before with only a slight reduction in 11–13-year-olds (see Figure 1). The wards in which young people lived also remained relatively static, with most participants coming from St Michael's and Foleshill wards (see Figure 2). Participant numbers did increase in St Michael's ward by 15% and dropped in Foleshill by around 20%. This reflects the restrictions on movement during Covid.

Participant numbers are now increasing again. For example, in the first quarter of 2021-22, 550 young people took part in PYF activities compared to 445 for the whole of last year.

Figure 1: Age range of participants, 2019 and 2020

Age range of participants 2019-20 & 2020-21, PYF

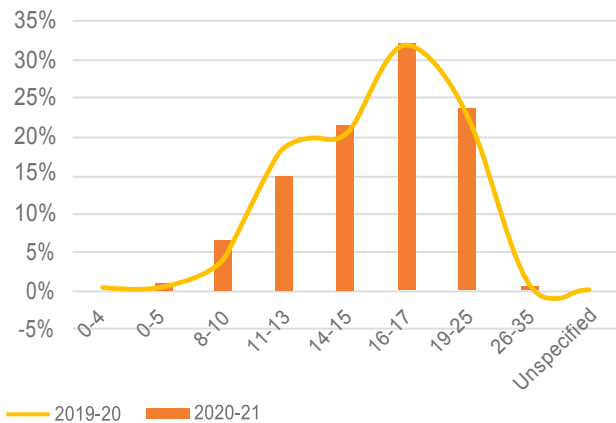
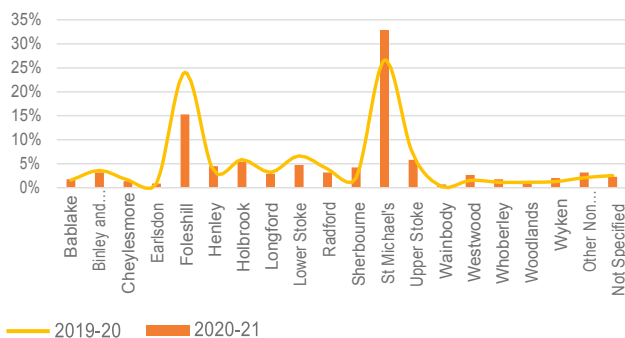


Figure 2: Home location of PYF participants by ward, 2019 and 2020

Where participants live, by Coventry ward, 2019-20 & 2020-21



75% of young people who attend a PYF programme respond positively to questions about the experience.

In November 2020 we asked young people about their experience of taking part in PYF activities (see Figure 3). The timing of the survey was significant – young people were just beginning to return to Hillfields Young People's Centre, and most were those that had quite high involvement in our work even during lockdown. In total 68 responses were received.

Figure 3: Young people's experience of participating in PYF activities, 2020

Question	Yes	%	No	%
A1. Do you trust the staff and volunteers at PYF?	66	97%	2	3%
A2. Do you feel that the staff and volunteers at PYF trust you?	65	96%	3	4%
A3. Do you feel valued as an individual whilst at PYF?	66	97%	2	3%
A4. Do you feel safe whilst at PYF?	68	100%	0	0%
A5. Do you feel that the activities at PYF challenge you enough?	60	88%	8	12%
A6. Do you feel a sense of achievement from your activities at PYF?	65	96%	3	4%
A7. Do you have any say over how the services are run at PYF?	56	82%	12	18%
A8. Do you feel empowered to make positive change in your life?	65	96%	3	4%
A9. Do you feel like you belong at PYF?	67	99%	1	1%
A10. Do you get the help and support you need from PYF?	67	99%	1	1%
A11. Do you value PYF?	68	100%	0	0%
A12. Are PYF's programmes / services good quality?	66	97%	2	3%



65% of young people who undertake a before-and-after programme survey show an increase of 3-8 points in their overall well-being.

PYF uses the Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (SWEMWBS) to measure change in young people’s sense of well-being while they are participating in our programmes. Young people complete a short survey with 7 questions early in the programme and then later, on one or more occasions. The results are used to inform overall progress of a group, rather than measuring individual’s progress.

Across all 79 respondents we saw an average increase in well-being scores of 2.7 (see Figure 4). Eighty-four percent rated their well-being as Moderate or High compared to 65% before taking part in our programmes.

Figure 4: Measuring young people’s well-being progress, 2020

SWEMWBS	Total responses	Mean change
I’ve been feeling optimistic about the future	79	0.33
I’ve been feeling useful	79	0.51
I’ve been feeling relaxed	79	0.30
I’ve been dealing with problems well	79	0.57
I’ve been thinking clearly	79	0.43
I’ve been feeling close to other people	79	0.29
I’ve been able to make up my mind about things	79	0.27
Total SWEMWBS score change		2.70
Positive change?		Yes
Statistically significant change?		Yes
Wilcoxon signed rank test P value		p<0.05

Target: annual staff survey shows 85% of staff rate PYF positively as an employer.

The staff survey (see Fig. 5) was carried out in November 2020 during the Covid-19 lockdown. Responses were recorded anonymously. We had 19 responses to the survey out of a possible 25 staff. Some staff were furloughed at the time.

Figure 5: PYF Staff Survey, 2020

Response to selected Qs (averages)



85% of PYF’s stakeholders identify PYF as a valuable and constructive partner and would wish to continue working together in the forthcoming year.

We decided not to go ahead with the stakeholder survey this year. The second lockdown early in 2021 made it very difficult to carry out a community survey and we have decided to postpone this so we can prepare more thoroughly.



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