

LONDON'S YOUTH SECTOR

Insights from London Youth membership



Introduction

London Youth's mission is to support the capital's youth sector to improve the lives of young people. We do this with and through our members – a network of over 600 youth organisations – and at our two outdoor residential centres, Hindleap Warren and Woodrow High House.

Somewhere to go. Something to do. Someone to trust. This is what London Youth's members give young people. Our youth organisation members are diverse, from small community clubs to large, pan-London organisations. Each youth organisation is unique, of different size, reach and provision.

We have been collecting data from our members in order to understand the landscape of the community and voluntary youth sector in London: who are the youth organisations, what work they are doing, their workforce, and the young people they're serving. We have been using this data to inform our offer to members and to advocate with them for better provision to the sector.

We are now sharing this data and insights to ensure they are more accessible. Not only for our network but also beyond it, helping policy and funding decision makers to make the youth sector more sustainable.

522

Number of Organisations

652k

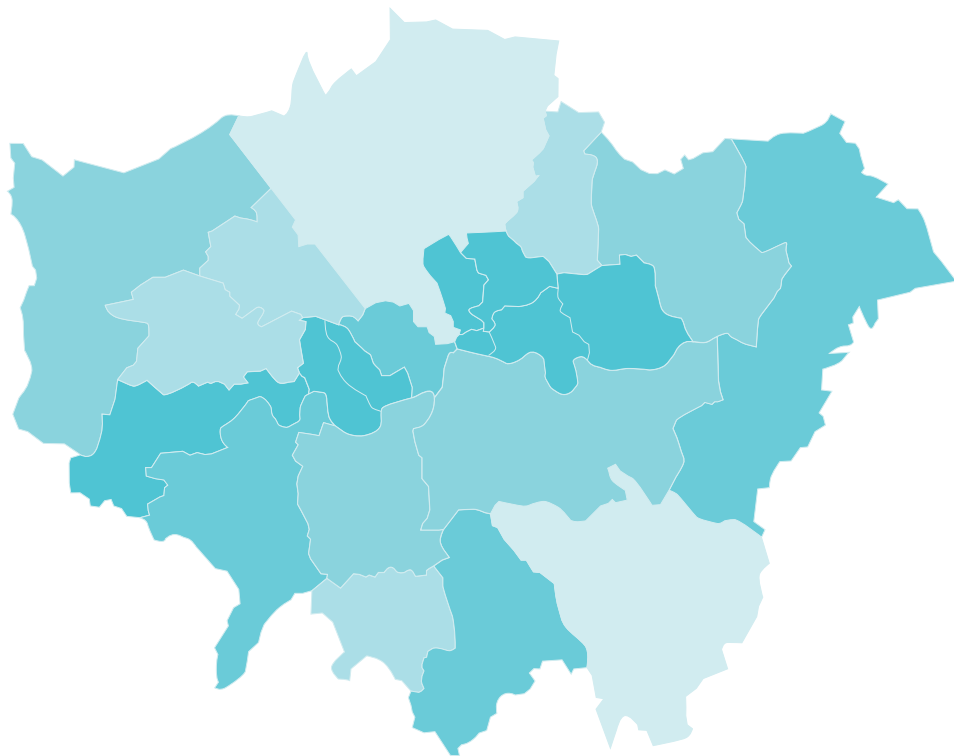
Young People Registered

12k

Staff Members (Paid)

121k

Young People Attending Per Week



londonyouth.org/londons-youth-vcs-data-tool/

This report provides data and insights as we see them in 2023, with organisations reporting on their last financial year. In addition, we created a public interactive data tool to enable access to data on a London borough level. We will be continuously updating and adding to the data on the interactive tool.

This is the first of a series of reports. As more infrastructure organisations and funders are sharing their data, the sector's knowledge base will continue to grow. We are planning to incorporate more publicly available datasets and collaborate with other sector partners to expand the public interactive data tool that accompanies this report, and to continue producing insight reports. If you would like to hear more, please contact the Learning team via membership@londonyouth.org.

Approach

The data included in the report was received from 522 organisations who were London Youth members in 2023. It was collected as part of our membership renewal process taking place in the spring.

The data is reported according to organisations' last financial year, so timelines may vary – the figures aren't exclusively relating to the last 12 months.

*Most organisations answered the majority of the questions, but the number of organisations who responded to each question varies. The data is presented in both numbers and percentages.

†We regularly use median average rather than the more common mean average. As our membership is so diverse, we have a huge range of organisations and a mean average gives a distorted picture. A median average is the middle value when the values are arranged from smallest to largest.

We use the term *Black, Asian and/or from Minority Ethnic communities or backgrounds. Although it's a broad definition encompassing different groups, we find it serves us as it enables youth organisations to respond to the ethnicity questions. Asking organisations to provide more detail about the ethnicity groups their leadership, staff and young people belong to would make it very difficult to answer. Therefore, we ask for general data, sometimes in percentages, keeping the data presented on a high level (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic only category for ethnicity, and male, female and other categories only for gender).



Youth Organisations

75%

Organisations Operating Exclusively in London

25%

Organisations Owning Space

Income[‡]

43% of the organisations have an income of under £250,000.

63% of organisations have an income under £500,000.

On average, smaller organisations engage with a smaller number of young people too. Organisations with an income of under £100,000 have a median average* of 150 young people that they engage with across the year, while organisations with an income of a million pounds and over have a median average of 728 young people, annually.

Legal Status[‡]

78% of organisations are registered as charities and 13% are CICs.

Community Interest Companies (CIC) which are relatively easy and inexpensive to register and as such are favoured by entrepreneurs. The CICs work with a smaller number of young people than average – average median† of 200 young people reached annually and 40 young people engaged weekly, compared to 300 reached annually and 60 weekly for all organisations.

Of the 69 CICs, 72% have an income of under £250,000 and 71% are led by people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups*, compared with 42% across all organisations.

Leadership

71% of organisations are equity-led:

organisations led by and for marginalised communities by minority groups. Over half (56%) of organisations are led by women.

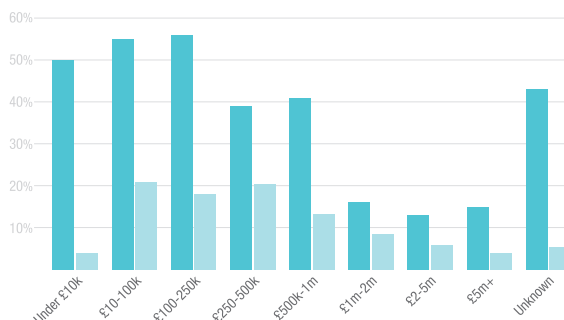
Although 20% of organisations are led by young people, half (50%) of all organisations have youth boards – we have seen the number of organisations having youth boards grow fractionally each year since 2020.

Minority groups leadership or equity-led

Women	56%
Other	22%
Educationally or economically disadvantaged	21%
Young people	20%
Have experience of living with mental health problems	15%
Disabled, neurodivergent or have special educational needs	12%
LGBTQ+	10%
Refugees, asylum seekers or migrants	8%
Care-experienced	7%
Have experience of being unhoused or homeless	7%

In addition to the more general question about equity-leadership we also asked specifically about Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)* leadership, with 42% of all organisations being Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic-led.

Organisations with smaller income tend to be more Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic-led: 55% of organisations with income up to £250,000 are Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic-led, with this figure dropping to 40% for organisations with income between £250,000-£1M. Only 15% of organisations with an income of over £1M are Black Asian and Minority Ethnic-led.



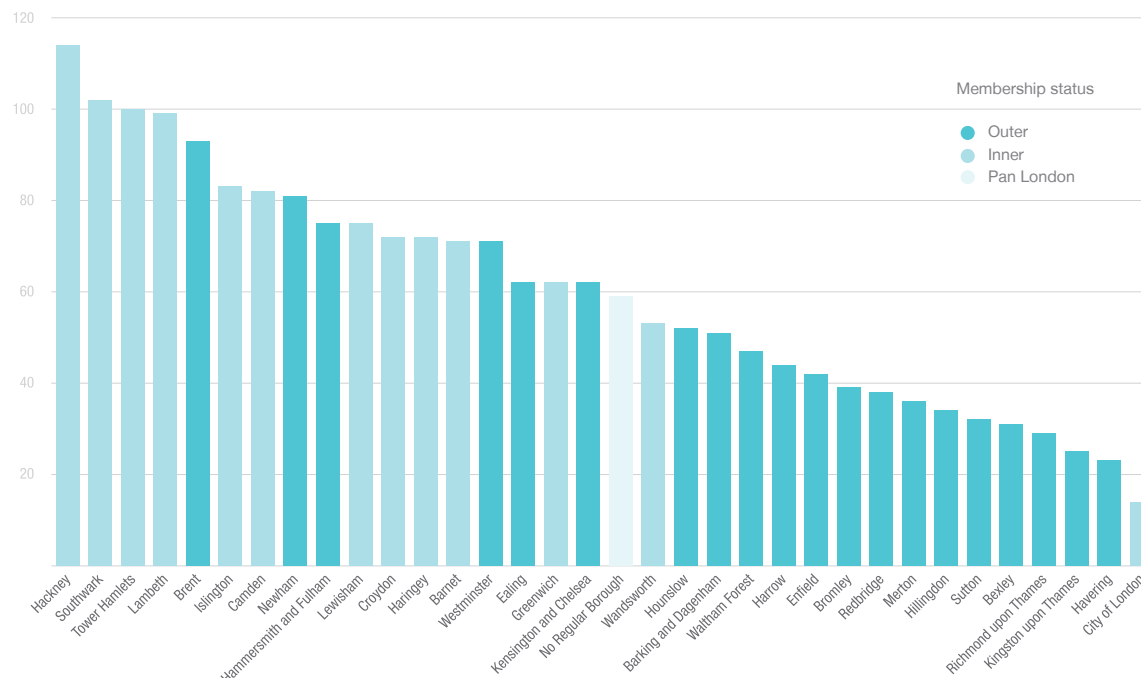
This chart depicts in a darker colour the percentage of organisations that are BAME-led* within each income category, compared with the lighter colour showing percentage of organisations under the income category out of all organisations.



Location

59% of organisations work in more than one borough. Our members work in every borough in London, with 59% (307) working in more than one borough. The 12 ‘inner boroughs’ are in the interior of the capital and have been a part of the original Metropolitan London since 1855, as well as the City of London district. The remaining 20

‘outer boroughs’ are positioned around the inner boroughs and have officially become a part of Greater London in 1965. More young people live in London’s outer boroughs, but youth provision is better established in inner London and funders have longer-term relationships in these boroughs. As a result, there is a huge imbalance in funding for young people across the capital*.



Types of youth work

Most organisations (92%) offer multiple types of youth work.

85% offer **targeted programmes** addressing specific issues or problems, often working with specific groups of young people.

76% deliver **centre-based** activities out of a specific venue – although only a quarter of organisations own their own space.

62% deliver **referral services** that other external services can refer young people to.

60% offer **open access** or **universal** provision. This is informal education that is delivered openly and is available to all young people, not just a specific group.

50% of organisations do **outreach**, meaning they approach spaces where young people choose to meet outside of youth work venues, in order to promote the services offered in a local youth centre and encourage participation.

Only 30% deliver **detached** provision. This is a programme of informal education, in places where young people choose to meet, away from traditional youth work settings or venues. More organisations who do detached youth work provide mentoring (77%), employability (88%) and social action projects (82%).

Youth work themes

Most organisations work with young people through a diverse range of themes with 89% providing services around mental health and wellbeing. Employability is also a popular theme, delivered by almost three-quarters (74%) of organisations. Arts and culture (71%) and social action (68%) are also popular. 63% of organisations deliver Sport

activities. This figure is higher for organisations that provide centre-based youth work (70%) and open access youth work (73%). 60% of organisations deliver mentoring and just under half (47%) have some outdoor learning provision.

Over half (55%) of the organisations work exclusively with young people.

Organisations may have more than one legal status, minoritised group/s they are led by, type of youth work and themes they provide and address.

More on the funding gap between inner and outer boroughs can be read by visiting www.360giving.org.

Young people

60

Young people attending per week (median average)

300

Young people registered (median average)

There is extensive research and data about and from young people. As an anchor organisation, our focus is on youth organisations and youth practitioners. We do however collect a minimal dataset about the young people youth organisations work with. The 522 youth organisations represented in this report work collectively with 651,968 young people each year with 121,294 young people attending weekly.

Organisations have 300 young people attending across the year and 60 attending per week, on a median average[†]. On a mean average, 1,249 young people attend across the year and 232 attend weekly.

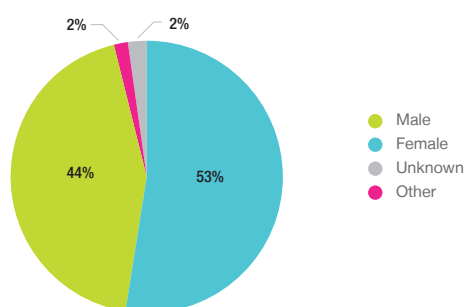
We have seen a growth in these averages from the previous year data was collected (2022), showing that organisations are working with more young people.

This corresponds with research on the greater need young people are presenting, compounded by the mental health and cost of living crises.

Gender

They work slightly more with boys and young men than with girls and young women.

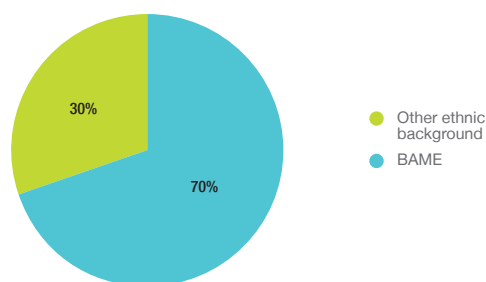
Gender



Ethnicity*

70% of young people the organisations work with are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. Almost all organisations (95%) work with young people of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

Ethnicity

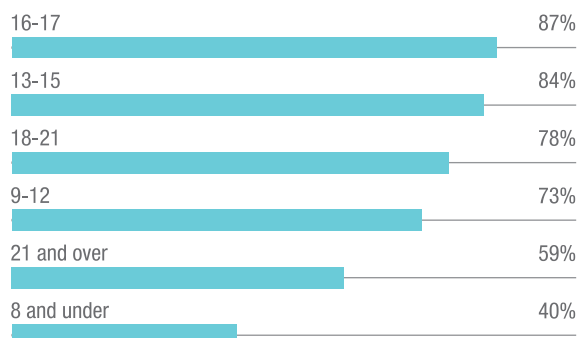


Age

This chart shows the percentage of organisations who work with the different age groups. Almost all organisations work with more than one age group, with the most common age group worked with being 13-17.

Groups Organisations work with different groups of young people. 83% work with young people who are affected by poor mental health. In the past we asked organisations if they work with young people affected by poverty—the answer was 100%, consistently.

Age



This chart depicts the number of organisations working with each age group.

Some organisations work outside of London. We asked them to provide data about the numbers of young people they work with in London only.

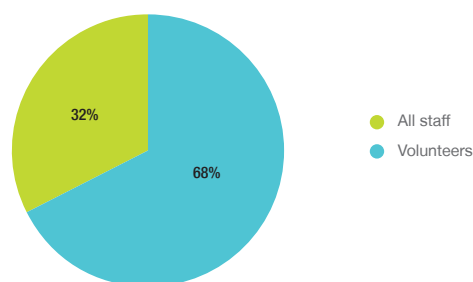
The number of young people accessing services are not unique attendance. We cannot identify duplication if a young person attends more than one organisation.

The number of young people accessing services weekly does not reflect frequency. We cannot identify if the young people attend every week, or if these are different young people.

Youth practitioners

The 522 youth organisations whose data we collected employ 11,932 in paid roles and 24,878 volunteers. **Generally, 68% of the workforce is made up of volunteers.**

Volunteers and paid staff



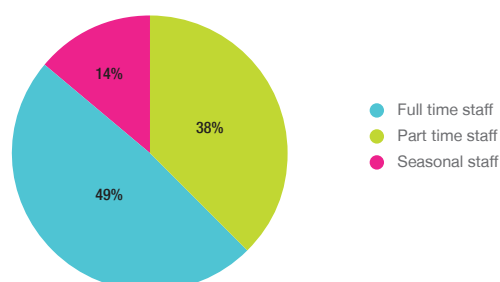
However, some types of organisations rely even more on volunteers, such as organisations with an income between £100,000-£250,000 (79% volunteers).

Organisations who provide mentoring also have more volunteers (74% volunteers), likely due to many mentors being volunteers. On the other hand, organisations who deliver arts and culture, outdoor learning and sport tend to have more paid employees, as those who work with unhoused or homeless young people (45% paid staff). This is also the case for organisations who offer centre-based, open access and referral services (41% paid staff), and outreach (54% paid staff).

Employment type

Overall, 49% of paid employees are working in full-time employment (FTE), 38% part-time and 14% work on a sessional basis. Sessional staff are employed only at sessions with young people, without any responsibilities.

Employment type



Organisations with an income lower than £250,000 employ less full-time staff (19%) and more part-time staff (58%). This is especially poignant for organisations with an income between £10,000-£100,000, with only 14% of paid staff in full-time employment, 64% employed part-time, and 22% employed on a sessional basis only.

Organisations tend to have more full-time staff members if they do detached youth work and/or work with LGBTQ+ young people (60% FTE). However, organisations engaging young people in themes such as arts and culture, outdoor learning and sport tend to have less full-time staff (38% FTE, 44% part-time and 17% sessional staff).

Youth workers

7,114 people work or volunteer directly with young people. We call them youth workers. In general, only 30% of organisations told us they have any JNC qualified youth workers at all. However, 40% of organisations didn't answer this question, which may mean they didn't know – having a JNC qualification is not a requirement when working with young people. There are differences between organisations with JNC qualified youth workers: only 23% of organisations with the highest income (£1M and over) have JNC qualified youth worker/s.

This figure rises to 36%-38% in organisations working with young carers, those who deliver social action or detached youth work, and at organisations working on sport and outdoor learning.

12k
Staff members
(paid)

25k
Volunteers

7114
Youth workers

30%
Organisations
with JNC
qualified youth
workers

