Strategic Plan (July 2025-June 2029) – Final June 2025

Table of Contents

Executive summary 2

Vision and Mission 3

What we do? 4

Who do we work with? 5

The systems we seek to change 6

Why our work matters? 7

National context and evidence base: 8

Theory of Change and Two Loops Model 8

Our impact to date: 10

Our values 11

Strategic priorities 11

Outcomes 12

Our call to action 13

Appendix A: Glossary (in alphabetical order) 14

Appendix B: Strategy on a page (2025-2029) 18

Appendix C: Communication Templates: Boiler Plate Communications 20

Executive summary

Peer Power Youth is a youth led charity that works alongside young people aged 10–25 who have experienced trauma, including abuse, neglect, exclusion, and systemic injustice. Many of the young people we connect with have encountered the care or youth justice systems, often due to deep-rooted societal failures.

Our work is rooted in empathy, equity, and ethical youth voice practice. Since 2016, we've supported over 1,000 young people and 7,000 professionals, embedding healing, trusted relationships, and youth voice at the heart of services. We exist to challenge re-traumatising systems and build new ones that are youth-led, relational, and compassionate.

Over the next four years (2025–2029), our strategy focuses on:

Three Strategic Priorities:

1. **Deepen impact** through youth leadership and ethical youth voice practice
2. **Build a resilient and sustainable organisation** with strong systems and infrastructure, staff support and financial stability
3. **Collaborate to influence change in services and systems**, reforming youth support services through partnerships, sharing our model and influencing

We aim to transform youth support services by supporting young people to grow as leaders, and by working with these young leaders and professionals to build empathy-led, trauma-informed systems. We want to see transformation in the services that support young people at a *preventative* level, so children and young people get better help, when they first need it.

We invite funders, policymakers, service leaders, and young people to join us in co-creating a fairer future, where healing replaces harm and every young person is heard, valued, and supported to thrive.

Together, we transform.

Introduction

We're Peer Power Youth - we exist to make support services better for children and young people who've experienced trauma, including childhood abuse, neglect, exclusion, injustice, and violence. Through empathy and trusted relationships, we support young people to see their strengths, build their confidence and leadership skills.
They tell us what needs to change in mental health, care, justice, and education systems and then we work together, with young people and decision makers, to make those changes happen.

About us
Peer Power Youth is a collective of young people and adults with lived and learned experience of trauma, working together through an empathy-led approach to ***prevent*** children and young people (CYP), aged 10–25, from entering, or falling further into, the youth justice system.

When we talk about trauma, we mean more than a vague or clinical term, it includes the profound impact of childhood abuse, neglect, exclusion, injustice and violence in their communities. These are not isolated incidents, but part of wider societal failures. Most young people we support have not simply "ended up" in services by chance or choice, they are there because of these deep-rooted and often repeated harms. It's critical that we make this clear, so we don't miss the opportunity to engage funders, partners and supporters with the real urgency and complexity of this work.

Some young people we connect with have used the term '*forced resilience*' to explain how they have ***had to be*** resilient to cope with challenges at a young age; resilience to them is not something to build, and it isn't a choice – it is survival. Other young people we connect with have described themselves as '*abandoned by society*'. We see their strengths, power and potential.

Every young person has the right to know that they *matter* by being heard, through trusted relationships, respect and being involved in shaping the support services that impact their lives. Yet, too often, youth support services themselves are re-traumatising, difficult to access, underfunded, and built without genuine youth involvement.

In 2016, Peer Power Youth was founded to change this and pioneered a unique approach to youth voice practice, co-creating the empathy-led model in partnership with young people, who have direct experience of these services. Delivering our model has enabled young people who have experienced trauma to access the support they need and improved youth support services across the NHS, Government services, Local Authorities, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and more.

This strategy sets out our ambitions for the next four years, co-created with our community of young people, staff team, trustees, and advisers. As ever, we remain guided by what young people tell us needs to change

Vision and Mission

Vision
A society where young people who've experienced trauma realise their dreams and live their best lives

Mission
To improve the future lives of young people who have experienced trauma by increasing professional love and empathy in youth support services. We do this by working in partnership with decision makers and young people, developing youth leadership skills, and embedding ethical youth voice practice.

Where others provide services *to* young people, we build change *with* them, through empathy, equity, and ethical co-production.

What we do?

We work alongside young people and decision makers in youth support services as equal partners through an empathy led approach to transform and shift services from systems of control into systems of care.

We build trusted relationships with young people and with decision makers in youth support services that support healing, leadership, and create the conditions for change in support services for young people.

We co-design and deliver:

- **Empathy-led youth support**: Safe, trauma-informed spaces where young people build trust, heal, and grow, supporting their transitions to adulthood
- **Leadership development**: Paid and volunteer opportunities for young people to lead change through access to new opportunities and networks, qualifications, training, research, co-design, and public speaking.
- **Involvement of young people** across our governance, operations, delivery and evaluation, as we always have
- **Involvement of Professionals** in youth support services through Communities of Practice, building a movement for change
- **Training, tools and consultancy**: Empathy-led training, bespoke projects and coaching for professionals and services, improving how they support and involve young people.
- **Partnerships**: With values aligned youth support organisations and Government youth strategies, enabling shared influence to create positive change in services
- **Policy change**: Influencing and improving youth support services with young people and decision makers at a strategic and operational level to reform services and embed ethical youth voice
- **Systems change**: Working with young people and decision makers change the underlying structures, power dynamics and cultures in youth support services to move them toward an empathic approach with professional love and ethical, equitable youth voice embedded as a 'way of being.'

"We are a beating heart for change " YP quote

Who do we work with?

Peer Power Youth work with young people who have experienced significant trauma, often the result of intersecting and increasing challenges.

We connect directly with:

- **Young people with lived experience of the care and justice systems**: young people who experience violence, poverty, discrimination, and exclusion, for some this is a part of daily life. Many have experienced abuse, neglect, and societal injustice from an early age. For them, the care or youth justice systems were not chosen pathways, they were consequences of unaddressed trauma. In addition they are navigating rapid brain changes and transitions through adolescence.

And our work also impacts:

- **Young people who experience exclusion and marginalisation**: many are neurodivergent, from racialised communities, excluded from school, and face social and economic disadvantage. Many experience multiple forms of injustice and exclusion, at school, in their communities, and from services.

- **Young people needing emotional and social support**: the young people we support are often navigating complex emotional and mental health challenges, made worse by systems that are disconnected, risk-driven, and lacking in empathy. Youth support services can be experienced as cold, process-driven and even harmful. We aim to shift this toward spaces for healing, where connection, care and trust are central.

The systems we seek to change

Our primary focus is on transforming the Youth Justice System (YJS), through an empathy-led approach to ***prevent*** children and young people (CYP), aged 10–25, from entering, or falling further into, the youth justice system.

Much of our work and engagement is centred in and around the youth justice system, and on the transitions that young people experience at key points, such as leaving care homes, or moving from one system to another after they are aged 18.
We know that many of those children and young people are also care leavers, have lived in care, or are known to social services. Many experience Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) including high numbers of neurodiversity. Some children and young people we connect with also live in secure settings, such as secure children's homes, secure school or youth custody. Secure environments for children and young people, while intended to offer safety or rehabilitation, are often felt as isolating, disempowering, and re-traumatising and can create further harm. It's critical that we include their voices in our approach to systems change.

Children and young people in the youth justice system often have overlapping and interconnected experiences in their young lives, including time in the care system, exclusion from education, contact with mental health services, and wider social services.

Young people and partners have told us that to create real change in the youth justice system we need to work 'earlier on' in the system (at a preventative level), improving support services at a much earlier stage. A list of support services is at the end of this document. They include social services, CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), youth clubs, schools, SEND and alternative education provision, Post 16 care leaver housing, Police, children's homes and secure settings.

Empathic support services that centre youth voice and are designed with young people will be more efficient, meaning children and young people get better help, when they first need it, and problems don't escalate.

The change we want to see:

- Movement building toward services that heal, not harm, and provide support at the earliest opportunity as opposed to services that are un-empathic, risk and process driven
- Young people meaningfully and ethically involved in transforming support services instead of tokenistic and harmful youth involvement practice.
- A move from viewing young people who have experienced trauma as 'high risk and/or hard to reach', to viewing services as 'out of reach', shifting toward equitable, empathy-led services that prioritise trust, care, and relationships

- Decision makers seeing the power and potential in young people who have experienced trauma, so more young leaders develop skills, access new opportunities, create positive change and achieve personal and professional success

"It was the relationships that made the difference. That's how I built trust, and now I'm leading change." – Peer Power Young Leader

If we succeed in supporting more young leaders to lead change in support services, we will succeed in transforming services. Higher standards of youth involvement, empathy and equity at a preventative level will improve longer term outcomes for young people, improve the efficiency of services and reduce costs.

Why our work matters?

CYP who have experienced trauma are among the most under-supported and least heard.

"Before Peer Power, I felt abandoned by society. Now, I feel like I have a voice and a future." – Peer Power Young Partner

Many of these young people face multiple systemic barriers:

- A high proportion have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or are neurodivergent.
- Many live in unregulated accommodation lacking basic care.
- They are disproportionately impacted by exclusion, criminalisation and mental health issues.

Services designed to support them are often underfunded and built without genuine or ethical youth involvement. Professionals experience burnout and secondary trauma. Young people describe these services as hard to access, process-driven and re-traumatising.

"Young people are not out of reach – it's services that are out of reach." – Peer Power Young Partner

Without this, the risks for children and young people are high:

- **Mental health: 70-80% of** care leavers have a recognisable mental health condition. Devastatingly, they make up **7% of deaths in 18–21-year-olds** despite comprising only **1% of this age group**.
- **School exclusions:** from mainstream and alternative provision (AP) continues to rise. 72% of children and young people in custody, have been previously suspended and 13% permanently excluded
- **Criminalisation of children in care:** Young people in care are more likely to be criminalised for minor offences than their peers.
- **Stop and Search:** 103,135 stop and searches of 10–17-year-olds took place in 2023-24; 76% resulted in no further action, and re-offending rates increased

- **Racial disproportionality in youth justice:** Black children represent **19%** of stop-and-search incidents despite making up only **6%** of the 10–17 population.
- **Long-term inequality for care leavers: 41%** of care leavers **aged 19–21** are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET), compared to **12% of their peers**
- **Youth unemployment crisis:** costs the economy **£31 billion (2021–2025)**.

National context and evidence base:

Our strategy aligns with the Government's current commitment to strengthening youth voice through the development of the youth strategy, recognising that young people must be central to decisions that affect their lives.

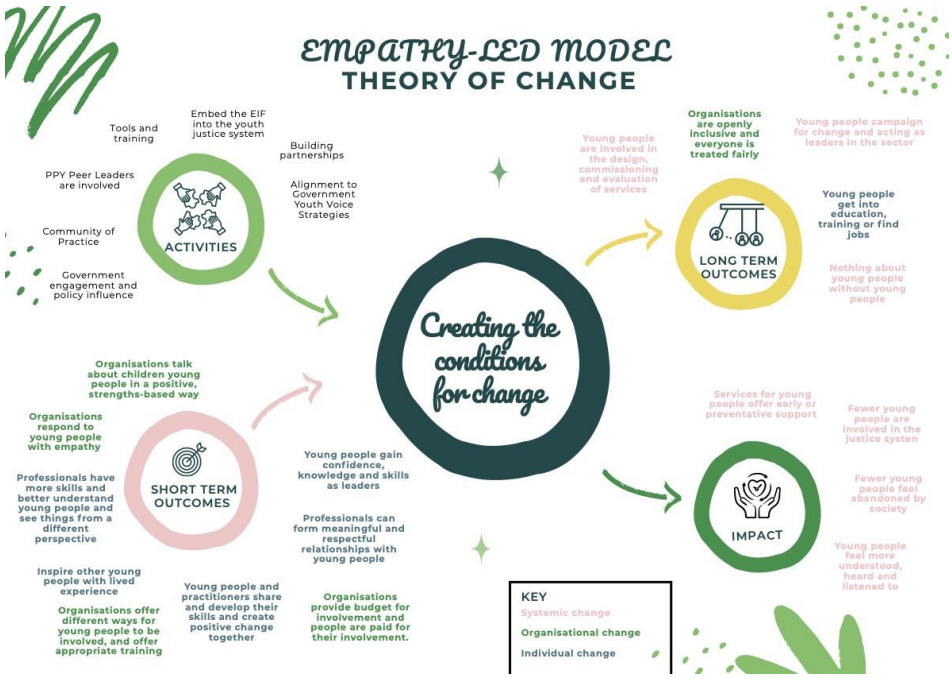
- Local authorities spent £12.2bn on children's services in 2022/23; over a quarter of their budgets.
  - It costs up to £200,000 for a young person to enter the YJS at age 16 versus under £50 to prevent it. A 10% reduction in reoffending could save the public between £300m and £900m.
- Residential care spending alone (£2.4bn) now exceeds all early intervention spending combined (£2.2bn).
- The cost of secure placements is £299,000 - £305,000 per child per year, yet outcomes for children remain poor
- Young people cite mental health, lack of work experience, and few local jobs as key barriers.
- Services that centre lived experience and lived experience voice show higher effectiveness and efficiency.
- Empathy-led organisations are more successful and profitable (source: The Empathy Business).
- Unempathetic, siloed services often fail to support transitions between care, health, and justice.

Theory of Change and Two Loops Model

To help illustrate our strategic approach, we use a **Theory of Change** model:

Strategic priorities → Activities → Outcomes → Impact

This model shows how our work, starting from investment and planning, translates into activity, short- and long-term outcomes and ultimately system-wide impact. It helps us monitor progress, demonstrate value, and ensure that everything we do is connected to our mission.



The diagram above presents Peer Power Youth's Theory of Change visually. The systems that Peer Power Youth aims to influence are broad, and there are complex factors that will affect them and contribute to change (positive or negative). The diagram above reflects this by avoiding a linear layout where A simply leads to B; instead, it illustrates the complex environment in which we operate, where not all factors can be controlled.

On the left-hand side, it shows PPY's activities in relation to the Empathy-Led Model and the short-term outcomes expected for individuals and organisations involved in this work. We believe these outcomes will help create the conditions needed for systemic change across the sector.

We recognise that systemic change is complex and influenced by many factors. Large-scale systemic change is unlikely to be attributable to us as a single organisation. However, we can contribute to creating the conditions that enable change, and we are committed to catalysing and supporting these shifts.

Our role is to help create the conditions in which ethical, inclusive, and trauma-informed systems can emerge and take root—this is our contribution and line of accountability.

Throughout the Theory of Change, outcomes are differentiated at three levels:

- **Individual** – changes in outlook, skills, confidence or practice for young people and practitioners.
- **Organisational** – changes in culture, structure, strategy, and policies within participating organisations.
- **Systemic** – deeper shifts in how systems function, particularly in and around the justice system, including policy changes, structures, decision-making, culture and power dynamics.

Long term outcomes

As these conditions for change take root, broader organisational and sectoral shifts begin to emerge. At this point we will see outcomes beyond those people directly involved.

Impact

This is the ultimate change we hope to see as a result of the Empathy-Led Model, and aligns to PPY's broader strategic aims and goals.

In addition, the **Two Loops Model** (see glossary for full definition), shows how we act as a bridge between failing systems and emerging, empathy-led approaches co-created with young people.

CURRENT SYSTEM (DECLINING LOOP)	BRIDGE (PEER POWER YOUTH'S ROLE)	FUTURE SYSTEM (EMERGING LOOP)
Services built on control, disconnection and risk- Siloed, reactive and hard to access	Supporting youth-led change- Building trusting relationships- Delivering empathy-led training and coaching	Youth-led, relationship-centred systems- Preventative and trauma-informed approaches
High costs (e.g., secure placements at £305k+/yr)- Over-reliance on punitive models	Amplifying young people's voices. Co-creating with professionals- Shifting culture and power dynamics	Co-produced services that prioritise equity, care and lived experience
Lack of early support- Widespread staff burnout- Limited genuine and ethical youth involvement	Providing leadership development and progression- Modelling ethical youth voice practice	Systems where young people are heard, respected, and shape decisions that affect their lives

Our impact to date:

- Reached over 1,000 young people and 7,000 professionals.
- 92% of young people involved in Peer Power are in education, training, or employment within 6 months.
- 100% report increased confidence, wellbeing and self-esteem.
- Internally, we've embedded shared decision-making and equity-informed leadership structures.
- Built a portfolio of funders and commissioners who support and champion our work.
- Co-created impact measures with young people to better track what matters most.
- Embedded shared decision-making and equity-informed leadership across our team.
- Improved internal systems and strengthened our governance and operations. ·
- We've influenced culture and practice across Youth Justice Board, HMIP, Ministry of Justice, NHS England, RCPCH, UK Trauma Council, local authorities, universities, funders and Parliament.
- Our young people have co-created and delivered:
    - Empathy-led training
    - Co-production training and coaching
    - Workshops and resources to deepen youth voice practice

- Health and well-being resources for young people by young people
- Designed and commissioned support services for young people
- Policy reforms centring the voice of the child
- Social action projects

Our values

At Peer Power Youth, our work is driven by our core values -

- **Empathy** – We prioritise care, consideration and relational strength.
- **Fairness** – We advocate for justice and equity in all communities.
- **Love** – We show care and kindness to everyone we work alongside – see 'Professional Love'
- **Openness and Honesty** – We are transparent in our decisions and actions.
- **Positivity** – We remain solution-focused in addressing challenges.
- **Respect** – We value others and allow that to guide how we treat them.

We also:

- **Embed equity in decision-making,** ensuring all young people feel valued and heard.
- **Challenge systemic barriers to inclusion** and tackle inequalities.
- **Co-create solutions** with young people, not for them.
- **Act transparently** about our decisions and actions, and share knowledge
- **Identify, champion and celebrate** young people's strengths and lived experiences.

Strategic priorities

Over the next four years we are committed to delivering our three strategic priorities.

1. **Strategic Priority 1: Deepen impact through youth leadership and empathic, equitable and ethical youth involvement practice**
   We will deepen our impact by increasing youth leadership and changemaking by scaling our empathy-led model across preventative youth support services, while staying responsive to a changing world.

   Our activities:
   We will:
   - Train and support more young leaders.
   - Offer development opportunities that enhance emotional health, creativity, social mobility and employability.
   - Embed and evolve our empathy-led model.
   - Deliver youth-led training to professionals.
   - Secure sustainable funding to deepen our reach.
   - Advocate for empathy-led, equitable policy change.
   - Model shared decision-making and continuous learning.

2. **Strategic Priority 2: Build a resilient and sustainable organisation**
   To make sure Peer Power Youth continues to grow and make a difference, we'll focus on bringing in more funding from a variety of sources. We'll support our team by investing in their learning, wellbeing and making sure they feel valued. We'll also improve how we run things behind the scenes, like our systems, decision-making and safety, and keep building a culture where fairness, shared leadership and youth voices are at the heart of everything we do.

   Our activities:
   We will:
   - Grow and diversify our income to keep our work going strong for the long term.
   - Keep putting equity, youth leadership and shared decision-making at the heart of everything we do.
   - Invest in our staff and volunteers by supporting their development, wellbeing, and recognising their contributions.
   - Improve how we work behind the scenes, making our operations, governance, and safety stronger.
   - Continue embedding equity, shared decision-making and youth leadership in everything we do.
   - Enhance our brand and communication.
   - Improve measurement and evaluation.

3. **Strategic Priority 3: Collaborate to influence change in services and systems**
   We will strengthen and expand our allies and partnerships to influence policy, practice, and public perception, centring empathy, ethical and equitable youth involvement in reform. By building trusted partnerships across sectors, we will influence policy, practice, and public understanding of the needs of young people.

   Our activities:
   We will
   - Grow our network of allies and decision-makers.
   - Share our model and provide deep learning and training across sectors.
   - Co-design preventative services with young people and partners.
   - Advocate for youth-led, empathy-based approaches across all youth-facing services, for young people and policy makers

Outcomes

We will track:

Youth impact

- Number of young people supported into leadership, employment, education and advocacy roles.
- Progress in wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem.

Systems change

- Influence of our empathy-led model on national and local policy and practice.
- Growth in empathy-led programmes and systemic shifts that prioritise empathy, equity and healing.

Organisational change (in partners)

- Changes in culture, practice, empathy and decision-making following our training and co-production work.

Organisational strength

- Improved internal processes, stronger alignment with our values and more sustainable funding.
- Increased staff and youth partner retention, diversity and leadership development.

Partnerships and collaboration

- Growth in strategic relationships that amplify our reach, learning and impact.
- Increased engagement and satisfaction from clients, partners and collaborators.
- Growth in movement building around empathic, ethical and equitable youth voice practice

Peer Power Youth is excited to work towards a fairer, more equitable future for young people, contributing to the transformation of support systems for young people.

Our call to action

We call on funders, policymakers, service leaders and practitioners to join us in placing empathy, healing and youth voice at the heart of our systems. By working together, we can prevent young people from entering or falling further into the justice system, and instead support their leadership, healing, and long-term success.

Together, we transform.

Appendix A: Glossary (in alphabetical order)

Alternative Provision (AP)
Education arranged outside mainstream schools for young people who cannot attend regular classes, often due to behavioural, emotional, or health needs.

Co-production
At Peer Power Youth, this means young people and adults working together as equal partners to design, deliver, and evaluate services or projects, sharing power and decision-making.

Creating positive change in services
Sometimes called **system change**, for us this means shifting the way whole services and systems work, not just fixing surface problems, but by changing culture, values, processes and power structures so they work better for young people. At Peer Power Youth, system change is led by youth voice and focuses on empathy, healing and equity.

Decision makers in youth support services
We mean practitioners, professionals, managers, and senior leaders in youth support services across social care, youth justice, government agencies, local authorities, youth and community settings, mental health services etc. Anyone who makes decisions **for** young people, and could be making decisions **with** young people

Empathy-led model
Our unique Peer Power Youth model, that has been developed with young people, and centres empathy as the core value in youth involvement and leadership. This model fosters trusting relationships, mutual respect, and genuine power-sharing to embed young people's voices, especially those with lived experience, into the design, commissioning, and evaluation of services. It promotes a cultural shift toward empathic involvement, challenging social injustice by enabling preventative and early intervention support that truly meets young people's holistic needs. The model is trauma-responsive and ethical, recognising the emotional impact of participation and ensuring young people are not exploited. Peer Power Youth work alongside organisations to co-develop this approach through deep learning, training and coaching, continuously evolving it based on feedback and evidence to create effective, inclusive youth engagement practices.

Empathy-led approach
A way of working that puts empathy, understanding and sharing the needs and feelings of others, at the centre of all actions. It means creating services together that are kind, caring, and respectful to foster healing and support.

Empathy-led support services
At Peer Power Youth, empathy is 'Love in Action' - it is a 'doing' word, and more than feelings. It is about the actions we take and the way in which we care for each other, our spaces and our work. An empathy

led approach changes how services are designed and delivered, making them more human, more healing, and more effective.

Equity and ethical youth voice practice
By equity in youth voice practice, we mean making sure that a range of different voices can be heard and in a range of ways that meet their needs. Also that everyone has what they need to be involved meaningfully and succeed, especially those facing barriers. Ethical youth voice practice ensures young people's involvement is genuine, reciprocal, respectful, safe, and free from exploitation, valuing their views, time, and wellbeing.

Forced resilience
A term that young people from Peer Power Youth used to describe the expectation or requirement to be resilient in the face of challenging or traumatic circumstances, even when young people may not have the resource to cope effectively. It highlights situations where resilience is not something young people would strive to be or wish to be praised for, but rather a necessary coping mechanism; they have had no choice but to be resilient in difficult situations they would rather not have experienced.

Justice system
The network of laws, courts, police and services that respond when someone is accused of breaking the law. For young people, this includes the Youth Justice System (YJS) which is the network of laws, courts, services, and professionals focused on children and young people under 18 who encounter the justice system. Its aim is to support rehabilitation, protect young people's rights and prevent reoffending while promoting fair and age-appropriate treatment. We collaborate with the system leaders to create fairer, more healing and less harmful services.

Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET)
Young people, usually aged 16–24, who are not currently engaged in education, paid work, or vocational training.

Peer Power Youth
A movement where young people with lived experience work alongside trusted adults to create change rooted in empathy, shared power and healing. Through supporting each other as peers and leaders, we transform systems, from justice to care to education, making them fairer, more human, and more effective.

Prevention (Youth Justice)
Prevention is about supporting children and young people *before* they reach crisis. It means services listening early, acting early and making sure young people get what they need to thrive, like mental health care, safe relationships, and trusted adults. At Peer Power Youth, we work to prevent young people from being criminalised or entering the Youth Justice System (YJS).

Professional Love
A term used to describe warm, compassionate and genuine care in professional settings. For young people, especially those who've experienced trauma, professional love means adults being consistent,

kind, respectful, modelling boundaries and being emotionally present. Importantly, demonstrating to young people that they **matter.** It challenges the 'professional armour' of cold, detached ways of working and puts relationships at the centre of support. Research has confirmed that loving relationships are essential to developing identity and empathy in young children.

Services in and around the Justice System

These are services that young people often encounter before, during, or after being involved in the justice system. They include:

- Youth clubs and community centres
- Schools and alternative provision (AP)
- Social care services, safeguarding and family support teams
- Post 16 care leaver housing – Unregulated accommodation (welfare)
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- Charities that work with children and young people
- Police and courts
- Youth Justice
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision
- Children's Homes and Foster Care Providers (welfare)
- Secure settings (e.g. secure children's homes, secure schools)
- Local Authorities
- Researchers

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Children and young people who have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder to learn or access education than most peers of the same age. SEND can include physical disabilities, learning challenges, neurodiversity, sensory impairments, or emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Systemic barriers to inclusion/ systemic injustice

Deep-rooted obstacles within social, economic, or institutional systems that prevent some groups, such as young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, from accessing equal opportunities and full participation.

Trauma

An experience or series of experiences that overwhelm a person's ability to cope, causing lasting emotional, psychological, or physical harm. Complex trauma involves repeated or ongoing trauma affecting development and wellbeing. This can include personal experiences as well as social issues like racism, poverty, and discrimination.

Two Loops Model

This is a visual way to show how old systems decline while new systems emerge. The first loop is the current system (e.g. services built on control, risk, and disconnection), which is starting to fail. The second loop shows the rise of new systems (e.g. youth-led, relational, and empathetic ways of working). Peer

Power Youth acts as a 'bridge-builder,' supporting young people and professionals to co-create that new, better loop.
(Add a visual for full clarity if space allows.)

What we mean by youth voice

Youth voice is about young people actively shaping services and systems that affect their lives. At Peer Power Youth, this means genuine **co-production** where young people and adults working together as equal partners in decision-making and action. We recognise the importance of **diversity of voices**, ensuring that all young people, especially those least heard or facing inequalities, are included.

Youth voice is not a hierarchy where some voices matter more than others. Instead, we see it as a **continuum of participation**, where young people's involvement can range from consultation to full leadership, depending on context and choice. Our goal is to create meaningful, ethical opportunities for young people to influence change at all levels.
This approach leads to system change, shifting culture, values, processes and power, to build more empathetic, healing, and equitable services.

Working in partnership with young people

Young people co-design and co-deliver all our work. This is why we refer to the young people we work with as our young partners, and when we say "we", we mean adults in support roles working with young people as paid Peer Leaders, volunteer Peer Experts, and other younger teenagers that they engage with. We share power, decision making, and action - we don't differentiate between adults and young people when we talk about our co-production approach.

Appendix B: Strategy on a page (2025-2029)

Vision

A society where young people who've experienced trauma realise their dreams and live their best lives.

Mission

To improve the future lives of young people who've experienced trauma by increasing **professional love** and **empathy** in youth support services.

We do this by:

- Working in **partnership** with young people and decision makers
- Developing youth **leadership**
- Embedding **ethical youth voice practice**

Our values

- **Empathy** – We prioritise care and relational strength
- **Fairness** – We advocate for justice and equity
- **Love** – We centre kindness and connection in all we do
- **Openness and Honesty** – We're transparent in actions and decisions
- **Positivity** – We are solution-focused
- **Respect** – We treat everyone with dignity and value

What we do

We embed equity, co-create solutions and challenge systemic injustice

- **Support young people** with lived experience of trauma
- **Grow youth leadership** through paid roles and training
- **Train professionals** in empathy-led, trauma-informed practice
- **Partner with services** to reform systems through co-production
- **Influence policy and public perception** with youth-led advocacy

Strategic priorities

1. Deepen impact through youth leadership

- Train and support more young leaders
- Embed empathy-led approaches across youth services
- Deliver youth-led professional training
- Advocate for equitable and healing systems

2. Build a resilient and sustainable organisation

- Grow and diversify funding
- Invest in staff and youth partners' wellbeing

- Strengthen internal systems, operations, and equity in decision-making

3. Collaborate to influence change in systems and services

- Grow partnerships and ally networks
- Co-design preventative services with young people
- Influence policy and practice across youth justice, care, health, and education

The change we want to see

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE	FOR SYSTEMS	FOR PEER POWER
Increased confidence, wellbeing, skills	Trauma-informed, empathy-led services	Sustainable income and strong governance
Progress into leadership, education, work	Genuine youth voice in design and delivery	Retention and progression of staff and peer leaders
Young people shaping services	Reduction in harm and re-traumatisation	Expanded national influence and credibility

Call to action

We call on funders, policymakers, and service leaders to help us put empathy, healing, and ethical youth voice at the heart of every system young people touch.

Together, we transform.

Appendix C: Communication Templates: Boiler Plate Communications

Peer Power in three sentences

We're Peer Power Youth - we exist to make support services better for children and young people who've experienced trauma, including childhood abuse, neglect, exclusion, injustice, and violence.
Through empathy and trusted relationships, we support young people to see their strengths, build their confidence and leadership skills.
They tell us what needs to change in mental health, care, justice, and education systems and then we work together, with young people and decision makers, to make those changes happen.

Longer version

We're Peer Power Youth; a charity led by empathy, connection, and youth voice.

We stand alongside children and young people who've been affected by trauma, including abuse, neglect, exclusion, systemic injustice and community violence. Many have spent time in care or the justice system, not by choice, but as a consequence of being failed by society and systems meant to protect them.

Through relationships rooted in trust and shared experience, we support young people to heal, grow and lead. They tell us what needs to change in mental health, care, justice, and education systems and then we work with young people and decision makers to make those changes happen.

We challenge services that often re-traumatise the very people they are meant to support, replacing harm with healing and exclusion with empathy.

Whilst we will stick to the above boiler plate templates, we appreciate the narrative might need to be adjusted based on specific stakeholders so have developed the below.

For Funders

Peer Power Youth is a youth-led charity transforming support services through empathy and lived experience.
We work with children and young people who've experienced childhood trauma, including abuse, neglect, exclusion, injustice, and violence in their communities. Many have been pushed into the care or justice systems not by choice, but by systemic failings.

Through relationships built on trust and shared experience, we support healing, leadership and change. Young people tell us what isn't working and we co-design better services that are more compassionate, effective, and human.

Your support helps us challenge re-traumatising systems, shift power, and build a future where young people are heard, supported, and thriving. *We invite you to invest in empathy-led change.*

For Delivery Partners (e.g. social care, youth justice, health services, housing, education)

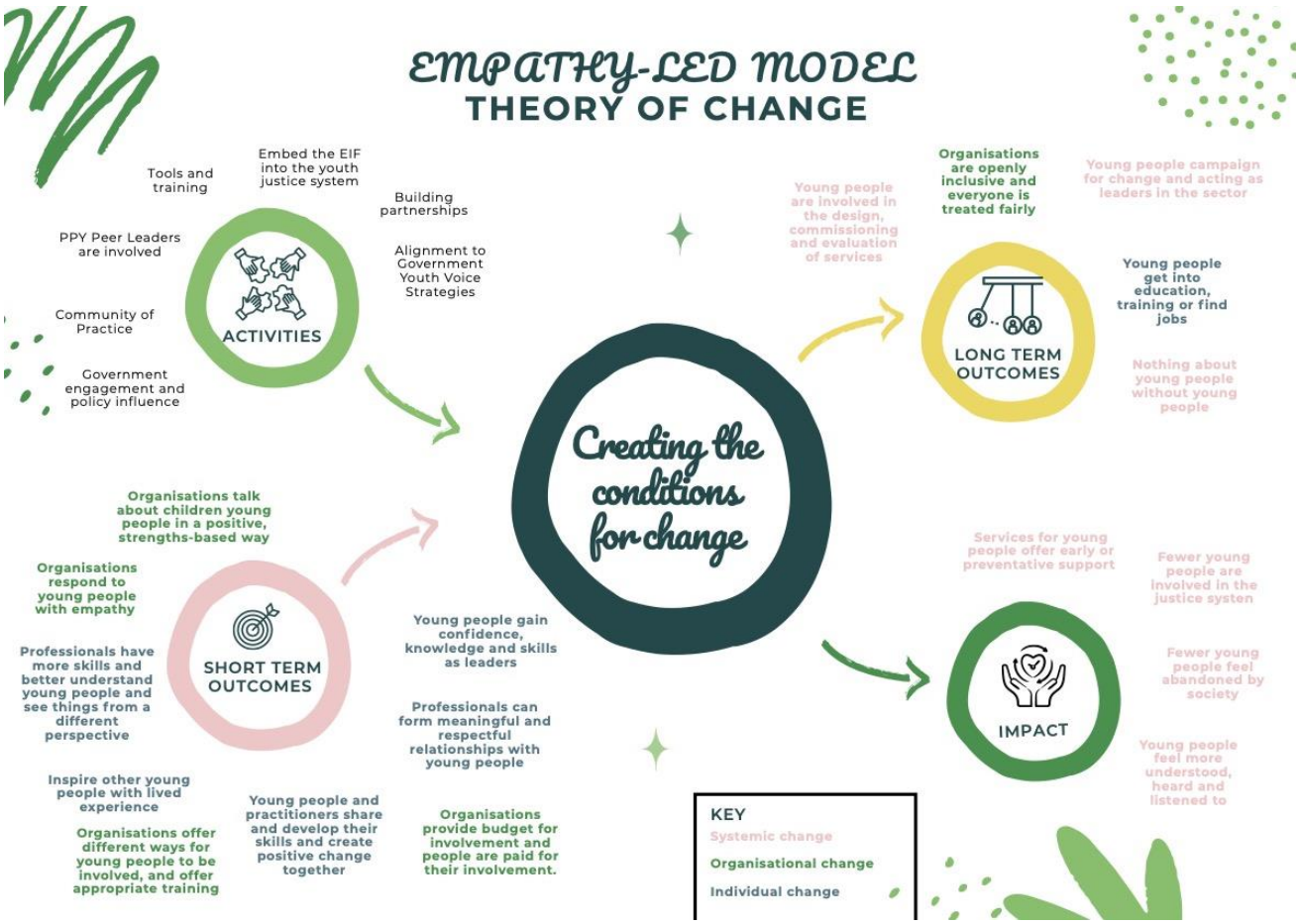
Peer Power Youth partners with services to improve outcomes by working alongside young people who've experienced childhood trauma, including abuse, neglect, systemic exclusion and community violence.

Many of these young people have experienced the care or justice systems, often because of unmet needs and structural inequalities, not by choice. The services they encounter are too often hard to access, disconnected, and re-traumatising.

We support young people to build confidence, trust and leadership skills. Together, we co-produce training, research, and service improvements that are more empathetic, equitable, and effective. *We invite you to embed ethical youth voice in policy and commissioning and transform practice through co-production.*

For Young People –

We're Peer Power Youth and we've got your back.
If you've been through difficult times, like abuse, neglect, exclusion, being in care or in trouble with the law; we're here for you. You didn't end up there by choice, and you deserve better.
We'll listen, show up for you, and support you to grow your confidence, build your future, and use your voice to influence change. You'll also get to help change the services that affect you and others, so they heal instead of harm. *Get involved and let's lead change together!*


EMPATHY-LED MODEL
THEORY OF CHANGE
Tools and training
Embed the EIF into the youth justice system
Building partnerships
PPY Peer Leaders are involved
Alignment to Government Youth Voice Strategies
Community of Practice
Government engagement and policy influence
ACTIVITIES
Creating the conditions for change
Organisations talk about children young people in a positive, strengths-based way
Organisations respond to young people with empathy
Professionals have more skills and better understand young people and see things from a different perspective
SHORT TERM OUTCOMES
Inspire other young people with lived experience
Organisations offer different ways for young people to be involved, and offer appropriate training
Young people and practitioners share and develop their skills and create positive change together
Young people gain confidence, knowledge and skills as leaders
Professionals can form meaningful and respectful relationships with young people
Organisations provide budget for involvement and people are paid for their involvement.
Young people are involved in the design, commissioning and evaluation of services
Organisations are openly inclusive and everyone is treated fairly
Young people campaign for change and acting as leaders in the sector
LONG TERM OUTCOMES
Young people get into education, training or find jobs
Nothing about young people without young people
Services for young people offer early or preventative support
Fewer young people are involved in the justice systen
IMPACT
Fewer young people feel abandoned by society
Young people feel more understood, heard and listened to
KEY
Systemic change
Organisational change
Individual change