

2023–2024 ANNUAL REPORT

(the junction* 
young people, health & wellbeing



“As the challenges for young people intensify in areas of employment, finances and mental health, it is more crucial than ever that they have properly resourced support. Organisations like the Junction are a vital part of the network of that support. Their role is absolutely essential. I’m so privileged to be a patron.”



Irvine Welsh (Patron) with Cara Spence (Director)

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front cover – Junction Youth Advisors with Trustee Chair Sophie Ewan (centre)



***“Being able to talk openly with other people
in the drop-in stops me feeling alone
and I realise other people
are struggling too.”***

The Junction

Established in 2005, it supports and improves young people's health and wellbeing within a purpose-built centre in the heart of Leith, Edinburgh.

Our multi-disciplinary team of staff and volunteers use both youth work and therapeutic approaches to meet the needs of young people, aged 12 – 21 who live, work or learn in the North East Edinburgh area.

Our Vision

Young people thrive, with access to support and resources that meet their health and wellbeing needs.

Our Mission

To provide services for young people that support their health and wellbeing and enable them to make informed decisions about their lives.

Introduction: Our New Director

"I was warmly welcomed to the organisation in November 2023. I'm delighted to be part of The Junction team and want to thank them for my introduction and for sharing their wealth of expertise and knowledge.

Since starting in post, the team and I have focused on fundraising and developing a new strategy. We have also established working groups on key areas including Digital Inclusion, Youth Voice, and Evaluation.

It's clear that young people's needs are at the centre of our organisation and that us listening to young people's views is a key aspect of our culture and daily practice.

I've enjoyed spending time with young people at the Friday Chiller and I look forward to engaging with the Youth Advisors in the coming year.

In terms of young people's wellbeing needs, I'm saddened to see that so many young people are experiencing poor mental health.

Increasing numbers of young people need our support, this is not surprising as data shows that younger people are most likely to report that they have a mental health condition than any other age group in Scotland[1].

There are also signs of increasing harm from alcohol and drugs among young people in Scotland and in North East Edinburgh [2].

This means that our services have never been so vital."

"It's clear that young people's needs are at the centre of our organisation and that us listening to young people's views is a key aspect of our culture and daily practice."



Cara Spence
Director

Youth Voice & Participation

Through the **Junction's Youth Advisors** (JYA) programme, young people are supported to create positive change at the Junction.



They talk about issues that impact the lives of young people in the community, and they support the Junction to develop and promote its services. This year, 14 young people volunteered with the Junction Youth Advisor programme contributing 183 voluntary hours. They were involved in:

Sharing their views for our new Three Year Strategy

Developing engaging consultation activities for other young people

Organising a team building evening for staff, trustees and JYAs

Supporting our Leith Chooses fundraising activities

Celebrating the 150th JYA monthly meeting

Through their volunteering, young people have told us they made new friends, built up their confidence in groups and improved their communication and leadership skills.

"I feel more confident from coming to the JYAs because everyone is easy to talk to and it's really fun and chilled."

"I feel more comfortable and able to express thoughts with the people around me."

We also carried out an annual survey called 'Voice Your Choice', this year the theme was 'The Junction as a Safe Space'. Feedback regarding the services provided by the charity was very positive, and any suggested changes have been embedded into plans for 2024 – 2025. We would like to thank the young people for their contributions and feedback. Key Findings from the 'Voice Your Choice' Survey:

100% of respondents think diversity is welcome at the Junction

92% felt staff & volunteers had a good understanding of their support needs (including neurodiversity and anxiety)

95% said they are aware of our RESPECT guidelines to create a safe and welcoming space

Areas of development:

52% of respondents said that they knew what to do if they weren't happy with their support

36% were unsure if staff and volunteer have a good understanding of different ethnicities and religions

As a result of feedback we will focus on revamping our Complaints Process and have plans to deliver 'Cultural Awareness Training' to our team working with Multi-Cultural Family Base.

Our Values



Our values (updated in 2024) guide all aspects of our work.

They inform our individual actions and decisions, and shape how we engage with young people, collaborate with others, and operate within the organisation.

As a youth and community-based organisation, young people are at the heart of everything we do. Our decisions and services are therefore responsive to the needs of young people and the wider community.

Nurturing

We create a supportive and compassionate environment for young people, staff and volunteers.

We work to ensure healthy growth and development for all individuals.

Non-Judgemental

Our staff and volunteers are approachable and aim to be non-judgmental.

We actively explore our biases and are open to learning and expanding our knowledge.

Inclusive

We ensure our services are accessible and inclusive for all.

We create safe and welcoming spaces for young people and an inclusive culture for our staff and volunteers.

Collaborative

We work collaboratively with young people, each other, and key partners.

We maximise working relationships that improve young people's wellbeing and organisational development.



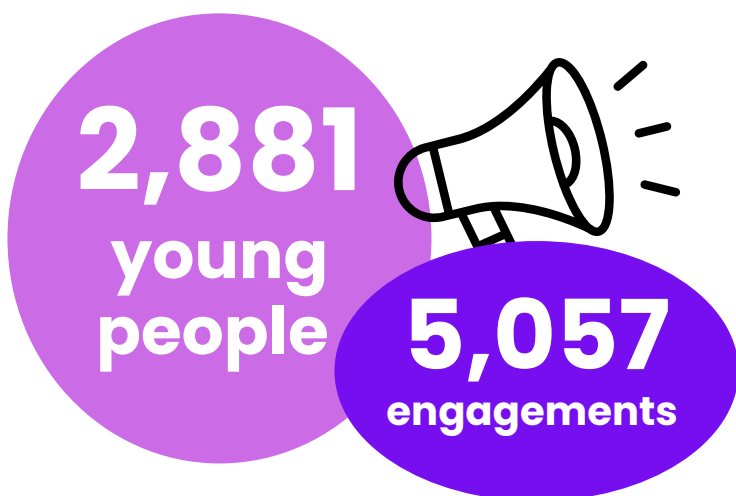
"If I didn't have counselling at The Junction when I did, I don't know if I would still be alive."

Overview of Key Achievements

There were significant achievements for The Junction in the year ending 31st March 2024. New staff, volunteers and board members were welcomed to the organisation, new projects and processes were established, and in-depth work and reflection around equality and inclusion took place. We also welcomed a new Director.

The Junction worked with over **2,881 young people** and had around **5,057 engagements** with young people. The term 'engagements' refers to contacts with young people or health and wellbeing interventions.

In addition to the delivery of services, the following achievements were also made by the charity – a **new online operating system** was introduced (Tacklit) to record therapeutic interventions and measure impact. Our implementation of this is now complete.



A **new Counselling Service** was established, funded by The Lottery 'Inspiring Communities', working with Universities and Colleges to support Counsellors in Training.

This new approach increased our capacity to support young people, and 10 trainee counsellors came on board this year, providing free counselling to young people.

Equality and Inclusion was also a key theme during this period.

We began working on the LGBT Charter at Gold level supported by LGBT Youth Scotland. Key achievements included new equality monitoring processes and activities delivered at the Pride Youth Space.

We also continued our partnership with the Multi-cultural Family Base to deliver the 'Mosaic Project'. Mosaic is a group to support Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) young people who have been experiencing poor mental health and wellbeing and feel that their cultural needs are not being met by mainstream mental health services or youth agencies.

One-to-One Support & Counselling



THANK
☺ YOU

"Thank you...

*...having this safety
plan will help stop
me acting on my
suicidal thoughts."*

We use various modalities to support young people in one-to-one settings including:

Counselling, Substance-Use Brief Interventions, Asset-Based Coaching, and NHS Scotland approved tools including 'Lets Introduce Anxiety Management' (LIAM) and 'Brief Behavioural Activation' (BA) (for low mood), and one-to-one creative work.

The Junction's **Counselling Service** uses a multi-agency approach to support young people within the 'Leith Community Mental Health Collaborative' of which The Junction is the lead partner.

We are a BACP registered service provider and utilise both qualified counsellors and counselling trainees throughout our Counselling Service. This service is managed by a qualified Counselling Team Lead, we also have a Youth Counsellor who oversees some of the most complex cases.

We offer a person-led approach and have counselling trainees joining us from a range of different modalities these include person-centred approaches, CBT, transactional analysis, art psychotherapy and integrative approaches.

Our **Substance Use Project** Worker supports young people who are impacted by drug and alcohol use including those young people who are impacted by substance use within their families.

Our **Creative Express Service** focuses on the use of creativity to explore, express and improve young people's health and wellbeing, using a range of mediums (e.g. creative writing, crafting, painting, printing, song writing). This is delivered through both group work and one-to-ones.

Creative Express one-to-ones can be particularly helpful in supporting young people impacted by trauma for whom traditional talking therapies are not the best fit. They can also prove popular with young people who already use some form of creativity as a coping strategy.

The Junction works hard to match each young person with the most appropriate modality of therapy.

In total 1,128 therapeutic one-to-one support sessions were provided, supporting 113 young people.

Themes raised within therapeutic one-to-ones included:



Evidence of impact:

100% of young people had new skills to deal with challenges. This included developing new or healthier coping strategies, building assertiveness and decision-making skills.

95% of young people showed progress in being better able to cope with difficult emotions such as anger, sadness and anxiety, building self-esteem and confidence.

73% of young people made improvements to their health and wellbeing e.g. improvements in sleep habits and diet, increased physical activity, reduced risk taking in relation to self-harm, sexual health, and substance use.

"I'm in such a different place than when I started this, I feel like I can manage my anxiety."

"I feel like a different person, like I can connect to my thoughts in a different way now."

"All this time I've been trying to avoid my emotions, but I actually realise I need to feel them in order for them to move... I'm starting to know what it means to love myself."

"What I got out of it is learning a bit more about myself on a deeper level, by writing about things I wouldn't have thought of."

In addition, there was a **300%** increase in wellbeing amongst those who accessed one-to-one support through our drug and alcohol support service.

On average young people measured 4 out of 18 in overall wellbeing at the start of the service and this increased to 16 out of 18 following the support provided.

Information on our evaluation methodology is available later within this report.



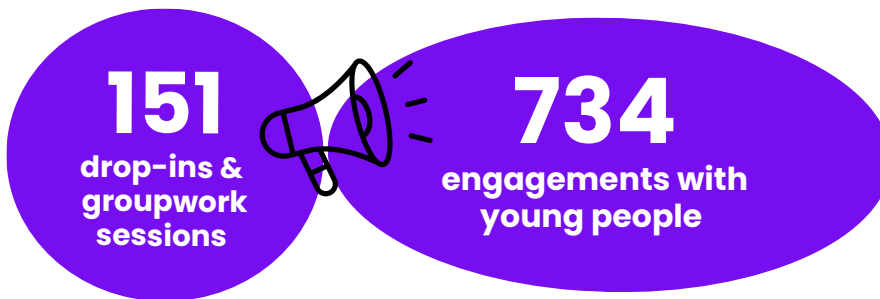
Open Access Services & Groupwork

To ensure young people can access services without waiting lists we provide drop-ins, educational, health and wellbeing themed group work.

Services include our '**Wednesday Walk-in**' and '**Friday Chiller**' where young people can access one-to-one support or sexual health services without an appointment, as well as health and wellbeing themed educational activities and our **Creative Express Service** (funded by the Robertson Trust) which provides regular creative group work programmes.



"The Creative Hours group that Creative Express runs gives me relaxation while being around people, even though I find being with people I don't know hard and I'm doing something I enjoy."



151 health and wellbeing drop-ins and group work sessions were delivered this year, resulting in **734** engagements with young people. Staff reflections show that:

- 91%** of young people developed new skills to deal with challenges, including the identification of healthy coping strategies and building assertiveness and decision-making skills.
- 76%** of young people were better able to cope with difficult emotions such as anger, sadness and anxiety, building self-esteem and confidence.
- 75%** of young people made improvements to their health and wellbeing e.g. sleep habits, diet, substance use, physical activity, self-harm and sexual health.

"My friend who is trans told me I should come here as it had really helped her And then when I walked in it just felt like a place I can feel comfortable in!"

"I have found some of the techniques you taught me in relation to anxiety have been really helpful."



Outreach Services



To reach young people who are most likely to experience poor health outcomes we provide outreach services and off-site educational group work. This includes:

Street Work

Providing brief interventions on health topics and promotes health & wellbeing services

Educational Groupwork

Delivered in schools with a focus on drug and alcohol harm reduction and service promotion

Community Events

Attendance at community events and targeted work young people experiencing disadvantage or who have protected characteristics.

Significant events this year included delivery of health and wellbeing activities at the 'Pride Edinburgh Youth Space' in partnership with LGBT Youth Scotland. We also provided health and wellbeing inputs to all S1 classes at Trinity Academy and Leith Academy.

In total **198** outreach and detached groupwork sessions were delivered, reaching **2,754** young people. Within schools we also delivered multiple sessions with the same classes, engagements with young people were therefore as high as **3,213**.

Training for Professionals

The Junction and LAYC (Lothian Association of Youth Clubs) worked in partnership this year to provide training to youth workers across Edinburgh and the Lothians, with a focus on 'The Impact of Alcohol Use on Young People'.

The overarching goal was to strengthen the quality of youth and children's work across Edinburgh and the Lothians, and the outcome was to improve responses to alcohol use by youth workers. Two sessions were delivered, one focused on 'Young People and Alcohol Use', the second focused on 'Alcohol Use and Parent(s)/ Carer(s)'.

12 participants took part in the training and evaluation data showed a **50% increase** in youth workers' confidence, skills and understanding to support young people affected by alcohol use.

Evaluation Methodology



In 2020, we worked with Edinburgh University to develop our '**Theory of Change**', and Evaluation Framework based on Edinburgh Wellbeing Outcomes.

In 2023 we set up a new online operating system piloted called 'Tacklit'[3] to record therapeutic interventions and measure impact. The implementation and pilot stages are now complete.

We use a range of methods to gather impact data including surveys with young people, staff reflections, as well as case studies and testimonies from young people. Some specific examples are noted below:

Counselling Service – Uses a blended method of 'YP Core'[4] questions to measure psychological distress and PSYCHLOPS a mental health outcome measuring tool.

One-to-One Support – Uses a 'Richter Scale'[5] tool to help young people identify goals and track progress towards their goals. We also use worker observations to assess young people's progress against agreed outcomes, and an End of Service evaluation tool.

Drug and Alcohol Support – One-to-one support is monitored on a set of outcomes agreed by all partners involved in the city-wide Young People Substance Use Services (YPSUS) Partnership. Outcomes are linked to GIRFEC[6] and focus on the indicators Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, and Responsible.

NHS Programmes 'Lets Introduce Anxiety Management' (LIAM) and Brief Behavioural Activation (BA) – Young people complete the Routine Child Anxiety and Depression Scale at the first and last session to measure change. An Experience of Service Questionnaire gives us qualitative feedback about how it feels to come in for sessions. We also use a tool called 'Goal Based Outcomes' weekly to track progress towards individual goals.

Open Access Service & Outreach – Impact of one-off interventions are identified by reviewing staff observations against agreed outcomes/ indicators.

To calculate statistical data on the number of young people that The Junction worked with, we completed the following calculation:

YOUNG PEOPLE

113 young people accessed one-to-one support, 14 young people were members of The Junction Youth Advisors, and we engaged with **2,754** young people via outreach = **2,881** young people.

ENGAGEMENTS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

1,128 one-to-one support sessions delivered, **734** engagements took place with young people through open access services and group work, **3,213** engagements with young people took place via outreach services (this includes data related to work in schools where more than one session was delivered with the same group of young people) = **5,057**.

Please note, numbers of 'young people' and the number of 'engagements with young people' should not be added together as they use different methodology and would result in double counting. We are also aware of the limitations of this data, for example outreach statistics could include engagements with young people on more than one occasion, however we have not knowingly included any data related to repeat contacts. Adhoc engagements with young people are also likely to be much higher.

Income in this financial year amounted to **£413,016**, largely through grants and donations. Total expenditure was **£400,652**.

This resulted in a net surplus of **£12,393** for the year. **£263,827** is to be carried forward into the next financial year and this includes **£129,456** in restricted funds.

The Junction continues to monitor the financial risks closely and have remained vigilant to the current economic climate. Despite challenges, we have been successful in several significant funding applications this year and remain in a positive financial position.

Finances



Thank You!

We would like to thank the following funders, trusts and contributors for their support in 2023 – 2024:

City of Edinburgh Council 'Community Mental Health Fund'

City of Edinburgh Council 'Community & Families Grants'

NHS Lothian – Health Improvement Fund

Edinburgh Drug & Alcohol Partnership – NHS Lothian & CEC

EVOC – Community Mental Health Fund

National Lottery – Improving Lives

National Lottery – Young Start

The Robertson Trust

The Wood Foundation

The Cray Trust

Dr Guthrie's Association

The Findlay Charitable Trust

Leith Benevolent Fund

The Maple Trust

The Postcode Lottery

Scotmid – Community Connect

The Make Tiny Changes Fund

The W.M Mann Foundation

Annual Report external sources:

[1] [Scotland's Census – Health, disability and unpaid care | Scotland's Census](#)

[2] [Young people experiencing harms from alcohol and drugs: literature and evidence review – gov.scot](#)

[3] [Tacklit | Proactive, Personalised, Outcome-Driven Health Care](#)

[4] [CORE Measurement Tools \(CORE-10\)](#)

[5] [The Rickter Scale® – Evaluation Support Scotland](#)

[6] [Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\) – gov.scot](#)

***" The Junction
should be...
...worldwide. "***

(Young Person)



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