



**THE MATRIX TRUST**  
**ANNUAL REVIEW**



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## WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Matrix is a Christian charity providing a lifeline for vulnerable young people across Guildford Borough. Established for 20 years, we are dedicated to working **with young people** - helping them to make the most of their lives, and **for young people** - catalysing change by nurturing, inspiring, connecting and empowering them.

Over the years, Matrix has met and served 1000's of young people in schools and in the community and has made a real difference to young people's lives. Today we continue to partner with local organisations, churches, schools and the community to help young people thrive.

## THE NEED - WHY DO WE DO THIS?

Guildford Borough is a place of contradictions. Bustling town, tranquil countryside; steeped in history, centre of innovation; wealth and status, poverty and vulnerability. From the outside, it may be seen as just a place of wealth, but the needs of many children and young people are very real, with up to 41% income deprivation in some communities (Hidden Surrey), 1 in 8 young people with a diagnosable mental health condition (Young Minds) and 54% of young people believing their lack of self-confidence holds them back in life (Prince's Trust).

It is within this context that Matrix works to bring a wealth of opportunity to those without and care for the vulnerable so they are not left socially excluded.

## MODEL - HOW DO WE DO THIS?

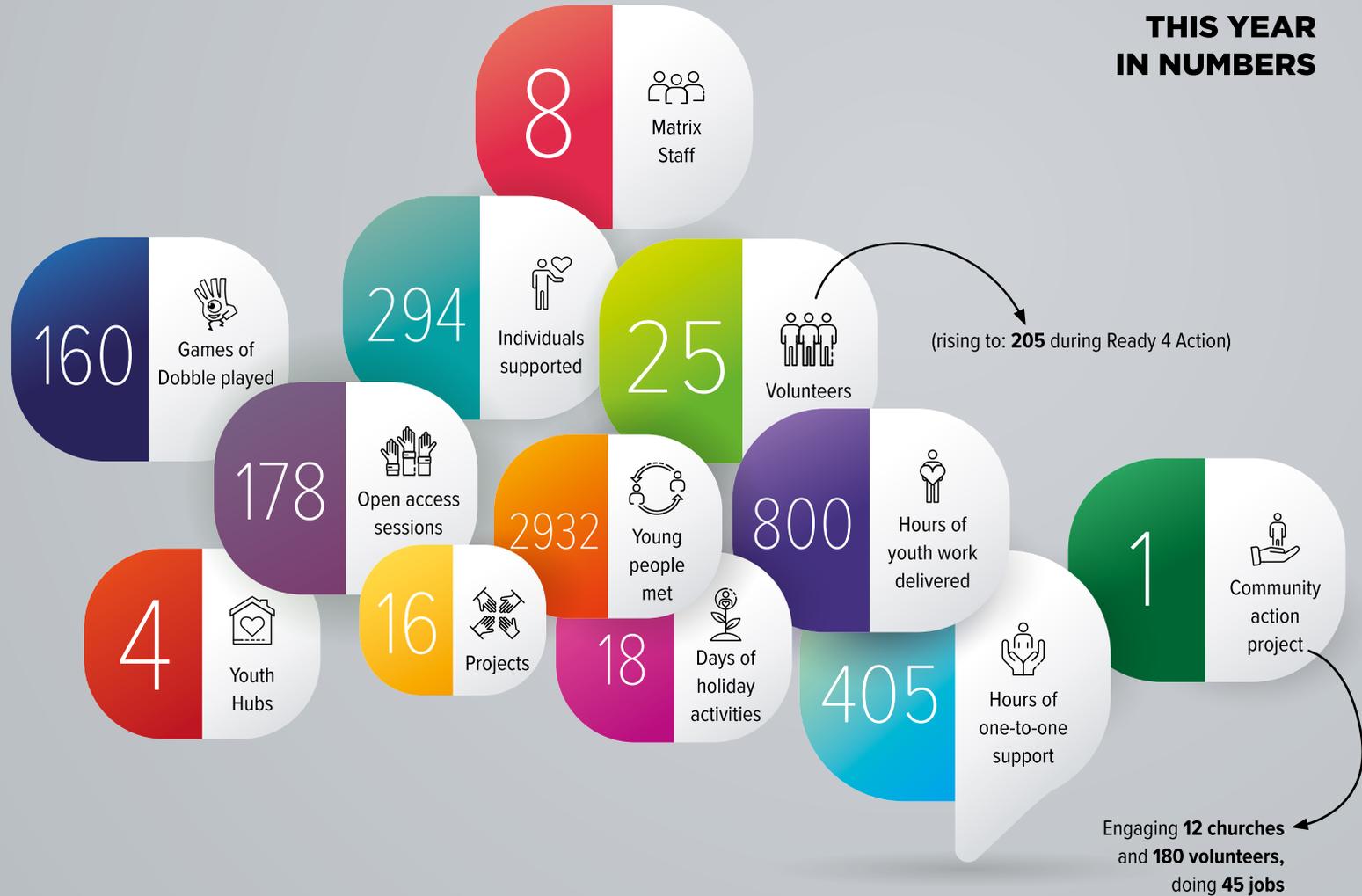
Building long-term relationships with young people across Guildford we provide activities within schools and communities that connect them to innovative opportunities, new experiences and positive role-models so each young person can make the most of their lives.





**“** *I find it helps to know there is someone I can come and talk to...*

# THIS YEAR IN NUMBERS



(rising to: **205** during Ready 4 Action)

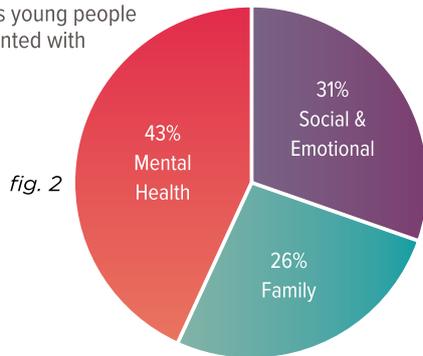
Engaging **12 churches**  
and **180 volunteers**,  
doing **45 jobs**

## **WE NURTURE:** caring for young people's needs so they're not left socially excluded by their vulnerabilities.

Integral to the pastoral systems of George Abbot and Guildford County Schools, we provide professional Mental Health First Aid trained Youth Workers to build long-term relationships and walk alongside young people through life's difficulties. Some of this work is preventative, but much is responding to the growing level of wellbeing and mental health needs amongst young people.

**“It helps having someone to talk to who understands and doesn't judge me...”**

Issues young people presented with

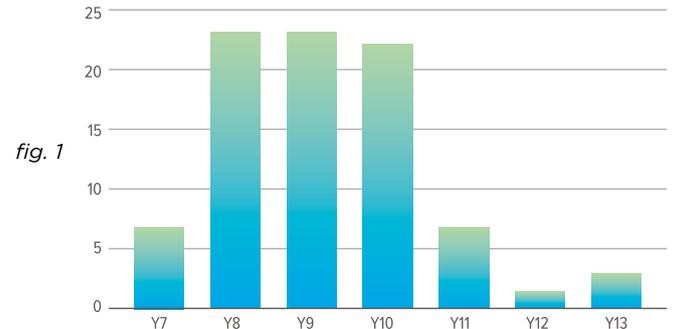


This year we provided personalised support for 89 individuals struggling with life, through one-to-one sessions, for as long as they needed us (fig. 1). Young people come to us with a wide range of worries and issues (fig. 2) - this year, 28% were specifically struggling with anxiety.

**NEW**

We piloted Wellbeing Days across 2 schools. **582 Year 7's** took part in workshops across the day and at the end, **88%** told us they can now explain what wellbeing is.

Spread of year groups supported



**WE INSPIRE:** offering hope in the future and opportunities to discover and achieve their potential.

We provide positive activities in a variety of communities and schools across Guildford Borough, increasing access to a wider range of opportunities that might otherwise be out of reach for young people. This year, 2024 10 - 17 year olds, took part in workshops including a Mock Wedding (relationships), Prayer Spaces (interactive, reflective spaces) and Mental Health.

**NEW**

Our new holiday programme, **Hub+**, got off to a flying start with **65 hours** of holiday activities in communities across Guildford Borough. **43 young people** took part in fun and innovative activities, such as a 'mocktail' workshop, escape room, scavenger hunt and outdoor cinema, reducing social isolation and relieving holiday boredom.



“

*I learnt  
I don't  
have to  
keep  
things  
to  
myself*

## **WE CONNECT:** providing opportunities for young people to engage with each other and their community

This year in the community, we made a positive impact by partnering with churches and volunteers across the town to deliver 126 Youth Hub sessions in key areas of need, and launched a new monthly initiative in Onslow. Of the 108 young people who attended regularly, over 60% told us that they made new friends as a result of Youth Hubs this year, and 80% of told us that Youth Hubs have had a positive impact on their life!

97 young people came to lunchtime drop-ins across 2 secondary schools, finding fun, friendship and a listening ear. One young person told us that because of drop-in: I am 'now able to feel happy and more confident to express myself'



Our **Ready 4 Action** project engaged **180 volunteers (30% under 18)** from **12 churches**, tackling **45 jobs** to improve the lives of those in need in our local communities. **100%** clients told us the work we did would make a difference to their lives.

**NEW**

We piloted Social Action Workshops in schools and at our community Youth Hubs, with 19 different young people. 75% said they agreed more strongly at the end of the project with the statements 'I can make a positive impact on my community,' and 'I have a responsibility to help those in my community who are in need'. One young person even wants to take up social action as a career!



## **WE EMPOWER:** giving young people tools to stand strong so they can advocate for themselves

We took 15 young people on a weekend away, camping. Despite some anxiety about staying away from home and taking part in activities, all the young people got stuck in. From putting up tents in the rain, to caving, buggy-building, and even orienteering, they spent the weekend full of enthusiasm. In just 48 hours, some young people overcame fears and worries, challenging what they thought they were capable of. Maisie\* was really nervous before the weekend and had arranged to be picked up each night by her Mum, but even before the first evening had finished she cancelled her lift. By the end of the weekend, she had stayed both nights, loved every minute and made new friends.

She told us:

**“ I didn't want to stay overnight  
but I'm glad I did**

**NEW**

We ran a taster session with 5 potential Young Leaders ahead of launching a new weekly programme to equip and inspire Y10-13s in Autumn 2019.



# STORIES

**Ruth\*** had a complicated family situation, and was meeting with our team for relational support in school each week and attending our lunchtime 'drop in' for additional support. At the start of the academic year Ruth would fall out with friends regularly and be difficult to talk to, often leaving mid conversation if we were trying to resolve an argument. Through our HUB+ holiday activities, summer camping trip and social action workshops we noticed she was changing and beginning to thrive. Although homesick on the residential she took part in several activities that she'd initially thought she wouldn't be able to face, including caving and high ropes, and was really proud of herself.

Ruth continued to push through her complicated family situation and friendship issues, telling us that she was now ready to rebuild relationships that had broken down, and that one-to-one mentoring and Matrix Youth Workers had been a "lifeline" for her during this time.

\* = Name changed to protect identity

We first met **Tim\*** in October. At first, he was quite shy, only speaking when asked and giving all the 'right' answers. Although he appeared to be doing ok on the surface, home life was tricky as his sibling had mental health issues - this was making Tim anxious. Our school-based Youth Worker built a rapport with Tim and after a few weeks he felt able to share what was worrying him and causing him to feel anxious. Tim realised he didn't have the necessary coping strategies, but as sessions progressed they were able to discuss a number of options for when he found himself feeling low.

Tim can now articulate how he is feeling and is becoming more emotionally resilient. Despite ongoing setbacks with his brother's mental health, Tim has been able to turn to his coping strategies and talk things through so that he can remain calm. Now he arrives at appointments with a much more upbeat attitude and body-language, and is very thankful at each meeting for the impact we've had.

**“** *You feel like you belong  
and like you're not alone*





*We will  
create  
visible and  
versatile  
space for  
vulnerable  
young  
people*

## **WHAT'S NEXT?**

As our nation continues to change and become more challenging for younger generations, with political instability, the impact of austerity and growing environmental concerns, we are seeing 3 key issues for young people:

1. An ever-growing mental health crisis
2. Lack of time in school for creativity, as well as social, emotional and personal development, resulting in some young people not being prepared for adult and working life
3. An decrease in face-to-face connection with peers and their community, due to the prevalence of social media and a lack of safe spaces to meet others

So, in 2020 we will be transforming our underused office-space into a more visible and versatile space for the benefit of vulnerable young people, initiating 3 innovative ventures:

### **1) Social Enterprise Café and Activity Room**

Set in a central park, this public cafe will provide a vehicle for training NEET young people in business skills through accredited schemes and have a transformational effect on the future sustainability of the charity by creating new income generating streams.

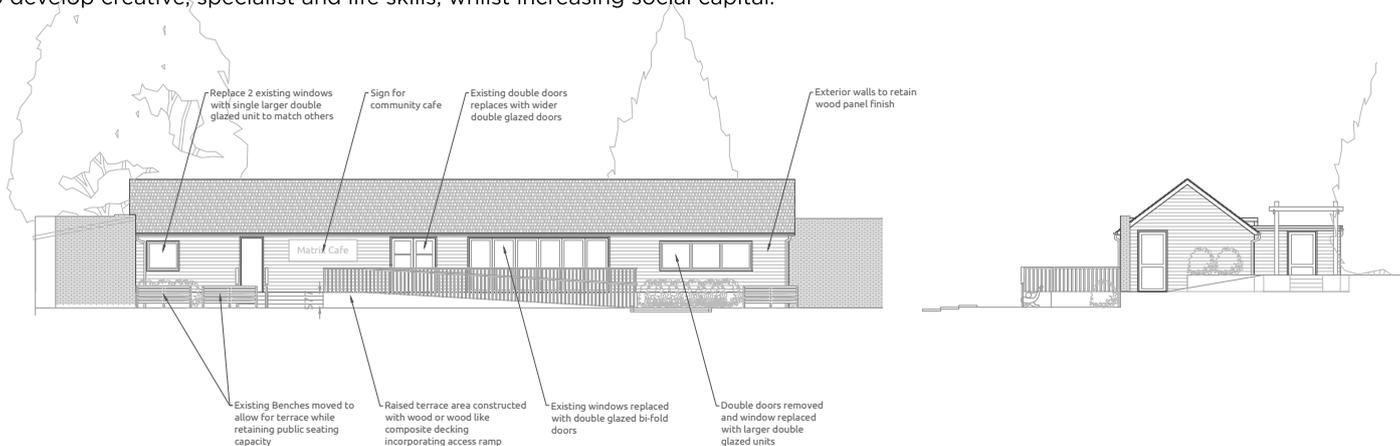
### **2) 'Relational Hub' and Youth Cafe**

The Youth Cafe will be open every day after school for 11-18 year olds.

Based in the community café (once closed to the public) it will provide young people with a space to make friends, build relational connections with youth workers and cultivate vital social and emotional skills.

### 3) Learning and Discovery Space.

Running in conjunction with the Hub this will connect young people to their community, providing co-produced training opportunities to develop creative, specialist and life skills, whilst increasing social capital.



Working alongside local businesses, residents and churches is key to ensuring Matrix can continue to deliver vital provision for the young people of Guildford Borough. If you'd like to discuss how we could work together, or just want to find out more about any of our projects, then I'd love to talk to you.



**Misty Bower**  
CEO

Contact Misty on **01483 574900** or email [mistybower@matrixtrust.com](mailto:mistybower@matrixtrust.com)

**“** *This is a space  
where I feel safe*



# matrix

*with young people, for young people*



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