



DERBY YOUTH ALLIANCE

#THISISDERBY

2025

April

2026

March

Our Annual Evaluation

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Introduction and Overview

The Derby Youth Alliance was created by Derby's Stronger Communities Board. It aims to promote openness, trust, responsibility sharing, innovation, high performance and the alignment of interests between delivery partners. Members are committed to working together to reduce risk and improve wellbeing and services for young people, in a collaborative and constructive way.



Mission

To bring together a network of providers working collaboratively to support Derby City's young people to be safe, develop and prosper. The focus of the Youth Alliance is always based on the needs of the most vulnerable and challenged young people and deprived communities.

Vision

The vision of the Youth Alliance is to work towards Derby being:

- A city where young people are safe, feel supported and are celebrated
- A city with diverse opportunities for young people to do activities in safe, supported environments
- A city that puts the needs of the most challenged young people first
- An inclusive city where young people are listened to and have a voice
- A city where young people feel happy, safe and empowered.

Funding

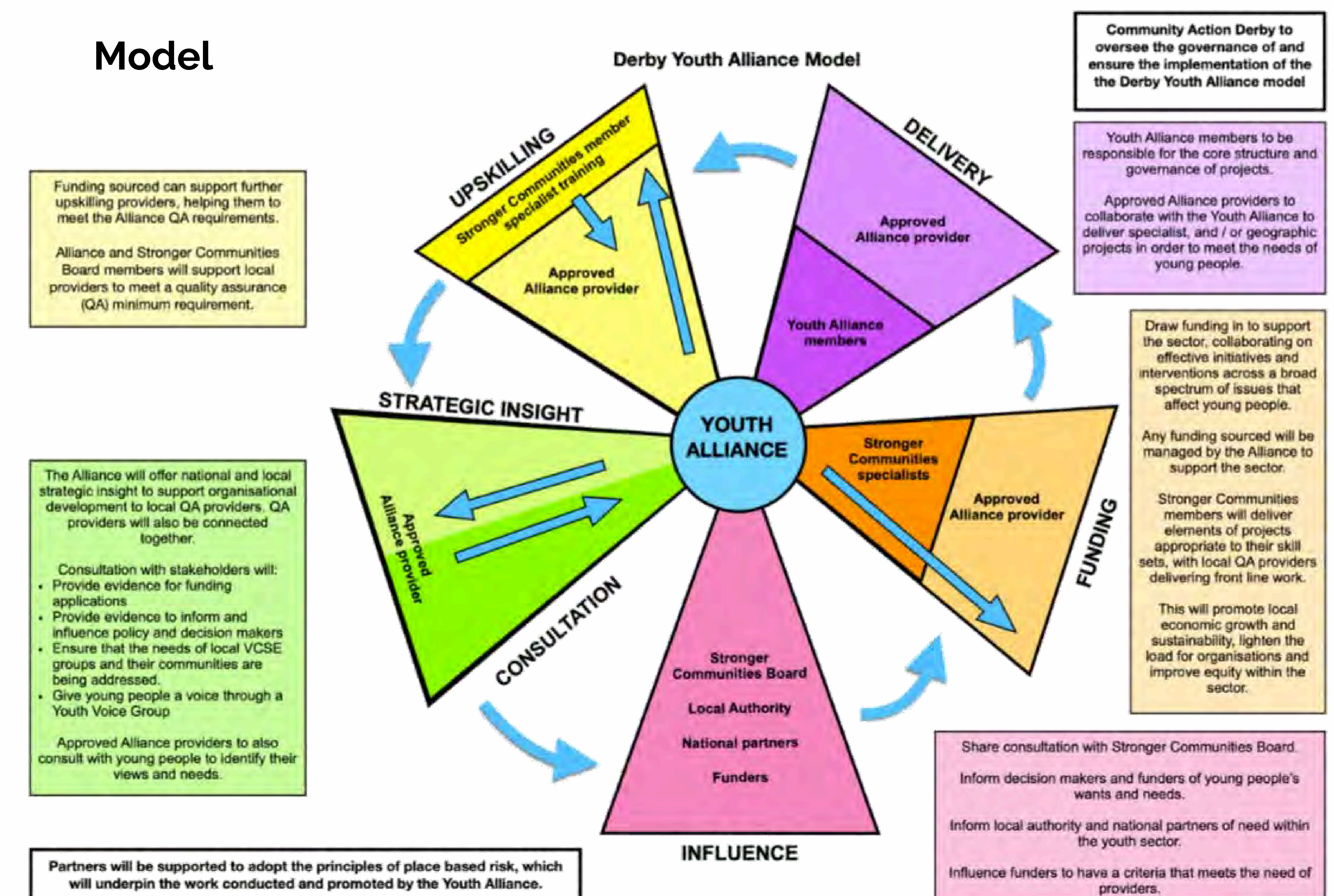
During the 2025/26 financial year, we received grants from Derby Homes, Derby City Council, Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing, and East Midlands Rail. Our Youth Alliance Coordinator role was funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

Priority Areas

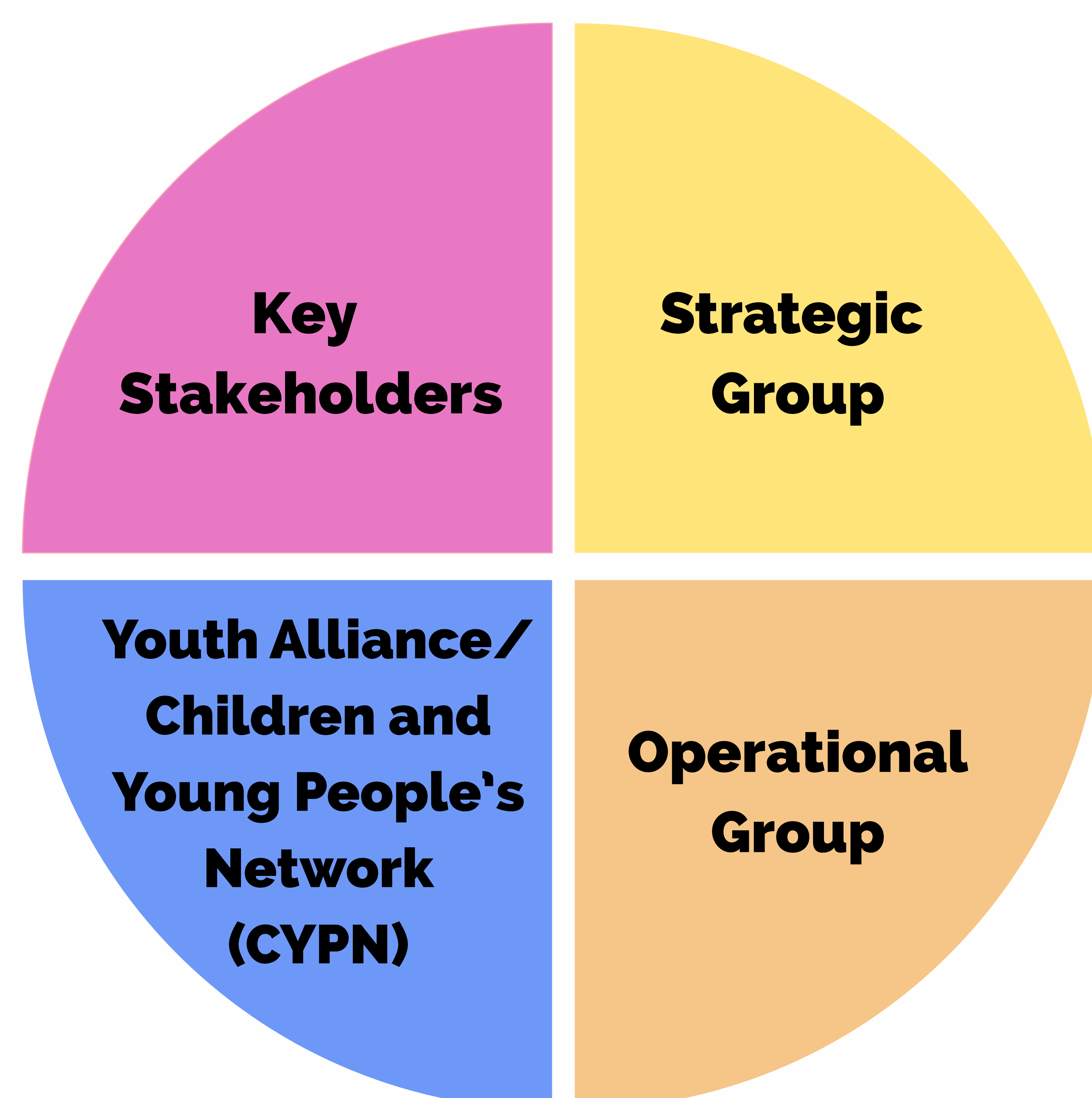
The Youth Alliance prioritises tackling issues that are relevant to young people, including, but not limited to:

- Abuse and exploitation
- Alcohol and drug use
- Anti-social behaviour and crime
- Education and employment
- Exposure to new experiences
- Extremism and radicalisation
- Facilitating engagement and connection with authorities
- Financial stressors, poverty and destitution
- Health and wellbeing (physical, mental and emotional)
- Life and family changes
- Cohesion, integration and isolation
- New and diverse communities
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and inclusivity
- The environment and climate crisis
- Youth voice and participation

Model



Membership and Growth



Throughout 2025/26, the Youth Alliance team continued to work with the current membership structure to solidify the networks and processes gained from the previous review.

The Strategic Group focuses on governance, strategy surrounding the identification of trends and themes of issues that young people are facing in the city, representation of the Youth Alliance on various local and regional boards and upskilling the youth sector. Members contribute expert advice and guidance from their own specialist areas of work around young people in our city.

The Operational Group is responsible for delivery across specialist projects and referrals, delivering and receiving training and offering thematic input into the overall strategy to support young people in our city. The group's input is valuable to those in the Strategic Group and also to the Youth Alliance (YA)/Children and Young People's Network (CYPN) members.

The YA/CYPN members may be organisations or individuals working in the youth sector. They are able to feed into thematic discussions and strategy and apply for funding as communicated through the distribution list. They are welcome to attend or present at our CYPN meetings and events, encouraging them to develop their offer and work more collaboratively with other organisations in the city.

Key Stakeholders support the Youth Alliance to grow and develop. They aim to include the Youth Alliance in discussions around the welfare of our city's young people, so we can strive to work together to resolve ongoing issues and community tensions and make Derby a more welcoming and inclusive city

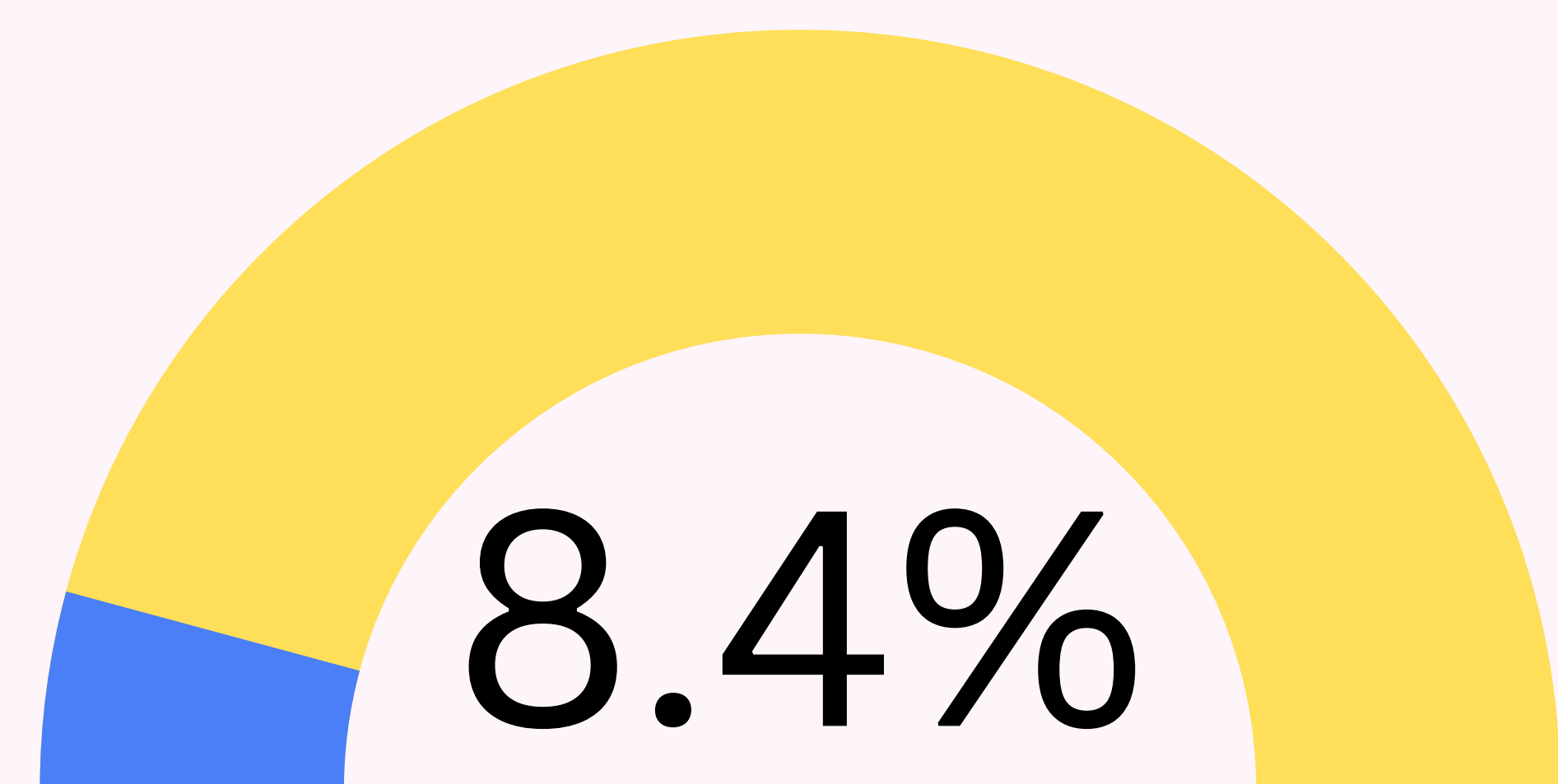


Local Information about Derby

Derby, the main city in the county of Derbyshire, has a population of 274,100, with 55,000 aged 0-15 years. [1]

Between April 2025 and March 2026, the average crime rate in Derby was 137.7 per 1,000 people - 48.2% higher than the national average (up from 28.3% last year). Violent crimes, violence and sexual offences and anti-social behaviour were the most prevalent crime types committed in Derby. [2]

Crime Statistics

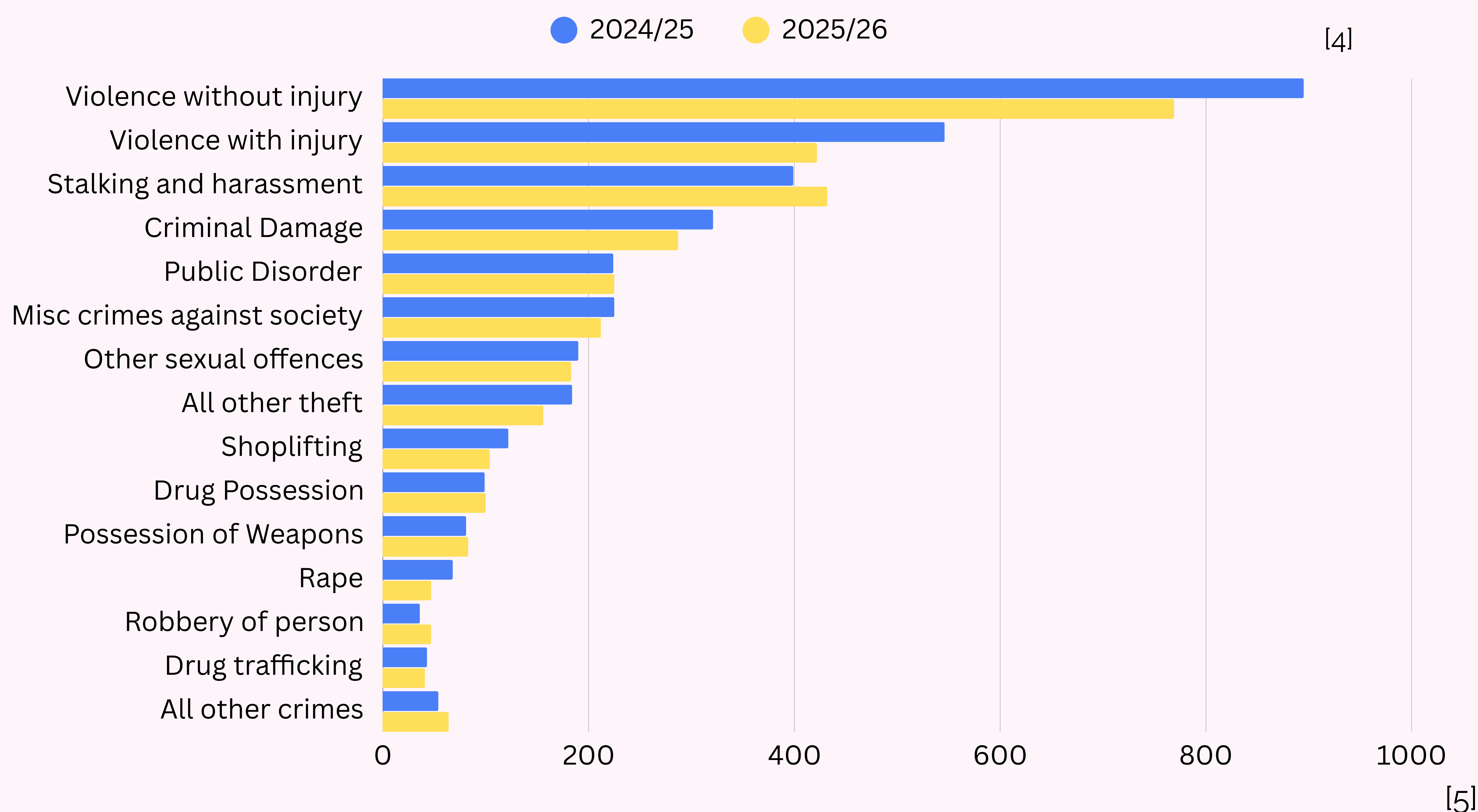


[3]
Across Derby City policing areas, between March 2025 and April 2026, 8.4% of all recorded crimes committed were by a suspect under the age of 18. This is down from 2024/25, when the citywide average was 14.3%.

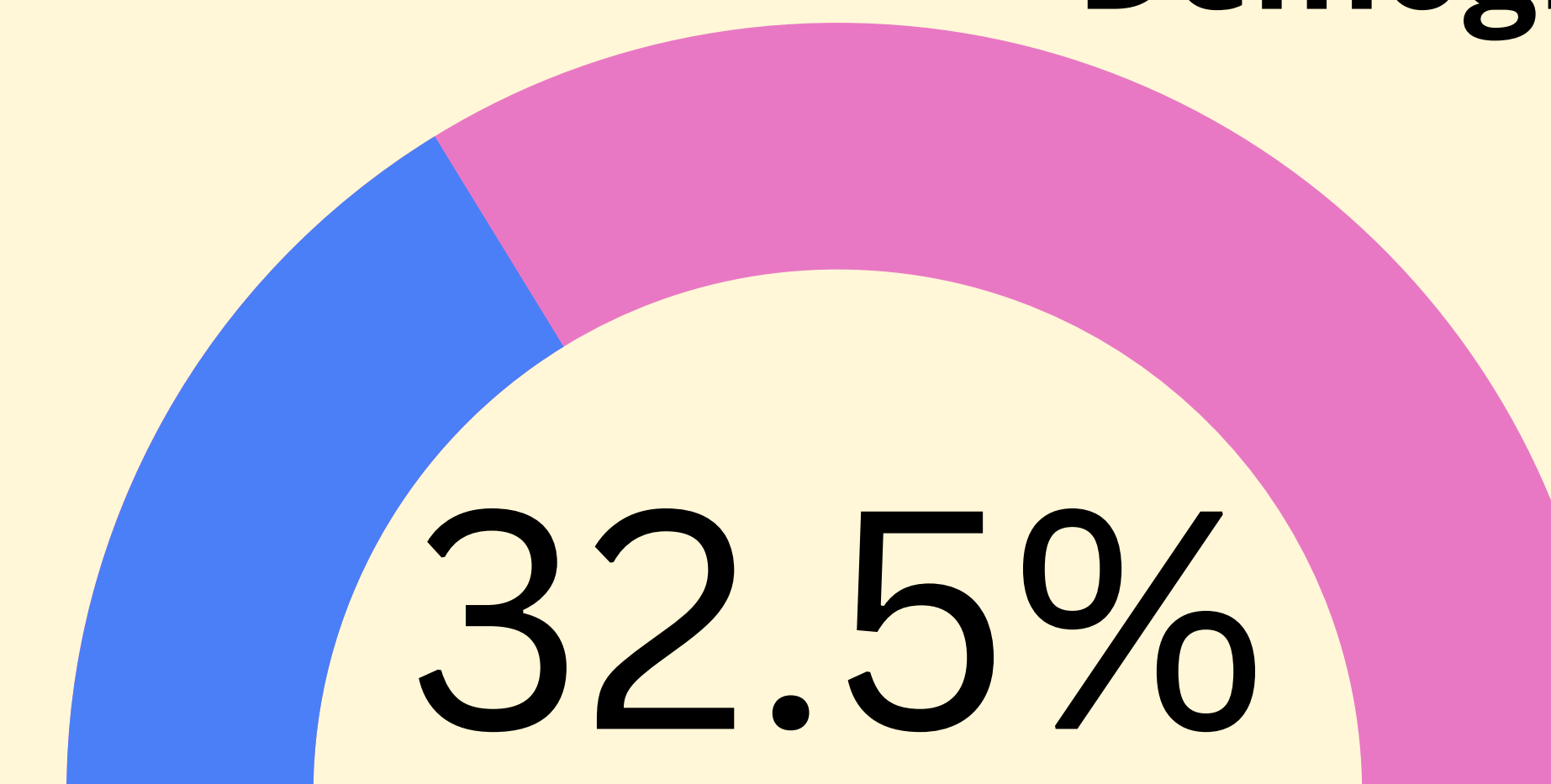
The chart below shows the most prevalent crime types committed by suspects under the age of 18 in Derby City.

300% Increase Burglary (Residential unconnected building)
38% Increase Arson
31% Increase Robbery of personal property
8.2% Increase Stalking and harassment

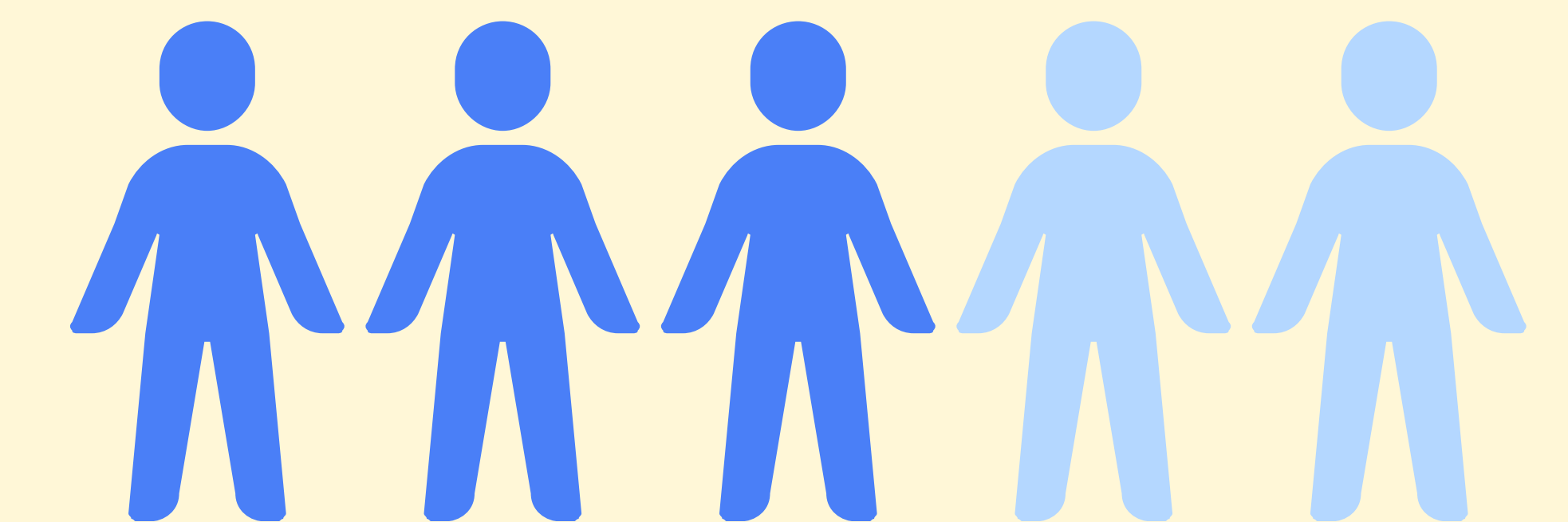
31% Decrease Rape
28% Decrease Theft from the person
23% Decrease Violence with injury
64% Decrease Theft from motor vehicle



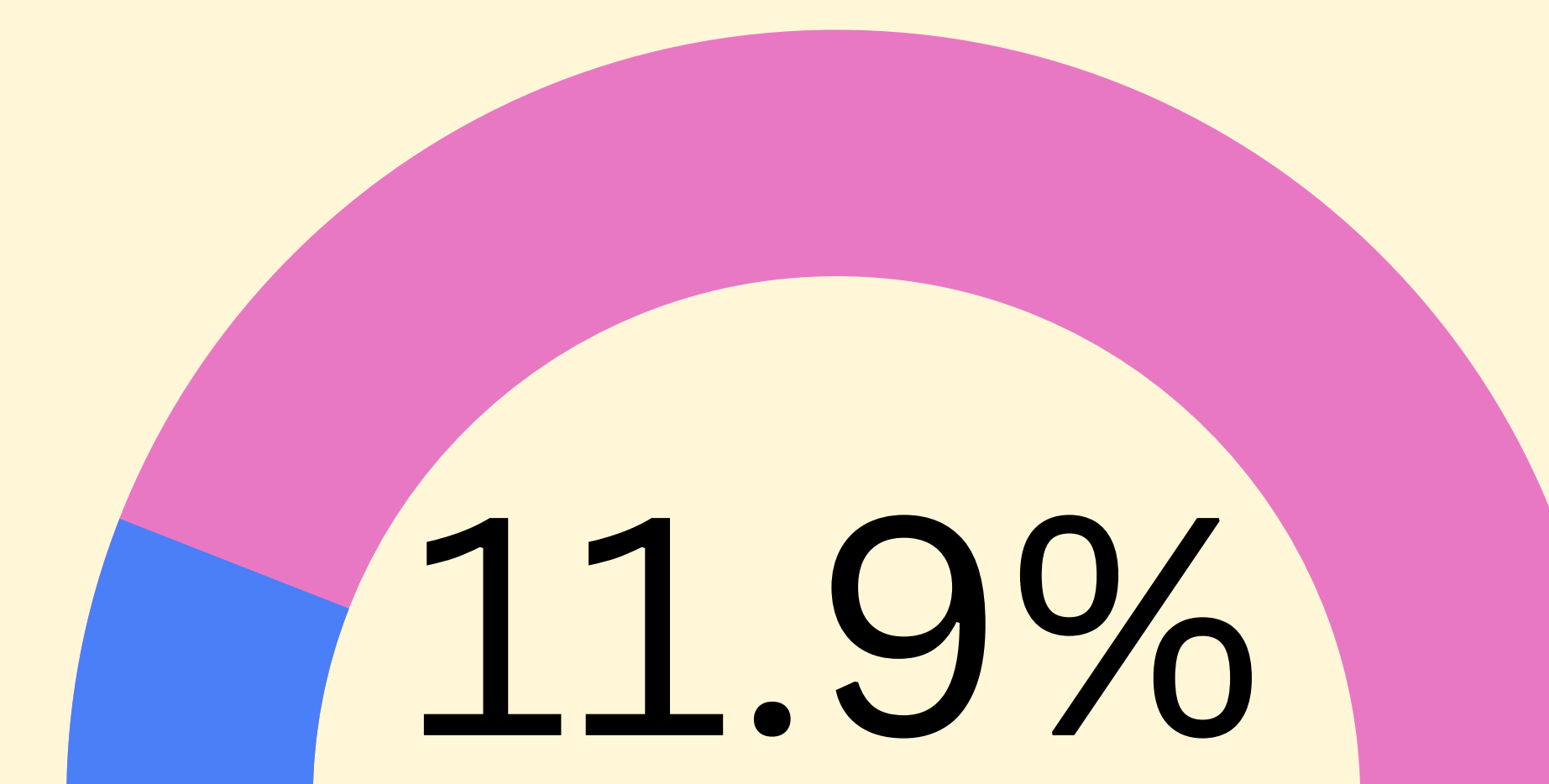
Demographic Statistics



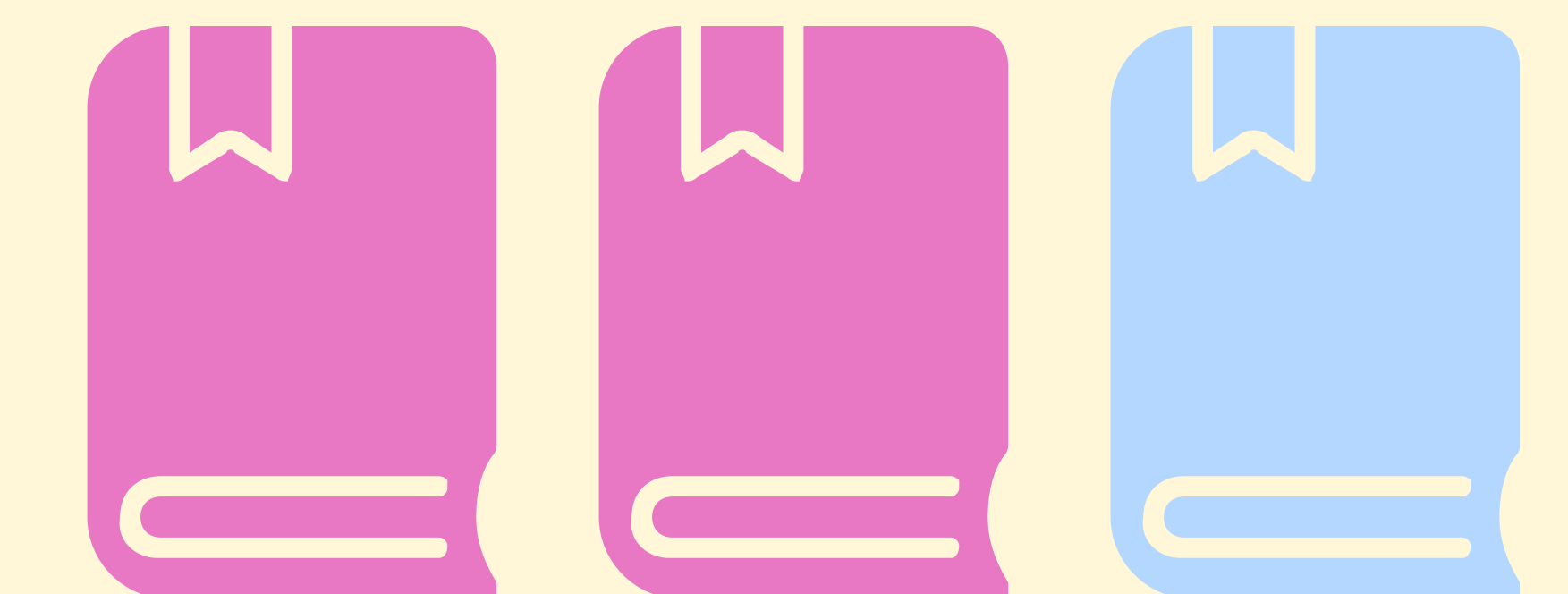
In the financial year 2024-25, 32.5% of children (under 16 years old) in Derby live in relative poverty after housing costs. The average for the East Midlands is 26.5%. [6]



In the financial year 2024-25, 57% of pupils met the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2 in Derby. The average in the East Midlands was 61%. [7]



In 2024, 11.9% of Derby's population was in fuel poverty. In comparison, the average for the East Midlands was 10.6% [8]



In the financial year 2024-25, 66.7% of young people in the academic years 2016/17 to 2024/25 in Derby achieved GCSEs (and equivalent) in English and maths by age 19. This was at 71.6% for the East Midlands. [9]



14th of 63

For 2025, Derby was ranked 14th of 63 English unitary authorities for overall deprivation. [10]

[1] <https://www.derby.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/statistics-census-information/key-statistics-for-derby/>
[2] <https://streetscan.co.uk/crime/a/district/derby/e06000015>
[3] , [4] , [5] - Freedom of information requests to Derbyshire Constabulary.
[6], [7], [8], [9] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/explore-local-statistics/areas/E06000015-derby/indicators>
[10] <https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/view/lga-research/lga-research-report-indices-of-deprivation-2020>

Youth Alliance Referrals Overview

Direct referral types:



Referrals from:

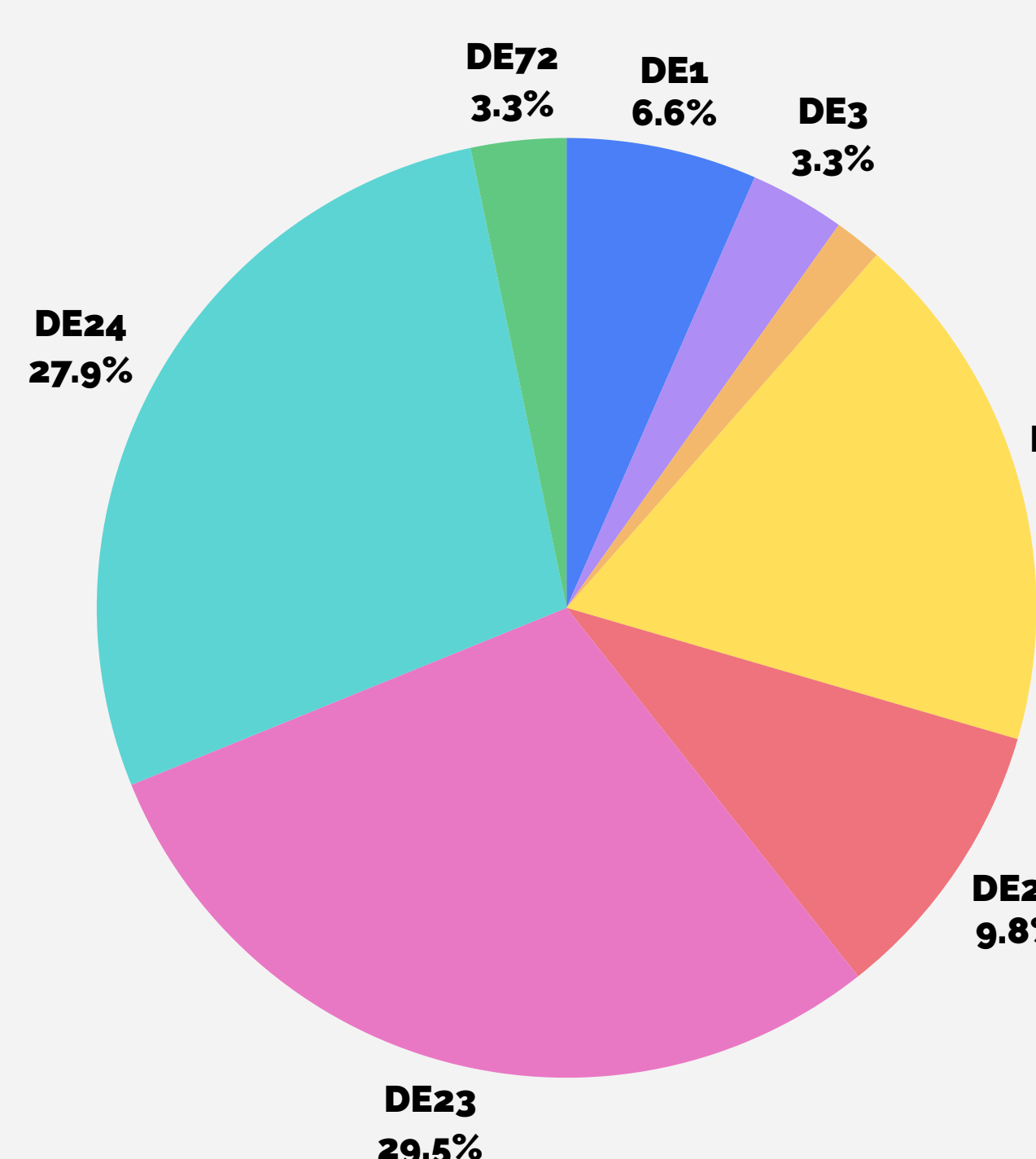
- Derby City Council
- Schools and Further Education settings
- Community Organisations

Referred to:

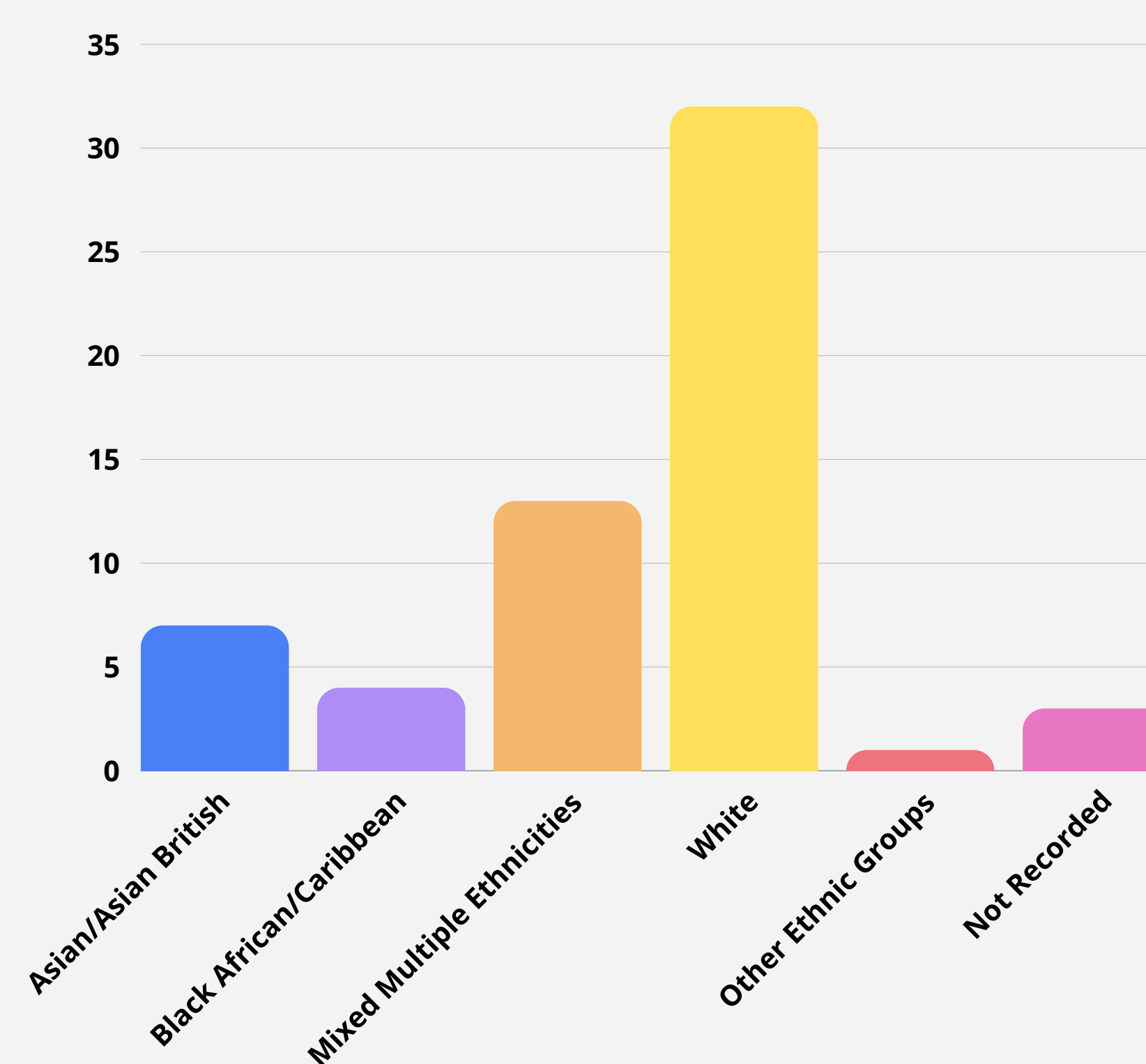
- **Baby People** - Mentoring support and youth group work, centred around art and music activities.
- **Children First** - 1:1 mentoring support and diversionary activities.
- **Derby County Community Trust (DCCT)** - Place-based community engagement and outreach, sporting activities and 1:1 mentoring support, catering for raising aspirations, supporting wellbeing and personal development. Pathways into Young Leaders qualifications and volunteering opportunities are also offered.
- **Derby Cultural Education Partnership (DCEP)** - Mentoring and group support centred around cultural activities and experiences.
- **Community One** - Youth groups with activities, support and parental engagement workshops. Culturally specific provision.
- **Safe and Sound** - 1:1 mentoring support, outreach and diversionary activities. Child exploitation specialist.
- **Supporting Communities** - 1:1 mentoring support around resilience and wellbeing and complex and multiple family support needs.

Person and Family Statistics - 60 referrals

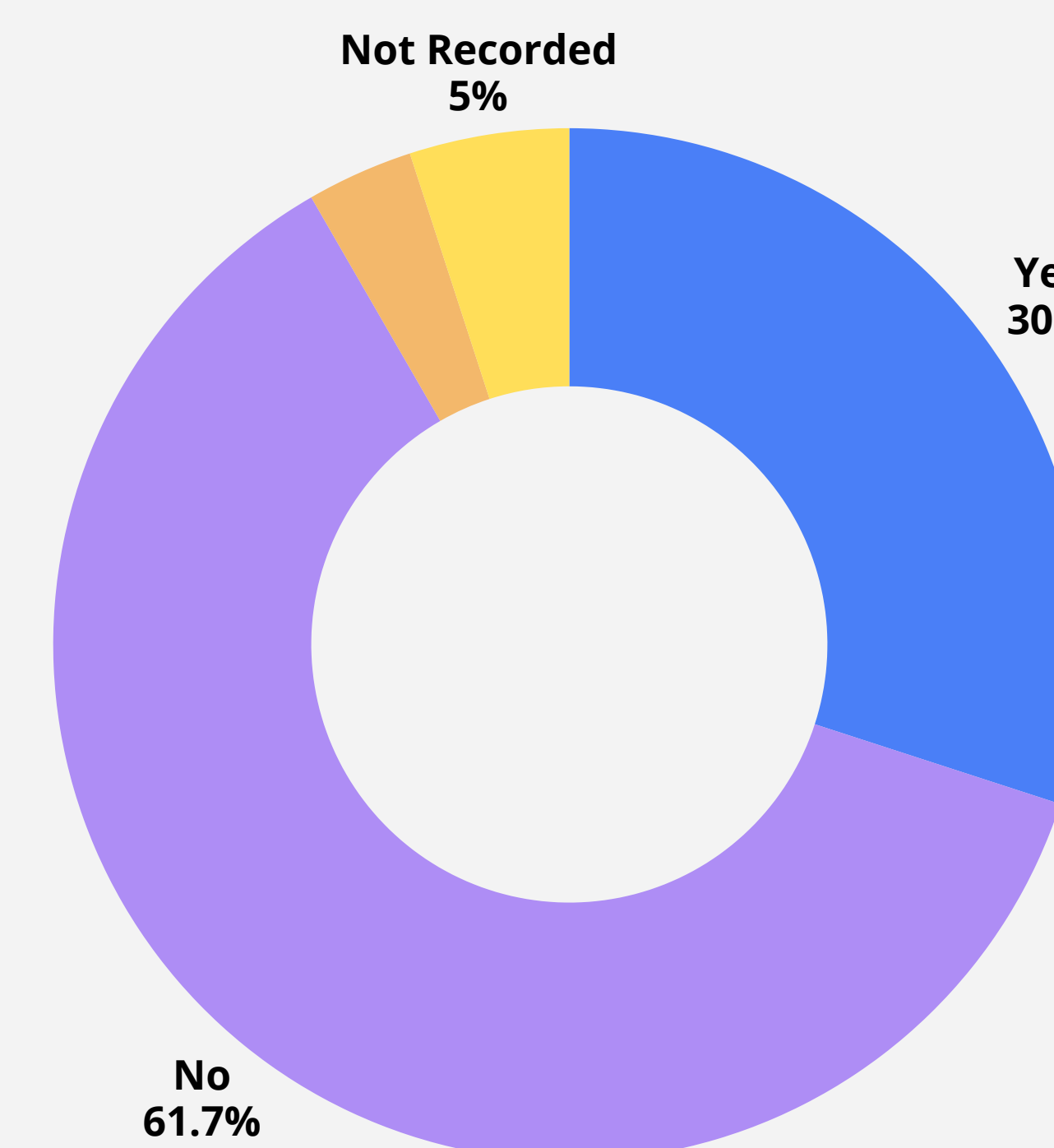
Number of Referrals by Postcode



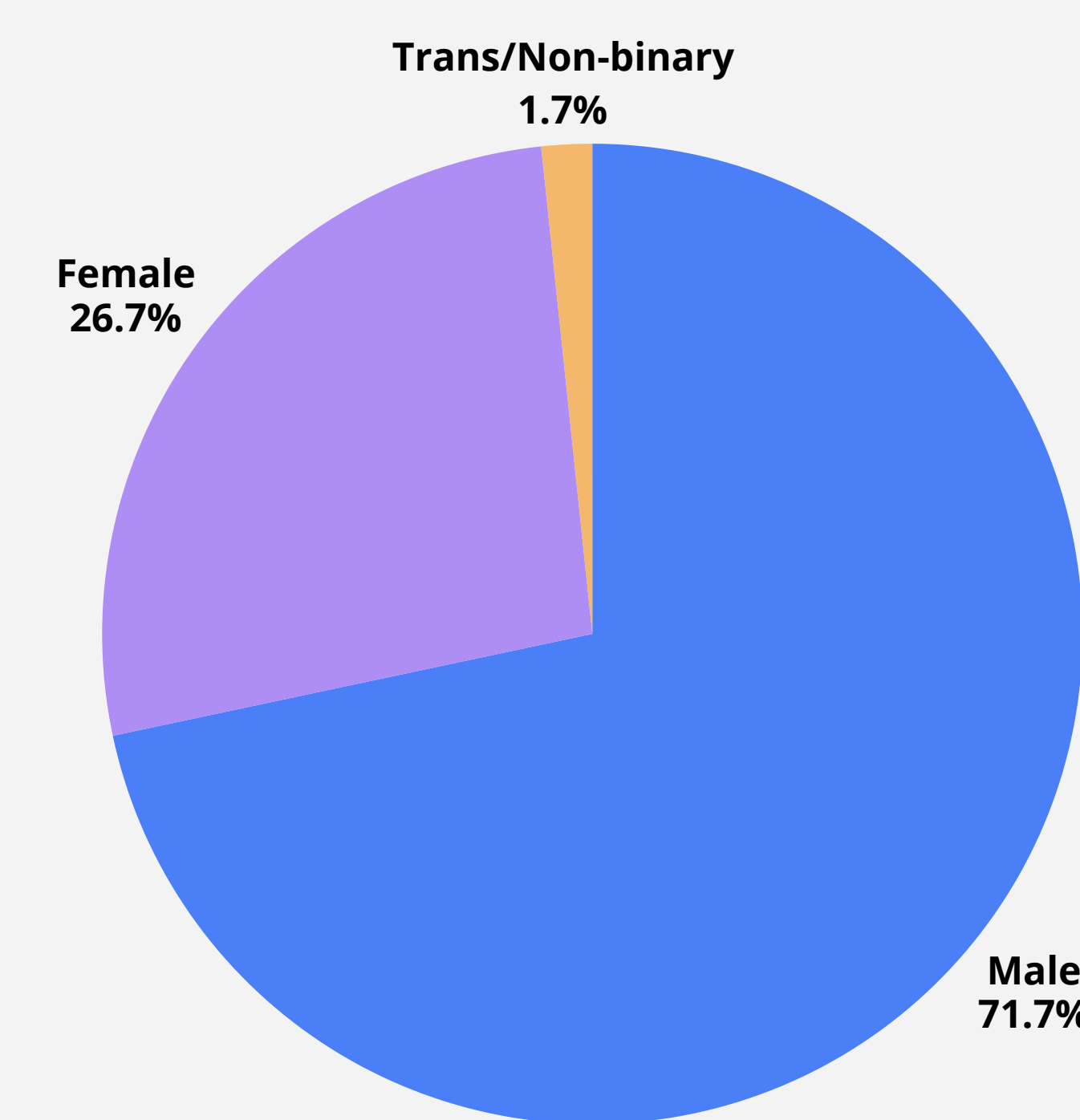
Number of Referrals by Ethnicity



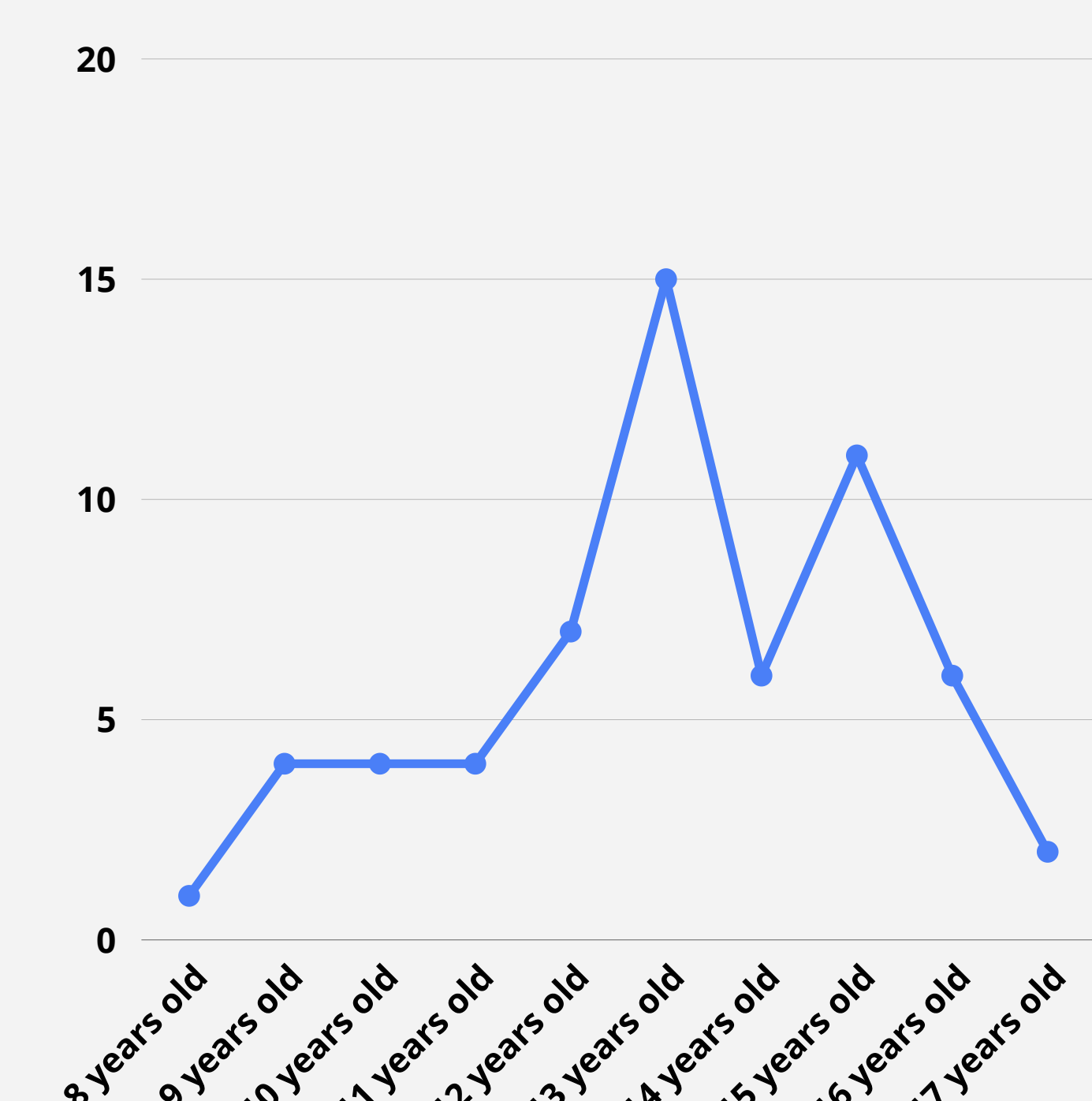
Referrals by SEND



Referrals by Gender



Number of Referrals by Age



Post code: DE1 (4), DE3 (2), DE6 (1), DE21 (11), DE22 (6), DE23 (18), DE24 (17), DE72 (2)
 Ethnicity: Asian/Asian British (7), Black African, Caribbean (4), Mixed Multiple Ethnicities (13), White (32), Other Ethnic Groups (1), Not Recorded (3)
 SEND: Yes (18), No (37), Awaiting Assessment (2), Not Recorded (3)
 Gender: Male (43), Female (16), Trans/Non-binary (1).
 Age: 8 (1), 9 (4), 10 (4), 11 (4), 12 (7), 13 (15), 14 (6), 15 (11), 16 (6), 17 (2)

Partner-Led Projects - Primary Transition

Following the success of previous Transition programmes, Derby City Council approached the Youth Alliance in the summer term of 2025 to support 10 individual referrals for young people transitioning from year six primary school provision into year seven secondary school provision. This project supports these young people's transition to secondary school through 1:1 mentoring tailored to their needs, alongside access to diversionary activities such as football, arts and crafts and drama classes, all delivered over the summer holidays and into the autumn term.

The 10 referrals were from five primary schools across the city - Cavendish Close Junior Academy, Dale Community Primary School, Roe Farm Primary School, Bemrose School and Beaufort Community Primary School - and were allocated to four of the Youth Alliance partners: Children First, Derby County Community Trust, Safe and Sound, and Supporting Communities. This project aimed to provide targeted intervention for the nominated children and wraparound support for their families throughout the summer term and school holidays in the lead-up to their transition into secondary school.

The new schools supported this process, and partners continued to work alongside the families whose children had been part of the Elite Programme to ensure smooth transitions into Year 7 and, in some cases, for a longer period where additional support was needed.

Case Study:

I initially met with M in a primary setting before the summer to build a rapport and gain insight into their feelings about transitioning to secondary school. Unfortunately, I was unable to connect with the parent over the summer, so the focus shifted to continuing support within the school environment after the transition in September.

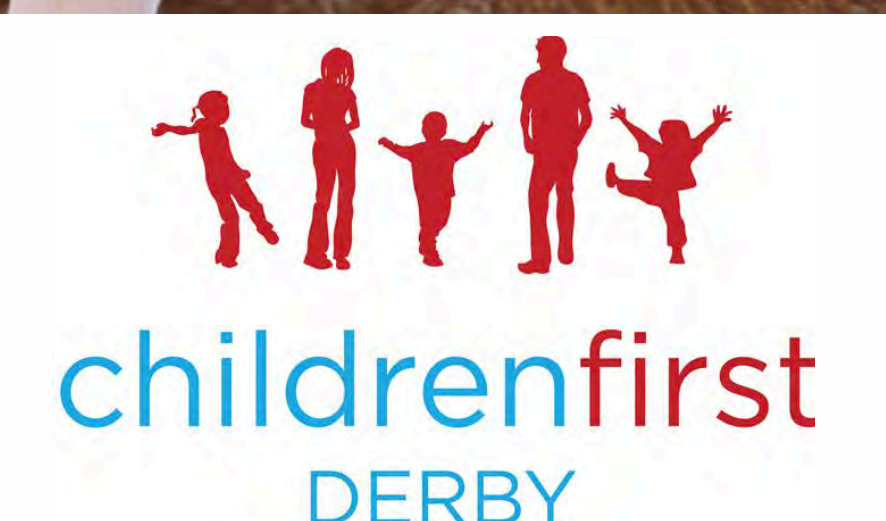
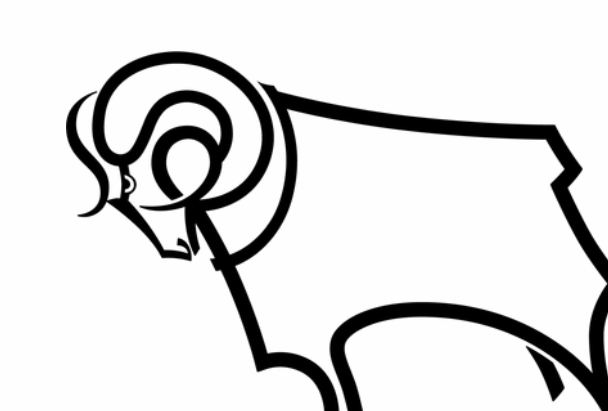
From September to December, I adjusted the frequency of sessions, recognising that M didn't require weekly support but did need help in expressing their emotions surrounding the transition over a longer period of time. I worked closely with the Head of Year to provide the necessary support and communication during this time.

M faced challenges in building relationships with new people, primarily due to the shift from a smaller primary setting to a larger secondary school. I liaised with relevant staff to ensure any concerns about unkind behaviour towards M were addressed. In these instances, I supported M with tools and strategies to communicate how they felt and to handle difficult situations.

Peer pressure was also shared as a significant issue for M, as the parent shared a concern around vaping in the community and M struggled with making choices due to external influences from peers. Fortunately, M has a strong support network at home with parents and has established a positive relationship with the Head of Year, who has been particularly supportive in school. We had a session on peer pressure and making positive choices.

M's parents have expressed concerns about whether M might have neurodiverse needs and may require further assessments. This is something that will need to be explored with appropriate professionals moving forward and I have offered support in navigating this.

Supporting Communities



Partner-Led Projects - On the Right Track

In the summer term of 2025, the Youth Alliance took part in another transition project funded by East Midlands Rail, called 'On the Right Track'. This project supported vulnerable young people to transition successfully between primary and secondary school provision, focusing on 10 young people from Derwent Primary School and Grampian Primary School. This was achieved through workshops in primary school settings followed by mentoring sessions in secondary schools, as well as supporting the young people's families when needed.

The workshops were delivered over June and July by YMCA Derbyshire, Derby County Community Trust and Baby People. These workshops focused on supporting the young people with any difficulties or concerns about transitioning into Year 7. The schools also submitted 1:1 mentoring referrals for the young people, who were matched with a relevant and bespoke Youth Alliance partner that suited their interests. The young people were allocated to five of our partners: Children First, Community One, Derby County Community Trust, Safe and Sound and Supporting Communities.

Throughout the summer term and the summer holidays, the young people were engaged with a range of diversionary activities and 1:1 mentoring. The new schools were supportive of this process and partners continued to work alongside the families whose children had been a part of the programme to ensure smooth transitions into Year 7 and, in some cases, for a more extended period of time where additional support was needed.



Case Study

The support programme for K began with an initial session to introduce ourselves and what the transition support would look like. As it was shared that K has diagnosed neurodiverse needs, I anticipated the need for extra support and time to build a positive rapport. In the early stages, K was reluctant to engage, which made it difficult to build a relationship or support plan. I had planned to meet with K in the community over the summer break, but found it difficult to get in touch with their parents to arrange meetings.

Within school meetings, K also showed minimal engagement. However, over time, K began to trust me and recognise the intention behind the support sessions. In the last two meetings, they began to share their challenges, showing progress in communication. It was recognisable that time has been very important in building a positive rapport with K.

Additional support has been put in place for K at school, though barriers remain, especially concerning effective communication with staff. I've communicated with the school's safeguarding lead regarding safeguarding concerns and K's needs with the relevant school staff to ensure they're adequately supported. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator confirmed detailed information about the support which is being offered. Support is ongoing, focusing on addressing communication barriers and further building trust with both K and the staff involved. I have also been asked to provide supporting information for K's education, health and care plan.

Supporting Communities

Events and Engagement

This year, the Youth Alliance has taken part in and supported numerous events across the city. It is important to be visible and to have the Youth Alliance's voice heard across the city and in different contexts. Below are some examples of how attending events and wider meetings have widened the Youth Alliance's reach, put advocacy into action and celebrated the incredible work in Derby's youth sector.

Derby Promise Roots Festival

The Youth Alliance was part of a marketplace event, along with other providers in the city, promoting opportunities for young people aged 14 to 18. These opportunities included work experience, activities for upcoming holiday periods, apprenticeships, further education options, skill-building and in-person activities. The Youth Alliance team enjoyed talking directly with young people about opportunities and activities around the city available to them. The Youth Alliance look forward to seeing more Derby Promise events in future.

Inclusion Conference

After attending last year's inclusion conference, the Youth Alliance team returned to support the provider marketplace at this year's conference. The team discussed the services and benefits provided by the Youth Alliance to those in attendance, along with making valuable connections with other providers who work with young people in the city. The Inclusion Partnership event saw attendees from primary schools, secondary schools, those who work with young people within school settings and other organisations that support young people. The Youth Alliance looks forward to supporting the Inclusion Partnership again in the coming years and watching it go from strength to strength.

Derby City Safety Summits

Following several high-profile violent crimes in the city centre, the Youth Alliance sent the Derby MPs a letter to speak about how this issue is affecting young people. As part of this letter, they also noted how the Youth Alliance should be utilised as part of the solution to this issue, drawing on previous youth voice work on young people's perception of safety in Derby. In response, Derby City Council, along with MPs Baggy Shanker and Katherine Atkinson, set up a Derby City Centre Safety Summit that meets monthly to put policies into place that could make the city centre feel safer. The Youth Alliance attends through a rota of representatives to ensure young people are advocated for and their voices are considered in the policies set forward.

Children First's Anti-bullying Campaign Screening

The Youth Alliance strategic partners attended the screening of Children First's Anti-bullying Campaign film, screened in collaboration with Derby Theatre. This moving film explored the real impact of bullying, including first-hand accounts from some of Children First's mentees and their families. The film documented how the campaign highlighted the continuing impact of bullying on young people, including young people collaboratively producing art that toured local schools and Children First's Youth Council meeting with the local MPs. It was fantastic to support Youth Alliance partners with their campaign and to celebrate their success.

Children and Young People's Network (CYPN)

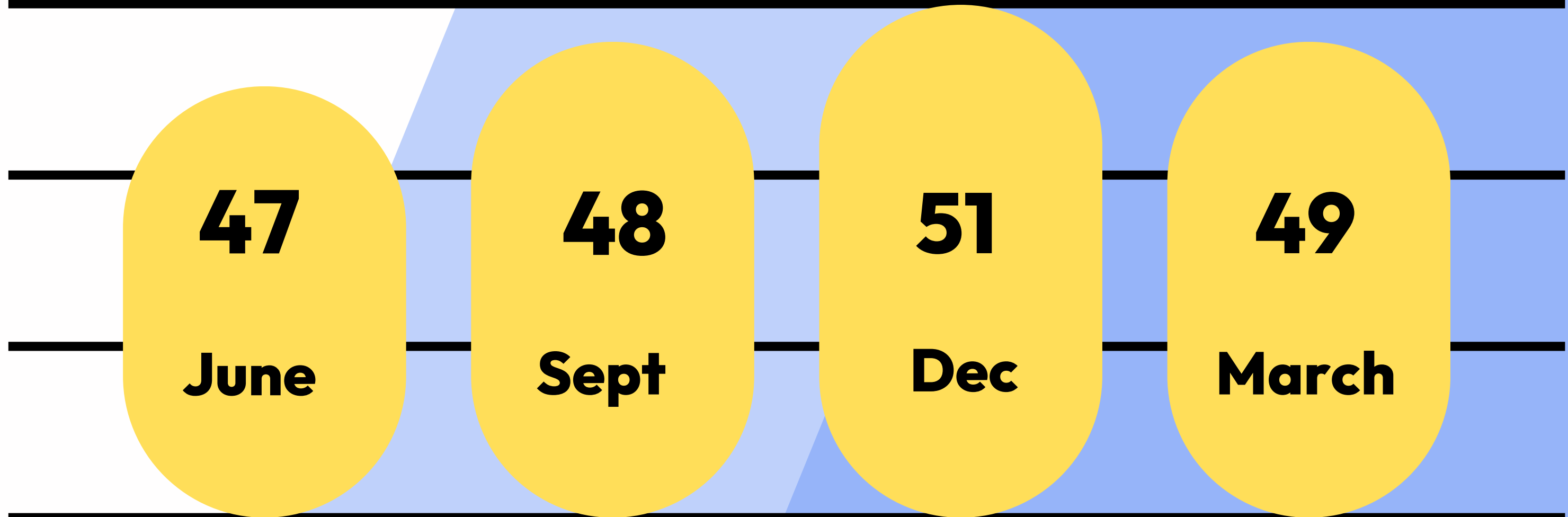
Back in 2021, the existing Children and Young People's Network (CYPN) joined up with the Derby Youth Alliance. Meetings are now held tri-monthly for the wider network members and for the Youth Alliance's strategic partners. Attendees of the network meetings all share the same goal of enhancing the quality of life for children and young people across the city.

The meetings are held across different venues and invite various professionals to present relevant updates, news and information from their organisations across different sectors in the city. Towards the end of each meeting, there is an opportunity for free or structured networking. The networking element of the meetings has been highlighted as being especially useful for attendees and encourages collaborative working across the city.

This year, all meetings were in-person, held at the following venues: The University of Derby, Moorways Sports Village, Pakistan Community Centre, The Multi Faith Centre. Attendees also gained insight into what these venues provide for young people from their representatives.

The CYPN mailing list is made up of 250+ professionals from over 120 different local organisations and continues to expand as partnerships across the city grow. From June 2025 to March 2026, the CYPN had approximately 200 attendees at these meetings, including familiar faces who have been attending from the very start, as well as many new members.

Number of attendees at CYPN



Children and Young People's Network (CYPN) continued

The goal is to keep the Youth Alliance/CYPN meetings as relevant and informative to the different professionals working across Derby City as possible.

For this year's evaluation, the Youth Alliance team invited members of the CYPN mailing list to complete a questionnaire giving feedback and suggestions for changes or improvements. Some of the responses included the following:

“The network is very well organised and creates a much-needed central point to share information and collaborate.”

“It's a great space to meet other local organisations doing similar work in Derby face to face.”

“It's a great space to meet other local organisations doing similar work in Derby face to face and share information about work, projects or services you are delivering.”

“They are always very welcoming, well attended, interesting topic areas, a good place to keep up to date with existing and new organisations.”

“I have recommended the Youth Alliance to all partners working in Derby and suggested that they use the networking meetings to keep a finger on the pulse of what is on offer in the city and a great way to make contacts.”

“The meetings are always lovely, I have always found the information provided very useful.”

“I believe that this is a great platform to reach as many professionals in the city as possible within the city with offers of help and to receive help with projects.”

“The emails are a great way to share upcoming events and information with colleagues across the school.”

“I find the network beneficial. It's valuable to have a range of youth organisations in one room together to share knowledge, support one another, and build relationships.”

Case Studies

C

We met with C in the primary setting and managed to build a trusting, supportive rapport with them over the summer period. There were some safeguarding concerns that were raised, and these were addressed promptly with an allocated social worker. Meetings have been had in regards support for the young person and family with Team Around the Family meetings, which we attended.

Support continued, with the last session held in November 2025. In total, 5 sessions were completed in the community, as it was recognised that C struggles to engage in the school setting because she has little trust in professionals and seems reluctant to engage with staff and Supporting Communities in school. It was agreed that Elizabeth will complete more support sessions in the community.

Supporting Communities

A

A experienced abuse and, as a result, is isolated and finds it difficult to share feelings with others. When attending school, A feels anxious and unable to trust adults, meaning that their feelings are suppressed until returning home. A experiences frustration, confusion and nightmares as a result of this.

A has attended the drama group provision at Children First. After a few weeks, their confidence improved, and they have integrated nicely into the group. Their involvement has increased, and they show no evidence of cognitive delay and a sound understanding of tasks. A's parents are seeing a very eager child wanting to go to drama group, often returning home to demonstrate their creative imagination and share experiences with the family.

Children First

P

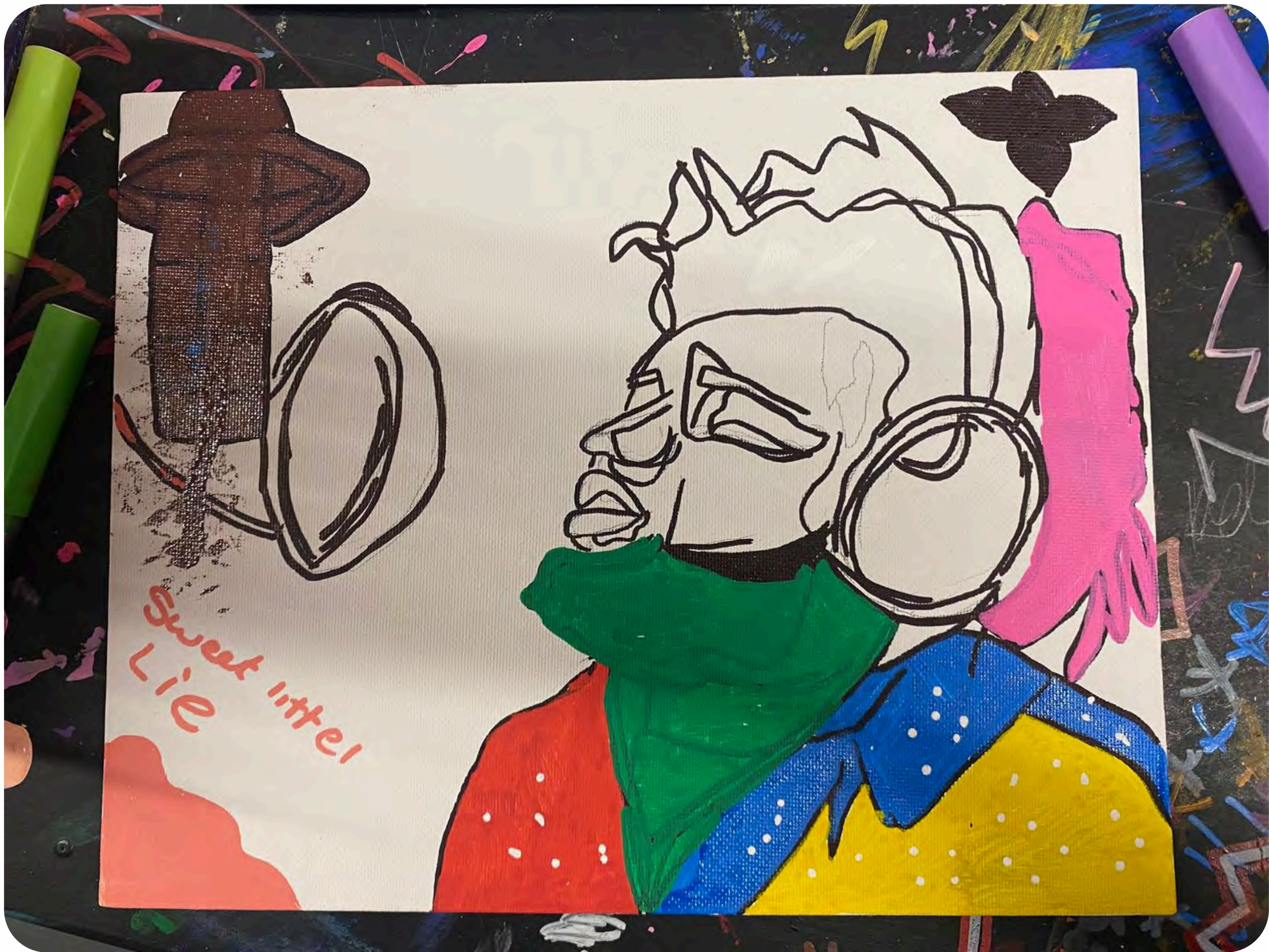
P joined the art sessions at Baby People with great enthusiasm. During the initial weeks, she demonstrated excellent commitment and consistently attended her scheduled sessions. Though her attendance began to drop off later in the term, her passion for the creative process remained high whenever she was present in the studio.

P proved to be an incredibly imaginative student who had distinct, creative ideas for her projects. She completed three final paintings, utilising both canvas and wooden boards as her mediums. Notably, she dedicated significant time and effort to producing a detailed piece focused on one of her favourite musicians, showcasing her ability to channel personal interests into creative artwork.

Throughout her time at Baby People, P was consistently lovely, polite and friendly. The creative environment gave her space to thrive, and there was a noticeable growth in her confidence from her first day to her final session. She developed a strong sense of pride in her artistic capabilities and expressed her ideas with increasing assurance.

P was an absolute pleasure to teach. It was incredibly rewarding to watch her confidence grow alongside her technical art skills. The time spent working with her was thoroughly enjoyable, and her positive attitude left a lasting impact on the studio environment.

Baby People



Example of P's artwork

Case Studies

C

C is an individual with a strong interest in creative arts, particularly music and visual art. While he initially shared only a brief overview of his background, it is clear that creative expression plays an important role in his life. His journey into theatre has been supported by people around him. Since joining, C has engaged with the theatre both as an audience member and as a participant in its programmes, and is currently involved in a drama group. His engagement has provided him with opportunities to explore performance in a supportive and structured environment. Through these experiences, C has developed a stronger connection to theatre. Watching live performances has been a particularly impactful element of his journey, enhancing his understanding of the art form and encouraging deeper participation. C, alongside his Creative Mentor, interviewed a professional cast member of *Oliver Twist*, formulating questions himself and interviewing.

Participation in Derby Theatre's programmes has had a positive personal impact on C. When asked what he gains from being involved, he expressed that the experience provides him with purpose and a sense of belonging.

C identified live performances as a major source of inspiration. Productions such as *The Great Gatsby* stood out to him, particularly due to the power of live acting and the immersive atmosphere. These experiences motivated him to become more creatively involved himself. At this stage, C remains open-minded about his future. Rather than having a fixed plan, he is exploring opportunities as they arise and continuing to engage with theatre as part of his personal development journey. This openness reflects a key benefit of creative programmes: they allow participants to explore potential pathways without pressure, fostering growth at an individual pace.

When asked what advice he would give to others in similar situations, C offered a simple but powerful message:

"Take a chance, you only live once."

This highlights the transformative potential of engaging with the arts and the importance of encouraging others to step outside their comfort zones.

C's experience demonstrates:

- The value of supportive networks in enabling access to arts programmes
- The importance of live performance in inspiring participation
- The role of theatre in fostering confidence, belonging, and creative exploration
- The impact of inclusive opportunities that empower individuals to develop at their own pace

Derby Theatre

Emerging work

Family Alliance

In early 2026, the Youth Alliance team was approached by a representative of the new Family First Partnership to discuss how the Alliance could fit in with this new programme. The aims of the Family First Partnership include making it easier for families to access universal and community services before issues escalate to a child protection level.

Following several discussions, the Youth Alliance decided to create an offshoot, called the Family Alliance, based on the successful Youth Alliance model. The central goal of the Family Alliance is to allow parents from the community to be heard in the redesign of services and give them greater access to support in the community. This work will happen alongside other prongs of the Family First Partnership strategy.

The Youth Alliance looks forward to seeing how the Family Alliance will grow and develop in the future, along with the Family First Partnership.

Challenging Toxic Masculinity

During the past year, there has been a growing mainstream awareness of how deeply rooted misogyny and toxic masculinity are within young men and boys. Some of this attention has come from mainstream TV programmes such as 'Adolescence' and 'Louis Theroux: Inside the Manosphere'.

Following discussions with the Youth Alliance partners, it was decided that it was something that the Youth Alliance would like to tackle in the community. Derby County Community Trust has been delivering a pilot project called 'Switching Formations' that tackles harmful stereotypes and fosters open communication in school environments. It was noted that a project that complements 'Switching Formations' in community settings could have a deep impact on Derby's youth. The Youth Alliance has looked into dedicated male mentors, raising awareness, and training professionals who work with young people.

The Youth Alliance is excited to delve further into this topic and how best to tackle this complex issue.

Reflections

“ Youth Alliance allows the organisations that support young people in the city to work more effectively and to recognise trends and specific problems, whether they be thematic or geographic. It makes us stronger as a city and gives more opportunities for young people. ”

Baby J, Baby People



“ By collaborating with Youth Alliance partners, we are always able to have a good overview of work that is happening within the city to ensure that we are able to add value as opposed to duplicating provision. We have a clear understanding of each other's strengths and therefore are able to collaborate effectively to come up with support solutions for individual and place-based challenges that young people are experiencing. Our collaborations ensure young people are getting the best support the city can offer them in a timely way. ”

Louise Curd, YMCA Derbyshire



“ A key strength of the Alliance is that it brings together a wide range of organisations, services and community partners, particularly from across the voluntary and community sector. While the voluntary sector can understandably be competitive due to funding pressures and limited resources, the Youth Alliance continues to provide an important space where organisations can come together, share information, identify opportunities and build partnerships around the needs of children and young people. ”

Ed Chrayah, Sporting Communities CIC



“ Being part of the Youth Alliance has provided huge benefits for young people within Derby City, especially in these ongoing, challenging times. Working in partnership with individual organisations has helped to create a wealth of knowledge and good practice that continues to enhance our service delivery. ”

Kerreene Davidson, Children First



“ Umbrella is proud to be part of the Derby Youth Alliance, which enables us to raise awareness of the issues facing disabled and neurodiverse young people. Through partnership, we can consider the broad range of challenges affecting young people across the city - ensuring that all young people are supported, empowered, and given the opportunity to thrive. ”

Laura Bowey, Umbrella



“ Youth Alliance is a distinctive and valuable partnership because it brings together a wide range of organisations with a shared commitment to improving the lives of young people in Derby. Its strength lies in our collective knowledge, relationships and resources, and in our ability to respond together to the challenges young people face. No single organisation can create the level of change needed alone, but through Youth Alliance we can identify gaps, connect opportunities and build a stronger, more joined-up system of support. ”

Caroline Barth, Derby Theatre



“ The collective work that has been achieved by the Youth Alliance across the city has had a lasting impact on the young people and families that we are able to support. Now more than ever, we are facing demands to support young people in overcoming challenges they encounter through mentoring programmes or diversionary activities. DCCT are privileged to be sat around the table and be a part of the collaborative work that the Youth Alliance is providing across the city, and being able to network and partner with other charities has had a lasting benefit to our organisation. ”

David Goulding, DCCT



“ The Youth Alliance has grown over the past few years with increased delivery of collaborative work across the city. We ensure young people are at the heart of our work, and it is so important we listen to young people, keep them safe, and give them a voice. They are the future of our amazing city. ”

Tracy Harrison, Safe and Sound



“ The Youth Alliance has brought together organisations supporting young people in the city, which has added value to what's on offer. The Alliance recognises the need for a tailored approach, which includes culturally specific interventions when working with diverse communities. Over the past 12 months, awareness & recognition of our work has increased & allowed us to create more safe spaces & support for young people in Normanton. Innovative referral pathways are being established, which allows young people to access support with confidence. ”

Amjad Ashraf, Community One



Reflections

“ April 2025 to March 2026 marked our fifth full year since the Youth Alliance emerged. Five years on, the Alliance has continued to evolve in response to the needs of Derby's young people, families and communities.

What began as a response to the needs of the city has developed into a well-established model of partnership working. We are now better embedded within Derby's wider youth support offer, working alongside schools, statutory services, voluntary and community organisations and other key partners to understand local needs, influence strategic priorities and most importantly, improve opportunities and outcomes for young people. This year has demonstrated the value of that approach. Our partners are increasingly connecting with the Alliance, bringing their expertise, insight and resources. In turn, this has enabled us to better understand emerging challenges and identify where we can work collectively to make a difference. One example of this was the 'On the Right Track' transition programme, as detailed in this evaluation, funded through East Midlands Rail. The programme provided an opportunity to bring partners together around a specific need and demonstrate how collaborative working can create practical opportunities for young people.

This has also been one of our most challenging years financially. Funding pressures have affected organisations across the youth sector, creating uncertainty and placing additional pressure on already stretched services. However, those challenges have also reinforced the strength and resilience of the Youth Alliance. They have encouraged us to work more creatively, make better use of the resources and expertise available across the city, and focus on where partnership can add the greatest value.

The Children and Young People's Network remains a vital part of this approach. It provides a space for organisations to come together, identify emerging issues and needs, share resources and ideas and ensure that the voice of the sector contributes to the wider conversation about children and young people in Derby. Our December YA/CYPN event was a particular highlight. We welcomed MPs Kathryn Atkinson and Baggy Shanker for a Q&A session, giving partners the opportunity to hear directly from local representatives and discuss the issues that matter to them. In keeping with the season, the event included some festive food and dancing too!

The context in which we are working remains challenging. Derby continues to experience higher-than-average levels of crime, child poverty and deprivation compared with national figures. For many young people, these circumstances create additional barriers to accessing opportunities, building aspirations and achieving their potential. Our referral data reflects the impact of these wider challenges. This makes it more important than ever that Derby has a strong, connected and responsive youth sector.

Nationally, the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is increasing, and Derby is experiencing this challenge too. At the same time, we are seeing a growing need to understand and respond to the needs of young people in elective home education. These challenges cannot be addressed by one organisation or one service alone. They require collaboration, shared understanding and a willingness to look beyond traditional boundaries.

That is at the heart of the Youth Alliance.

We remain committed to working collectively to ensure that Derby is an inclusive city where every young person, regardless of their circumstances, has access to opportunities, support and the chance to develop their skills, confidence and aspirations. ● ● ●

Reflections - continued

- ● ● A key theme throughout the year has been the continued development of our partnerships, alongside a growing focus on supporting families as well as young people. These priorities were identified in last year's aims, and I am particularly pleased that partnership and collaboration have remained central to our work throughout 2025–2026.

We have worked closely with Derby City Council on the implementation of the new Family First Partnership programme, which seeks to transform the way help, support and protection are provided to children, young people and their families. The relationships, trust and ways of working established through the Youth Alliance have provided a strong foundation for this next stage of development. Building on that experience, we have begun developing a Family Alliance. The Family Alliance will create a stronger focus on family networks and family decision-making across the family help and child protection system. Its ambition is to support more children to remain safely at home wherever possible, while also strengthening support for children who may transition into kinship care. A central principle of this work is listening to lived experience. Families have valuable insight into what works, what does not, and what needs to change. By capturing these experiences and ensuring they influence the design and delivery of services, we have an opportunity to create better, more positive experiences for families across Derby.

Five years into our journey, the Youth Alliance is in a stronger position to respond to the challenges facing Derby's young people. We have built relationships, created spaces for collaboration and developed a model that brings people together around a shared purpose.

We know there is more to do. The challenges facing young people and families are complex and continually changing. Our response must therefore remain flexible, ambitious and rooted in the experiences of the people we are here to support.



The next chapter of the Youth Alliance is about building on what we have learned, strengthening our partnerships and continuing to create opportunities for young people and families to shape the services they need. Our strength is in working together. Our ambition is to make Derby a city where every young person and family has the opportunity to thrive.

We are always grateful to our funding support, so many thanks to Derby Homes, Derby City Council, Metropolitan Thames Valley, The National Lottery and East Midlands Rail, who have all contributed to enable this work. A big thanks too to the strategic group and the team here at Community Action - always supportive, helpful and willing. ”

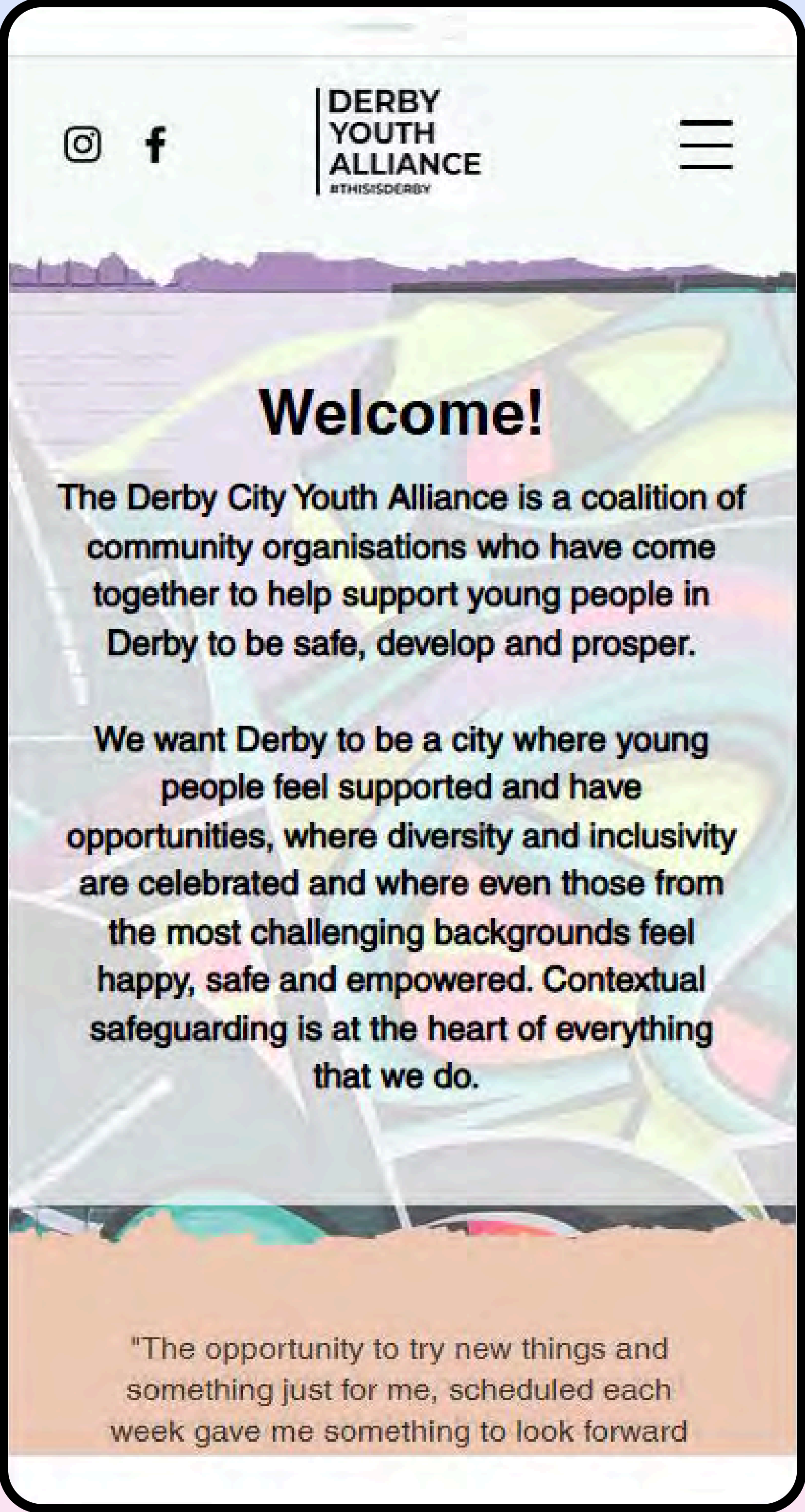
Helen Britten, Programme Lead, Community Action Derby

Moving Forwards:

- **Strengthen partnerships** of the Youth Alliance and the emerging Family Alliance
- **Further opportunities** for families and young people to learn and develop
- **Source sustainable funding**
- **Specialist projects** for targeted interventions
- **Build on success** of previous specialist projects
- **Focused work with NEET** and Electively Home Educated young people



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