



INSPIRING BELIEF IN YOUNG PEOPLE

A year in review - 2022/23
thekeyuk.org



www.thekeyuk.org

Registered charity number: 1093569. Registered in England and Wales.
Office address: Mea House, Ellison Place, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 8XS



THE KEY - A YEAR IN REVIEW

Inspiring belief in young people in 2022-23

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR OF TRUSTEES, LIZ WATCHORN

Welcome to The Key's annual impact report for the financial year 2022/23.

2022/23 was a busy year for The Key as we did a lot of thinking about where we fit in the changing youth services ecosystem. We focused on refreshing our proven youth-led, development programme, now known as the KEY+ Challenge. We built a new digital platform to underpin our work with young people and trained all of our delivery partners in how to use it alongside the KEY+ Challenge. In addition, we also built a new website to tell our stories more effectively.

As that development work took place, we continued to build back up the number of young people participating in the KEY+ Challenge. These numbers have been rising ever since COVID-19 and its associated periods of lockdown. We've seen young people use their voices and ideas to deliver some brilliant projects through the KEY+ Challenge in the year, ranging from comfort packs for children and young people going into care, a mini candle business to test their enterprising skills and an emotive music video raising awareness of life as a refugee.

All of these achievements took place against the backdrop of common challenges facing the charitable sector. We searched for ways to mitigate cost pressures and reduced the size of our team to operate in the most streamlined way possible.

It has been a challenging but rewarding year for The Key's team and Board of Trustees. We are proud to have worked with so many partners, volunteers and funders who have joined us in inspiring belief in young people through the KEY+ Challenge. Thank you for your continued support.



LIZ WATCHORN,
THE KEY'S CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

A YEAR IN PHOTOS



WHAT WE STAND FOR

The Key is committed to inspiring young people to believe in themselves, especially those living in deprivation and facing challenging personal circumstances.

We want to create a world where all young people are inspired to believe in themselves and are empowered to achieve their full potential.

Our work is built upon four core beliefs that young people should be empowered to:



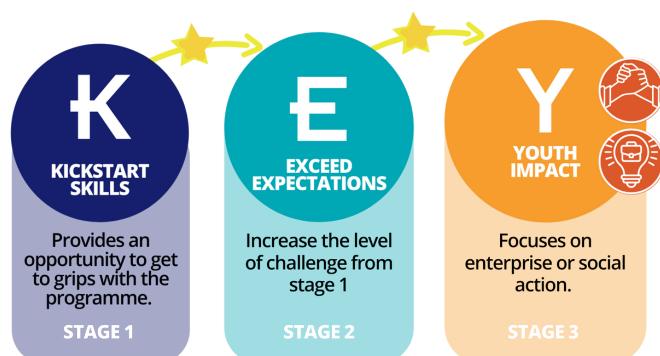
WHAT WE DO

We support young people to complete our proven, youth-led skills development programme, The KEY+ Challenge.

Together in small groups (and supported by a KEY+ Facilitator), young people are set the challenge to:

1. **Think** of a project or activity
2. **Plan** what is needed for that project, including a budget
3. **Pitch** their project to a panel of volunteers
4. **Do** their project if given the go ahead by the panel
5. **Review** and reflect on their project, learning, and development.

Young people complete this process up to three times, each time planning more progressively challenging projects with greater personal development. At Stage 3, young people must explore enterprise or tackle a social issue with their KEY+ project.



The KEY+ Challenge gives young people the opportunity to use their voices and ideas and take the lead in delivering projects and activities that matter to them. It empowers and equips them with the skills, mindset and self-belief to achieve their potential.



A 2022-23 SNAPSHOT

The year was a one of refresh, rebuild and recovery for The Key. We saw youth work return to a new normality as young people were able to participate in group work once again and reconnect after the pandemic. We achieved some major milestones and undertook some great learning in the year and we're proud to have inspired belief in so many young people facing challenging circumstances.

KEY STATS

886

unique young people were supported to participate in KEY+

They used their ideas and took the lead to think, plan, pitch, do & review

220

of their own projects or activities

Including:

- Food hamper support for struggling families
- Group bonding experiences
- Community fun days
- Youth-led school enterprise fairs



95%

of young people reported improved confidence thanks to KEY+

100%

of young people asked, said KEY+ will have a positive impact on their future



Young people developed their skills by an average of

25%

leading to increased confidence, resilience and self-esteem - a 'growth mindset'



KEY YOUNG PEOPLE QUOTES

"It has helped me gain confidence around people and work in a social environment. It helped me realise that I can achieve what I believe and encouraged me to get into the world and explore."
- Ellie, KEY+ completer

"We know each other a lot better. We can come to each other when we have problems & don't feel afraid."
- Will, KEY+ completer

"We developed our problem solving, communication, team working, and independence skills. It has helped us develop our character more and learn new life skills that will help us in the future with jobs."
- Emy, KEY+ completer

"Taking part in KEY+ made me more resilient because I know how much the work we do means; in the future it'll make me more ambitious also because I know what I can achieve now, so why not go further? I wish everyone could experience."
- Jessica, KEY+ completer

KEY STORIES

1. **The Lionesses** transformed throughout the KEY+ Challenge and became young entrepreneurs. Together they battled many personal challenges but managed to launch their mini candle business using recycled jars and materials and became KEY+ Completers. The young women supported re-engaged in positive activities and all re-entered into employment or education following their engagement. [Read more about their journey here.](#)

2. **One For All** used their KEY+ Project to raise awareness of their experiences as young refugees living in County Durham. Together, they worked with a songwriter and created a moving song and music video to illustrate what life is like and the challenges they have faced. [Watch it here.](#)

3. **Community Hope** completed all three stages of the KEY+ Challenge and made a community impact with each of their projects. These young people from South Tyneside even put on a three-course Christmas Dinner for local people struggling with financial issues or social isolation. They ran a gift donation drive and brought everyone together on Christmas Day. They even wrote and performed their own Geordie Nativity. [See what Community Hope said here.](#)

4. **Funky Phoenixes** tackled climate change with their KEY+ Project but made sure they galvanised others in the process. They launched a recycling competition in school after being shocked at the amount of single use plastic being binned. The group got the school on board and made it a house wide challenge which helped them make a big impact. [Read about it here.](#)

5. **Wilfies Warriors** took on the KEY+ Challenge to make entering care more personalised and less daunting. Working from their own experiences, these young women created care packages for children and young people entering care to comfort them on their first night in new surroundings. [See how they found the experience here.](#)



KEY MILESTONES

1. The KEY+ Challenge

We launched our refreshed and improved youth-led, skills development programme, the KEY+ Challenge. It built on the best bits of our previous framework but includes greater challenge and increased reward and recognition for young people.

2. Launched our digital platform - KIT!

We finished the build of our new digital system which supports the delivery of the KEY+ Challenge, tracks its impact, and provides young people with a platform to view their skill growth and interact with their KEY+ development journey.

3. Built a new website

We built and launched our new website which gives us greater content control and enables us to better showcase the amazing stories of young people who have completed the KEY+ Challenge.

4. KEY+ Completers

Completing any stage of KEY+ gives young people a voice, skills, and confidence, while completing all three stages is a remarkable achievement. This year, more young people completed all stages and made an impact.



KEY LEARNING

- 1. We used user feedback to inform changes to the KEY+ Challenge.** This led to the reduction of KEY+ Stages moving from four to three and enabled us to become clearer about why each stage is a different challenge to young people. The number of groups doing more than one stage has increased significantly and we think this might have helped.
- 2. We changed to a reimbursement model of paying for young people's projects and activities.** This reduced administration time for both The Key and our partner organisations and ensured that more young people reviewed their engagement before requesting Key Funds. We need to continue to identify opportunities to streamline processes and increase efficiencies.
- 3. We identified an opportunity to improve skills assessment for young people.** For years, we have used a skill wheels to help young people recognise the skills they develop. This year, we found there may be a different and more accessible way to measure and have started to talk to young people about new ways to do this.
- 4. We trained a significant number of KEY+ Facilitators this year and we discovered that not all KEY+ Facilitators go on to support a KEY+ group.** We want to understand this more and see if we can introduce tools and support to change this in the year ahead.
- 5. 40% of young people accessed our digital platform to engage with their KEY+ journey directly.** We want to increase this further and reduce the need for young people to rely on their KEY+ Facilitator to input their project information. We will collaborate with young people to re-evaluate what they want from the platform and how we can improve it.

WHAT NEXT?

2022/23 saw us build the strong foundations needed to take The Key and the KEY+ Challenge into its next chapter of providing opportunities for young people in the North East of England, especially those living in deprivation and facing challenging personal circumstances.

In 2023/24, we will continue our commitment to being a learning organisation and building on our youth voice work to harness young people's ideas into the running and governance of our charity.

In the coming year, we will grow the reach of the KEY+ Challenge so that 1,000 young people participate in it annually. We will target our growth in communities of the North East where we know young people are living in deprivation and where there are limited opportunities for them to use their voices, lead projects that matter to them, build skills and confidence and become active citizens.

Stay in touch and follow our journey by visiting www.thekeyuk.org