



Professional Development Opportunities for Youth Workers 2026

The East of England and East Midlands Regional Youth Work Unit is offering a programme of professional development sessions for Youth Workers and other staff working with young people. The sessions will be delivered online via Zoom. All the sessions are free of charge and will have a maximum of 15 places available per course. Places will be allocated on a first come basis and by geography to ensure an equitable distribution across the region. To apply for a place please complete the application form below and return it to robin.konieczny@youthfocuseastandeastmids.org.uk

Organisation Name:											
Organisation Address:											
Post Code:											
Organisational Type											
LA		Vol Sector		Housing		Sports		Creative		Other	

Learners Full name: (Block capitals)
Address:
Post code:
Date of birth:
Highest level of education achieved & last learning experience undertaken:
Please list any Youth Work qualifications already held.
Telephone number:
Email address:
If you have any additional learning requirements, e.g. specific coloured hand-outs, please describe them here:

Role within the organisation and if Full time/Part time employed or volunteer	How many hours do you work/volunteer per week.	How many hours are face to face with young people per week
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Employment status Tick one	Full Time paid	Part time paid / Volunteer

Project Type	
Universal open to all	
Targeted to a particular group of young people	
Detached	
Other – please state	

2026/27 Course Programme

Please tick to book a place on each session you wish to attend. All sessions are delivered online via Zoom. **If you are applying for multiple courses, please rank the courses in order of preference.**

Course description	Course dates	Tick to book a place
Health, Lifestyle Choices and Inequality This workshop looks at the main areas of lifestyle medicine: movement, food, sleep, stress, substance use and social connection. We discuss how these areas link together and how poverty, discrimination and school pressures can affect young people's physical and mental health. Participants will learn practical ways to encourage healthier habits without blaming or judging young people. We focus on positive conversations, motivation and the role youth workers play as trusted adults who help young people understand their own health and make small, realistic changes over time.	Date: Monday 12th October 2026 Time: 9:30am – 1:30pm Tutor: Josh Barnbrook	☐
Equality, Power and Inclusive Practice (2 Sessions) This workshop explores diversity and inclusion in youth work. Using ideas like intersectionality and anti-oppressive practice, we look at how different parts of a young person's identity—such as race, gender, class, disability, sexuality or faith—shape their experiences. We also reflect on our own values, assumptions and positions of power, and how these affect our decisions and relationships with young people. We revisit key laws like the Equality Act 2010, but we also talk about why following the law is only the starting point. The goal is to build cultural humility and develop youth work practice that is fair, inclusive and challenging of inequality.	This is a two-session course — attendance at both sessions is required, plus an inter-session activity. Date: Monday 9th November 2026 Monday 16th November 2026 Time: 9:30am – 1:30pm Tutor: Josh Barnbrook	☐

Course description	Course dates	Tick to book a place
NEW: Erasmus+ is Back The UK's return to Erasmus+ opens new opportunities for youth workers, youth organisations and young people to rebuild European partnerships and develop international youth-work practice. This two-hour briefing provides a practical introduction to the youth-work elements of Erasmus+ from 2027, with a focus on what organisations can actually do and how to begin shaping credible project ideas. The session covers Youth Exchanges, Mobility of Youth Workers, Youth Participation Activities, DiscoverEU Inclusion Action, Small-scale Partnerships and Cooperation Partnerships. It will also explain how Erasmus+ priorities such as inclusion, participation, environmental sustainability and digital transformation should shape project design. The briefing includes a section on the European Solidarity Corps, including current volunteering and solidarity opportunities, and the European Commission's proposal to bring volunteering more closely into the successor Erasmus+ programme from 2028. This will be explained carefully, distinguishing what is confirmed for 2027 from what is still subject to final agreement. This is not a detailed application-writing workshop. It is designed to help youth workers and organisations understand the opportunities, match youth-work ideas to the right programme route, and identify practical next steps ahead of the 2027 Erasmus+ call.	Date: Wednesday 18th November 2026 Time: 12:00pm – 2:00pm Tutor: Robin Konieczny	☐
Adolescent Development – A Quick Refresher This workshop gives an easy-to-understand overview of how young people grow and change during adolescence. We look at how thinking, identity, relationships and emotions shift from early to late teenage years. We explore key developmental tasks such as becoming more independent, forming an identity, building close relationships and planning for the future. We also consider how trauma, neurodiversity, disability, being in care, migration or discrimination can change or complicate this process. Participants will learn how to view behaviour through a developmental lens, not simply as “challenging.” We explore what supportive, age-appropriate youth work looks like in everyday practice—such as setting boundaries, building trust, running groups, safeguarding and working with other services.	Date: Friday 20th November 2026 Time: 9:30am – 1:30pm Tutor: Ariane Hoppler	☐

Course description	Course dates	Tick to book a place
How the Teenage Brain Works In this workshop, we look at how the teenage brain develops and why this affects behaviour. Instead of seeing certain actions as “problems,” we learn how parts of the brain—like the prefrontal cortex (used for planning and decision-making) and the limbic system (linked to emotions)—develop at different speeds. We explore how hormones, friendships, social pressures and the need to “fit in” can influence a young person’s mood, choices and reactions. The session focuses on how youth workers can use this knowledge to respond in a calm, supportive and trauma-aware way, rather than using punishment or assuming young people “should know better.”	Date: Friday 4th December 2026 Time: 9:30am – 1:30pm Tutor: Ariane Hoppler	☐
Spirituality, Awe and Meaning in Youth Work This workshop explores the idea of “awe”—moments that feel powerful, inspiring or bigger than ourselves. Awe can come from nature, music, creativity, teamwork, relationships or big ideas, not just religion. We look at how awe and spirituality can give young people a sense of purpose, connection and hope. We discuss how young people seek meaning at a time of climate anxiety, social injustice and rapid change. Participants reflect on their own beliefs and comfort levels, and how these affect what they notice or encourage in youth-work spaces. The workshop is inclusive of all faiths and non-religious worldviews. Finally, we explore practical ways to bring awe and reflection into youth work—such as time outside, creative projects, shared rituals, and conversations about “big questions.” We also look at how awe-focused approaches can support wellbeing, resilience and ethical development in young people.	Date: Monday 18th January 2027 Time: 9:30am – 1:30pm Tutor: Ariane Hoppler	☐
New Tools for Working with Gen Z and Gen Alpha Today’s young people grow up in a world shaped by constant online connection, social media, climate worries, academic pressure and inequality. This workshop explores how these experiences influence how they think, feel and communicate. We look at creative and digital tools—such as games, journaling, card decks, videos and interactive activities—that help young people open up, reflect and develop emotional skills. Participants will learn how to choose and adapt tools so they fit different ages, cultures and digital habits, rather than using activities just because they are “fun” or “trendy.”	Date: Friday 29th January 2027 Time: 9:30am – 1:30pm Tutor: Ariane Hoppler	☐

Course description	Course dates	Tick to book a place
NEW: Leading with Purpose in Youth Work Leadership has a powerful influence on how youth work feels because it shapes team culture, trust, wellbeing and the experiences young people encounter. This interactive half-day workshop explores the values, behaviours and cultural dynamics that underpin effective leadership today, drawing on current thinking and the realities managers face. Through discussion, reflection and practical activities, participants will explore their leadership identity, values, power, communication, trust and inclusive practice. They will reflect on their own assumptions and leadership habits, considering how these shape staff experiences and the environments young people move through. Participants will leave with insights, practical tools and greater confidence in leading with clarity, compassion and purpose.	Date: Monday 8th February 2027 Time: 9:30am – 1:30pm Tutor: Josh Barnbrook	☐
Mindfulness in Youth Work This workshop introduces mindfulness as a set of simple practices that help with focus, calmness, self-awareness and emotional regulation—for both young people and youth workers. Participants will try out grounding exercises, breathing techniques, mindful movement and short reflective activities that can be used in drop-ins, one-to-ones, groups, trips and residential. These activities can help young people understand their feelings, manage stress and feel safer in their bodies. We also look at how youth workers can use mindfulness to stay calm, notice their own reactions and create safer spaces. Ethical issues such as consent, trauma-sensitivity and accessibility are discussed. We emphasise that mindfulness should support—not replace—strong relationships and structural support.	Date: Friday 12th February 2027 Time: 9:30am – 1:30pm Tutor: Ariane Hoppler	☐

Course description	Course dates	Tick to book a place
NEW: Managing People, Practice and Change Managing youth work practice is complex and deeply relational. It influences staff wellbeing, team culture and the quality of support young people receive. This practical half-day workshop explores supervision, communication, decision-making and leading teams through uncertainty and change, grounded in current research and frontline realities. Through scenario work, reflection and hands-on activities, participants will explore supportive accountability, conflict, wellbeing, online influences and the emotional demands of management. They will reflect on their own assumptions and communication habits, considering how these shape staff confidence and young people's experiences. Participants will leave with clear frameworks, practical strategies and renewed confidence in managing people and practice with calmness, clarity and care.	Date: Monday 15th February 2027 Time: 9:30am – 1:30pm Tutor: Josh Barnbrook	☐
NEW: Understanding Gendered Experiences of Adolescence (2 Sessions) Gender can have a powerful influence on how young people experience adolescence, shaping their identity, relationships, confidence, wellbeing and sense of belonging. This lively and interactive three-hour virtual CPD workshop explores the different and overlapping experiences of girls, boys and gender-diverse young people, bringing together current research, emerging debates and the realities young people face today. Through discussion, reflection and practical activities, participants will explore masculinity and femininity, mental health, friendships, social media, online influences and the growing need for safe “third spaces” where young people can connect, feel accepted and be themselves. Youth workers will also be encouraged to reflect on their own assumptions and gender stereotypes, consider how these may influence their practice, and develop more inclusive and responsive ways of working.	This is a two-session course — attendance at both sessions is required. Date: Monday 1st March 2027 Monday 8th March 2027 Time: 9:30am – 1:30pm Tutor: Josh Barnbrook & Ariane Hoppler	☐

Free Partner Training: The Politics Project

These sessions are delivered by The Politics Project, not the Regional Youth Work Unit. Please register directly via the links below — there is no need to tick a box on this form for these sessions.

Conversations with Politicians — Thursday 24th September 2026, 11:00am – 1:00pm. [Register here](#)

Gamifying Democracy — Thursday 1st October 2026, 11:00am – 1:00pm. [Register here](#)

Conversations with Politicians — Wednesday 14th October 2026, 11:00am – 1:00pm. [Register here](#)

Demographic Data

We would like to get an idea of who we are working with. To do this we would like you to share some information with us. Data will be shared with The National Youth Agency (NYA) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

Please circle one answer to the questions below:

Age:	Under 18	19-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+
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Ethnic Background: choose the number that best describes your ethnic group or background:

1. White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	9. Asian/Asian British - Indian
2. White - Irish	10. Asian/Asian British - Pakistani
3. White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	11. Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi
4. White - Any other, please describe:	12. Asian/Asian British - Chinese
5. Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean	13. Asian/Asian British - Any other, please describe:
6. Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African	14. Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - African
7. Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian	15. Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean
8. Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - Any other, please describe:	16. Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Any other, please describe:
	17. Other ethnic group - Arab
	18. Other ethnic group - please describe:

Gender:	Male	Female	Prefer to Self-Describe (please specify)	Prefer not to say
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Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	Yes	No	Please detail any support that may be needed to enable participation.
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I understand that in order to complete this course I will need to:

- ☐ Attend all sessions
- ☐ Complete set tasks between sessions

Signed:

Date:

Please complete and return to
Email: robin.konieczny@youthfocuseastandeastmids.org.uk