

Welcome to

emerge 

Emergence Vision

Our vision is to inspire lasting positive change in the lives of young people, aiming towards personal growth, better physical and mental wellbeing and positive engagement in education and to actively transform the communities we live and work within.

Our Core Value is to have Radical Compassion

We think this means:

- With young people, team and organisations we are relational, holistic and person centred.
- We want to grow compassion, creativity and positivity in our activity and in others
- We have a bias towards the hardest to reach and those in most need
- It is important that we work with many young people, but it's not just a numbers game – we want to real change which can mean a focus on smaller numbers sometimes.
- We want all work to be sustainable – we are here for the long haul!



History

Emerge grew out of church-based work with young people which started over 30 years ago within two parishes in the BD4 area of South-East Bradford where we are still based today. For many years, we were based in the old St Mary's Church building in Laisterdyke which had been loving refurbished to facilitate youth work. Through that time, our work grew a focus on delivering alternative education alongside the community youth work programme. As our work evolved, it also spread geographically – in the period from 2012 to 2017 we initiated work in eight Bradford communities alongside developments in South Yorkshire and London. From 2017, rather than continue to be thinly spread across multiple cities and communities, we renewed the priority of our BD4 communities and supported our work beyond BD4 to continue through local partners or take on independent charity status.

In 2019 we sold the old St Mary's building to help us create a more equal presence across BD4. We now borrow and rent premises where and when we need them, working in regular partnership with 10 local organisations and over 20 schools. Change and development are a consistent theme throughout our history as we look to creatively position ourselves to support the needs of young people and respond to the changing priorities of the sector, local and national politics and funders.



Context

We love our communities, but sadly for many young people they do not offer the opportunities you would hope for. Statistically they are classed as disadvantaged; all are health deprivation hotspots where young people and their families experience health inequalities. We see significant levels of economic and social hardship, educational struggles, low levels of physical activity, a broad range of mental health and wellbeing struggles, alongside limited and undermined aspiration. Young people express low expectation of themselves or life, and a helplessness to change their futures.



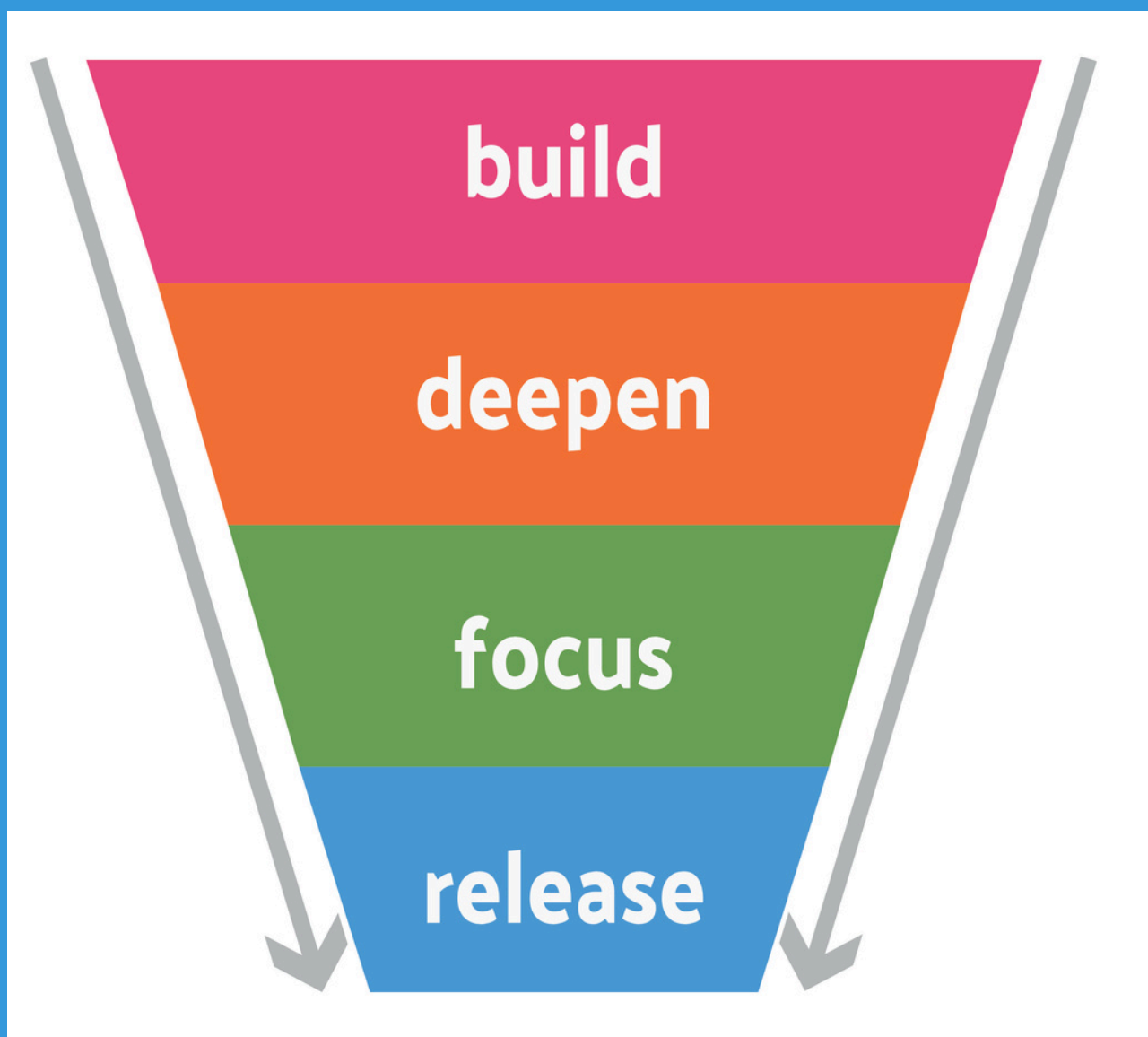
Alongside the above struggles, our conversations and surveys have highlighted the following things which concern young people the most:

- School pressures (excessive focus on academic catch up, patchy support for wellbeing and increased violence within school), and the seemingly insurmountable challenge for post-16's of achieving independence.
- Fear of falling into the criminal and antisocial behaviour common on our streets, and into the gangs who lead much of this.
- The unrelenting strain on low-income families due to cost-of-living increases.
- A lack of hope and the feeling that the world is only full of bad news.

Our youth work is not capable of meeting all of the complexities of unmet needs we encounter, but can support young people to develop the resilience and personal skills necessary to better navigate and hopefully thrive within, the challenges they face.

Our theory of change is summarised by the below picture. We BUILD relationships with large numbers of young people and then DEEPEN and FOCUS those relationships and our activities so that in time we RELEASE and enable young people to flourish and thrive independently.

We know 'youth work works' – this helps us understand how!



Our work in numbers

Within the 2024/25 academic year we have:



814 young people have attended our **1209** sessions of community youth work. Of these **122** young people have been involved in our social action and leadership programme, or volunteering in other ways.

We are a team of **14** staff with a lot of experience, and roughly **35** regular or ad-hoc volunteers. Many of our staff and almost all volunteers live in the communities we work within!

Engaged **1064** individual young people and delivered **4917** sessions of youth work

147 young people have attended our sessions exploring faith and spirituality



We have engaged **288** young people through **3182** sessions of 1-2-1 support in **22** different schools

Our accounts from financial year 2024/25 will tell you we spent approximately **£500,000** in the year to enable the above activity.

Our Impact

We have worked hard over the last few years to improve our ability to capture the impact of our work. There is however still work to do to improve this and ensure we have relevant and proportionate processes for all areas of our work. Our efforts focus on capturing information on the Socio-Emotional Learning of young people within six core areas – teamwork, emotion management, initiative, responsibility, empathy and problem solving. This is based on the well researched links between good socio-emotional skills and longer-term life outcomes such as employability, educational attainment and good family/friend relationships.

We gather information on our impact through questionnaires, case studies and quotes from young people, partners and parents.



Our work makes a difference

- 64% of young people supported within schools report an increase in Empathy and Responsibility
- 100% of young people involved in our Social Action programmes report higher Initiative scores.
- Of 58 young people engaged in volunteering, 92% evidenced growth in Problem Solving and 87% in Teamwork skills.



A recent 'snapshot survey' we carried out explored the impact of our work on the wellbeing of young people. 101 young people responded with the following results:

- 89% said that Emerge has helped them understand mental wellbeing better.
- 91% said that Emerge helps them look after their wellbeing 'most of the time' or 'always'.
- 85% said that we help them be 'significantly more' positive and optimistic for the future.
- 86% said that Emerge is an important part of helping them cope with challenges in life.

I value Emerge because...

*"... the team help you never to give up". Boy, aged 14.
 "... the activities get me away from trouble". Boy aged 11.*

*'Emerge has taught me how
 to respect people more, be
 grateful for things and be
 yourself.'*

Girl, aged 13

**Since being part of
 Emerge...**

*"I have learnt that things
 don't always go your way
 and got more confident
 around other people"*

Since being part of Emerge...

"I have become more mature and a better team leader"

Emerge have worked in partnership with BFA since we opened our doors in 2015. The work they do with our young people within school cannot be underestimated. Our students often ask when Emerge staff are in the building and frequently want to talk to them due to the positive relationships they have built. Our young people feel safe, respected and cared for by all Emerge staff they come across and they are a real credit to the BD4 community due to their work within schools but also their work in evenings and in school holidays to create the best outcomes for the young people they work with.

**Andy Russell, Associate Senior Leader, Safeguarding, Bradford
 Forster Academy**

Community Hubs



Through our four Community Hubs we deliver approximately 25 sessions of youth work activity each week across East Bowling, Holmewood, Bierley and Sutton. This youth work programme includes:

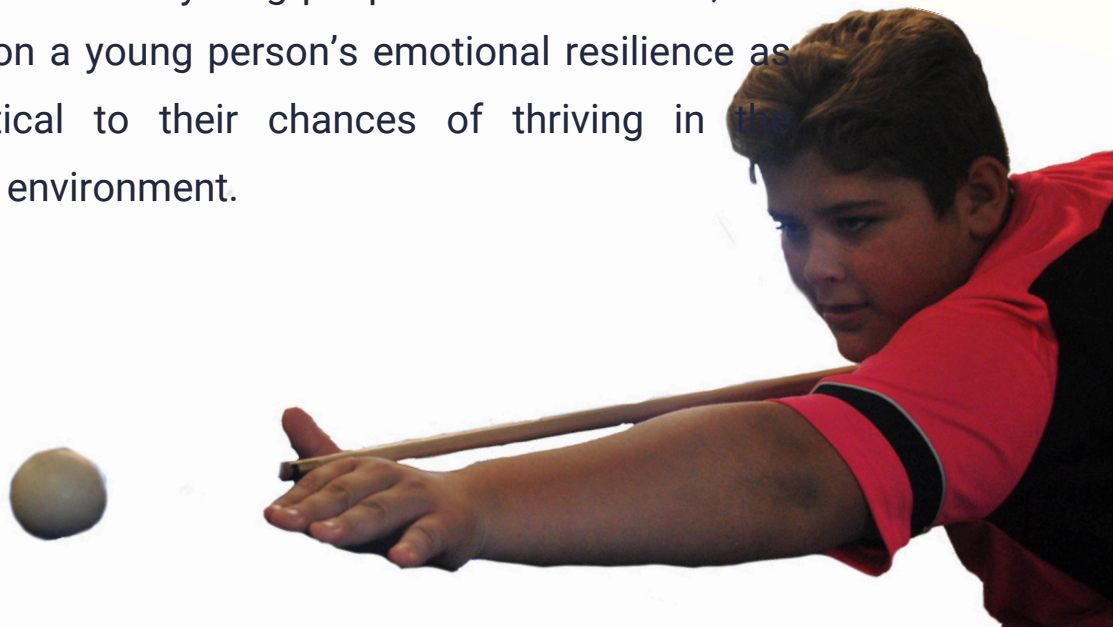
- Outdoor sports and/or detached work sessions in parks and community games areas,
- Centre-based open-access sessions
- Social action/leadership programmes,
- Targeted issue-based small groups.
- In the school holidays our provision changes to fill the greater available time and includes sports camps, trips, walks, cycling and other outdoor activities, pop-up sessions and low-key safe spaces where young people can spend time.

Our social action programmes are a highlight of our work, enabling young people in each community to actively participate in influencing their neighbourhood practically (planting flowers in community areas, community clean-up work and visiting residential homes for the elderly are all recent examples), and through joining in with community initiatives which influence adults decision makers.

Schools

Our work in primary and secondary schools supports 60 - 70 young people each week through 1-2-1 support sessions. These mainly operate through contracts with individual schools which vary from a couple of hours to three full days per week of staff time. Our approach is highly relational and person-centred, with a deliberate focus on those most at risk of school exclusion, mental ill-health, and socio-emotional struggles. Mostly, young people are identified and referred by the school when these issues are impacting their engagement with learning and/or attendance. We work hard to link work in schools to our community youth work programme, aiming for young people to have a 'wrap around' offer, engaging in positive relationships with peers and adults in multiple settings.

Our work in schools also includes our project supporting Care Experienced young people, mainly during their transition from primary to secondary education. Working in partnership with Bradford Virtual School for young people in Year 6 and 7, our support focuses on a young person's emotional resilience as this can be critical to their chances of thriving in the secondary school environment.



Faith

Emerge grew out of church-based work and throughout our 30 year history we have kept a distinctive programme of activities which are explicitly faith based. These sessions intentionally communicate about and open discussions on faith and spirituality from a Christian perspective.

Like everything else we do (and in line with our professional youth standards), these sessions are inclusive and open to all young people regardless of faith background or any other defining characteristic. It is important to us that we follow the example of Jesus, and position ourselves to meet, support and stand alongside the excluded and marginalised. We make no assumptions about existing knowledge but aim to connect faith relevantly into the lived experience of young people.

Activities include:

- Get Real – an evening group with 30-40 young people attending full of fun, stories, discussion and food.
- Small groups linked to the Get Real programme where a few young people meet to have deeper conversations.
- Church@5 – a family focused session including a meal, a thought, and opportunity to share lived experiences.
- The Heart – we support the chaplaincy in one of our local schools.



Team

The staff team is made up of 14 amazing people with a broad range of experience and skills. The collective commitment to support young people, 'go the extra mile' and bring creativity and passion into their work is inspiring.

The new CEO will join our Leadership Team of four senior leaders with management responsibility for individuals and operational responsibility for different areas of our work.





A final word...

Leading Emerge is both an incredibly rewarding privilege and a complex challenge requiring excellent people and leadership skills. The new CEO will inherit:

- A fantastic team of youth workers committed to their work, their communities and to each other.
- An organisation with a great reputation and a broad range of organisational friends and partners.
- The challenge of keeping a medium sized voluntary sector organisation financially sustainable in the midst of a complex funding environment, starting from a relatively positive financial position currently.
- The long-term responsibility of navigating into a future which enables Emerge to stay true to its values and vision, develop and maintain creative, impactful services with young people and ongoing growth of a staff team with the gifts and skills to deliver all the above.



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