

# VOLUNTEER IT YOURSELF

Our Strategy

2022–2025



INTRODUCING  
**VIY**

VIY is a not-for-profit community interest company that combines impact in three areas: **youth, community** and **volunteering**.

We do this by challenging young people to **learn construction trade skills** and boost their employability whilst helping to **transform local community places and spaces** in need of essential improvements.

Young people are mentored on site by professional tradespeople and construction operators and have the chance to achieve **Entry Level City & Guilds trade skills accreditations**. VIY learners are also supported, where appropriate, to **progress beyond VIY into employment, education and further training outcomes**.

Since VIY launched in 2011 we've delivered more than **700 community projects** involving and benefitting **13,000 young people** who are typically unemployed and disengaged from mainstream education and training, or at risk of unemployment and disengagement.



Working in partnership, here with the Rugby League World Cup at Normanton Knights, Wakefield

**THE REASON  
WE DO  
WHAT WE DO**

**Young people facing disadvantage are at increased risk of long-term unemployment:**

Despite reports of [youth unemployment](#) returning to pre-pandemic levels, young people aged 16-24 are still over three times more likely to be unemployed than the rest of the economically active population. Digging deeper, the disparities in employment prospects widen for those facing other socio-economic barriers and discrimination in their lives, for example, according to [ethnicity](#) or whether a young person is disengaged or excluded from mainstream education or training and/or has special educational needs. Our aim is to help break down the barriers that many young people face in boosting their skills and work-readiness and accessing employment opportunities.

**Essential community facilities are at risk and in need, especially in 'left behind' areas:**

Community facilities are recognised as one of the most important aspects of local community infrastructure and yet are least readily available in some of the most ['left behind' areas in the UK](#). Cuts to youth services of more than £1bn over the past decade have left many of these spaces struggling to survive, with the cost of undertaking urgent maintenance and improvement works [being a major factor](#). Now, more than ever, and especially in areas hardest hit by closures and the effects of the pandemic, such spaces play a critical role in combatting social isolation, supporting people's health and wellbeing, improving inclusion and delivering vital services to local people.

**Those living in deprived, urban areas are less likely to volunteer and participate within their local communities:**

Volunteering is widely recognised as a valuable driver for positive social change in local communities and society at large, yet people living in areas of high deprivation are generally less likely to volunteer than those in less deprived neighbourhoods. [Findings from 2021](#) also show that volunteers in the most deprived areas had dramatically improved scores across mental and physical health, confidence and socialisation, compared to those who didn't volunteer. Enabling the positive benefits of volunteering for wellbeing and in building 'pride of place' in areas where levelling up is most needed is a volunteering revolution we're right behind.



*Creating safe outdoor spaces for elderly residents, Vale View, Newark*

## OUR MISSION

To combine impact and progression outcomes in three areas:

### YOUTH

Boosting young people's skills and work-readiness

### COMMUNITY

Refurbishing and transforming local facilities that host valued services

### VOLUNTEERING

Inspiring young people and trade mentors/construction professionals to work together and share skills

## OUR VISION

### THREE GOALS:

1. Marginalised and disengaged young people **inspired and better supported to progress** towards and into employment, especially within construction
2. Vital community places and spaces able to **benefit more people and new audiences** and become more inclusive, sustainable and financially secure
3. More people **inspired to volunteer** for the first time and/or more often in their communities – with associated health and wellbeing benefits



Boosting young people's skills and work-readiness, Swan Youth Project, Norfolk

## OUR CORE VALUES

### We're progressive

Our model is unique and we're constantly striving to deliver greater long-term impact and outcomes, continually developing and improving the way we work as a team to achieve our mission.

### We're all about collaboration

Working in partnership with like-minded organisations is at the heart of the VIY model. We also work very collaboratively as a team, trusting and supporting each other.

### We're flexible

We operate with 'flexibility within frameworks' and adapt our approach to achieve the best possible outcomes where needed. We're flexible as a team too, empowering individuals to do their best work.

### We're inclusive

We work hard to offer equal opportunities and a level playing field to everyone on our programmes, to suit different backgrounds and needs. We also respect and celebrate the diversity of our own team - we encourage everyone to be their true selves.

### We're a passionate bunch

We really care about what we do – we are ambitious and driven to help VIY realise its full potential.



# OUR MODEL

## YOUTH

### Who we work with:

- Young people aged 14-24 who are marginalised, live in deprived locations and typically not in education, employment and training or at risk of becoming NEET\*

### What we do:

- Young people engaged via youth work organisations local to our project sites and also through the community clubs and venues at the heart of each VIY project
- Personalised work plans created for young people based on their needs and goals
- Young people mentored on site and learning vocational trade skills (plus broader personal employability skills) whilst helping to transform community places and spaces
- Wider work-readiness and progression support

### Impact:

- Raising young people's aspirations
- Increasing young people's awareness of and interest in construction as a relevant, rewarding and accessible sector
- Young people successfully progressing beyond VIY to an EET\*\* outcome
- Young people achieving City & Guilds trade skills accreditations

### Key success measures:

- No. of young people taking part
- % gaining Entry Level 3 City & Guilds skills accreditations
- % achieving an EET\*\* progression beyond the end of their VIY experience

\*Not in education, employment or training \*\*Education, employment or training

61% OF VIY LEARNERS IN 2021-22 SUCCESSFULLY ACHIEVED AN ENTRY LEVEL 3 CITY & GUILDS SKILLS ACCREDITATION



Young people learning and applying trade skills to enhance community facilities, Hunslet Warriors, Leeds

# OUR MODEL

## COMMUNITY

### Who we work with:

- Places and spaces hosting essential services in local communities, typically located in the most under-served areas (according to IMD\* stats)
- Including: community centres, youth clubs, grassroots sports clubs and facilities, arts and cultural venues, outdoor green spaces, supported accommodation/housing

### What we do:

- Needs-based assessment focused on boosting capacity, diversity and sustainability
- Scope/scale of works agreed to meet needs
- Community facilities physically refurbished and transformed by young volunteers and VIY mentors working together

### Impact:

- Community spaces and places able to benefit more people/new audiences, host new activities and become more inclusive, sustainable and financially secure

### Key success measures:

- No. of projects delivered/venues improved
- Venues having an improved offer for their local community
- Venues reporting increased number and/or diversity of users
- Venues reporting increased financial resilience and sustainability

\*English Indices of Multiple Deprivation



100% OF VIY PROJECTS DELIVERED IN 2021-22 WERE LOCATED IN OR SERVING COMMUNITIES IN THE 20% MOST DEPRIVED NEIGHBOURHOODS NATIONALLY

*Giving venues a new lease of life, like The Old Library, Mansfield*

# OUR MODEL

## VOLUNTEERING

### Who we work with:

- Young people helping to improve places and spaces they do, or could, use and benefit from
- Local tradespeople mentoring VIY learners and sharing their skills
- Other partner employee volunteers
- Across all of the above - people who are often new to volunteering

### What we do:

- Create enjoyable, well-structured and accessible opportunities to volunteer with VIY
- Offer further volunteering opportunities with VIY

### Impact:

- Enabling and inspiring more people (local to our projects) to volunteer for the first time and/or more regularly, contributing to skills development and wellbeing

### Key success measures:

- No. of volunteers engaged
- % having a positive volunteering experience with VIY
- % interested in continuing to volunteer post their first VIY experience
- % repeat volunteering with VIY or elsewhere in their local community



VIY WAS THE FIRST VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE FOR 98% OF VIY LEARNERS IN 2021-22

Inspired to volunteer and improve a space they use and benefit from, Bury Cricket Club

# OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2022–25

**1. Delivering a core VIY model that can be applied in different settings**

We will focus on providing a core offer meeting local needs with national reach, ensuring consistency and high-quality outcomes at all times.

**2. Working at greater depth in our hub regions**

We will deepen our operations and resources in our key delivery regions for greater sustainability, efficiency and impact.

**3. Developing and strengthening our youth engagement and employer partnerships**

We will continue to build relationships with like-minded organisations that are ideally placed to refer young people into VIY, as well as with trade and construction employers who can offer progression opportunities for VIY learners.

**4. Growing our volunteer mentor network**

We will increase opportunities for local tradespeople, construction professionals and employer ambassadors to mentor and share their knowledge and experience with VIY learners.

**5. Learning what works – continuing our journey to becoming a fully insight-led organisation**

We will further develop our data capture and data analysis systems and processes to evidence the impact of our work and inform continuous improvements to our model.

**6. Continuing to build a diverse, sustainable funding and income base**

We will ensure our cross-sector income and funding streams support our strategic priorities in a sustainable way and help VIY grow and deliver greater impact at scale.

**7. Raising our profile and voice nationally**

We will boost awareness of our work to help fuel our operations and deliver against our strategic priorities, whilst also championing our model and sharing our learning more widely across the sectors and areas of impact we focus on.



Hands-on work experience for young people alongside local tradespeople, Flo Skatepark, Nottingham



# FROM MISSION TO VISION



## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Whilst our strategy sets out our vision and how we aim to achieve it, delivery of the strategy will also be guided by a number of core principles. These principles underpin the way we operate as an organisation and a team. They also keep us focused on working towards and achieving our impact goals.**

- Prioritising young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET and typically face other challenges and barriers in their lives
- Working in the most under-served neighbourhoods and communities across our hub regions
- Delivering entry level vocational skills accreditations that enable young people to reach the all-important 'first rung on the ladder' – often the hardest step to take

- Working in partnership – including with youth referral organisations, trade and construction sector employers, local authorities, sports bodies and social impact grant funders
- Aspiring for growth in terms of impact, progression outcomes and reach
- Balancing organisational and business growth with appropriate operational management to ensure there are no risks to safety, quality, consistency, reputation and workforce welfare
- Minimising our environmental impact
- Nurturing our organisational culture and values



Young people helping to improve a valued community space, The Phoenix Centre, Norwich

If you're interested in VIY's work, from partnering on projects and referring young people to recruiting experienced tradespeople as mentors and providing progression opportunities for VIY participants, please get in touch: [info@teamviy.com](mailto:info@teamviy.com)

Follow the latest from us on social:

 /volunteerityourself

   @viyproject

