

SOUND COMMUNITIES

2025 IMPACT REPORT

VISION AND ACHIEVEMENTS



AP Session, April 25

image credit: Conor Marks Photography

It's been another BIG year for Sound Communities. Need has risen, resources have been stretched, and the vulnerabilities of the young people we support have exceeded anything we have faced before. The drive, commitment, and empathy of our team have enabled us to thrive under these pressures, delivering the four core values our young people need most: consistency, trust, inspiration, and creativity.

The numbers and stories in this report offer an honest reflection of our impact and how we innovate in response to young people's voices and needs. We constantly reflect and foster a proactive culture so we can respond when it matters most, helping prevent young people from falling into patterns of negativity and low self-worth. By investing in human capital, we are supporting safer, more hopeful, and more productive futures.

This year, we reached 63% more young people. Working alongside Non-Executive Directors, advisors, mentors, consultants, and peer organisations, we have shaped our strategic direction to support this growth. We strengthened governance, developed our Theory of Change, refined evaluation approaches, and expanded philanthropy to sustain impact.

We introduced a rolling CPD programme to inspire and upskill staff, while building partnerships and joining networks including The Centre for Social Justice and The Global Fund for Children: Boys and Young Men Initiative. We also invested significantly in upgrading our premises, securing funding to ensure they are accessible, warm, equipped to industry standards, and creating six additional studios.

Thank you for your continued support.



Mike Cook + Kate Rudman, Directors

OUR VISION

We work to create communities of empowered, confident and resilient young people with the aspirations and skills to build a better and fairer future.

OUR MISSION

To engage and mobilise marginalised young people. We will help them to lead production opportunities together, to improve their wellbeing and facilitate expression, creativity and agency.

OUR VALUES



WHY WE EXIST

WE WORK WITH SOME OF THE MOST VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE MOST DEPRIVED AREAS

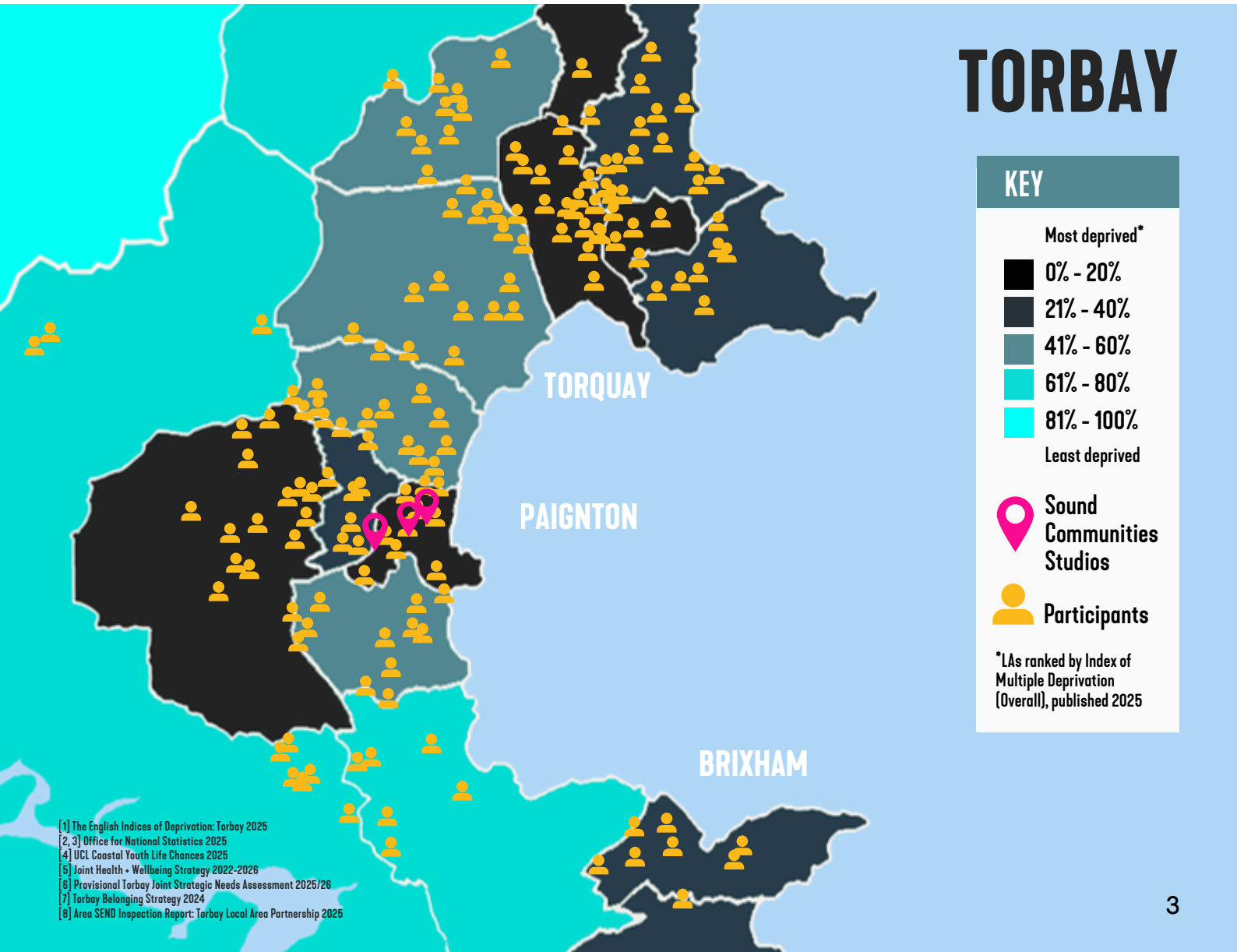
Torbay continues to be one of the UK's most deprived areas - ranked 38 out of 317 Local Authorities in England for deprivation, the most deprived in the South West (IMD 2025[1]), with high rates of poverty, domestic violence, special educational needs, mental health challenges, adverse childhood experiences, looked-after children, self-harm, and suicide.

These challenges often lead to low confidence, social isolation, school exclusion, risk-taking behaviours, lack of agency, lack of access to creative and cultural activities, lack of trusted relationships, positive peer relationships and role models, and low aspirations.

OUR PREMISES' POSTCODE RANKS IN THE POOREST 1% OF THE UK

THE SCALE OF NEED IN TORBAY:

- Around 1 in 4 children (0-15) in Torbay are growing up in relative poverty,[2] that's roughly 5,600 young people. We worked with 2,593 young people last year which means many more are still waiting to be reached.
- Torbay is the 38th most deprived area in England and most deprived in the South West.[3]
- Young people in deprived coastal communities have worse mental health than inland peers and face lower educational attainment / progression.[4]
- Torbay has one of the highest rates of children in care in England, significantly higher than the national average.[5]
- Torbay has a significantly higher proportion of primary and secondary school pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan.[6]
- Torbay has almost double the rate of school suspensions and exclusions than the national average.[7]
- Ofsted identifies systemic failings in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision in Torbay, raising urgent concerns about outcomes for children and young people.[8]



[1] The English Indices of Deprivation: Torbay 2025
[2, 3] Office for National Statistics 2025
[4] UCL Coastal Youth Life Chances 2025
[5] Joint Health + Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026
[6] Provisional Torbay Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2025/26
[7] Torbay Belonging Strategy 2024
[8] Area SEND Inspection Report: Torbay Local Area Partnership 2025

OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

IN 2025...

2593 YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED
63% increase from 2024

3469 SESSIONS DELIVERED
52% increase from 2024

33746 CONTACT HOURS
67% increase from 2024

PAST PARTICIPANTS REPORTED...

75% EMPOWERED
now feel completely empowered because of their experience with Sound Communities

88% CAREER
definitely or somewhat influenced their career direction

100% CONFIDENCE
rate their current confidence at 7 or higher

50% PEER NETWORKS
have gone on to build strong peer networks with people from similar backgrounds

YOUNG PEOPLE WE ENGAGED WITH SAID...

90% BELONGING
reported an increased sense of belonging and reduced isolation

87% EDUCATION
achieved qualifications and production skills

93% CREATIVITY
felt able to express their creativity

94% CONFIDENCE
increased confidence, self-belief and aspirations

88% SOCIAL ACTION
felt more empowered to make positive contributions to their communities

81% COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST
felt connected to like-minded peers

84% EMPLOYABILITY
were motivated to seek work, education, or training*

*of participants who were NEET prior to completing Sound Communities Employability project

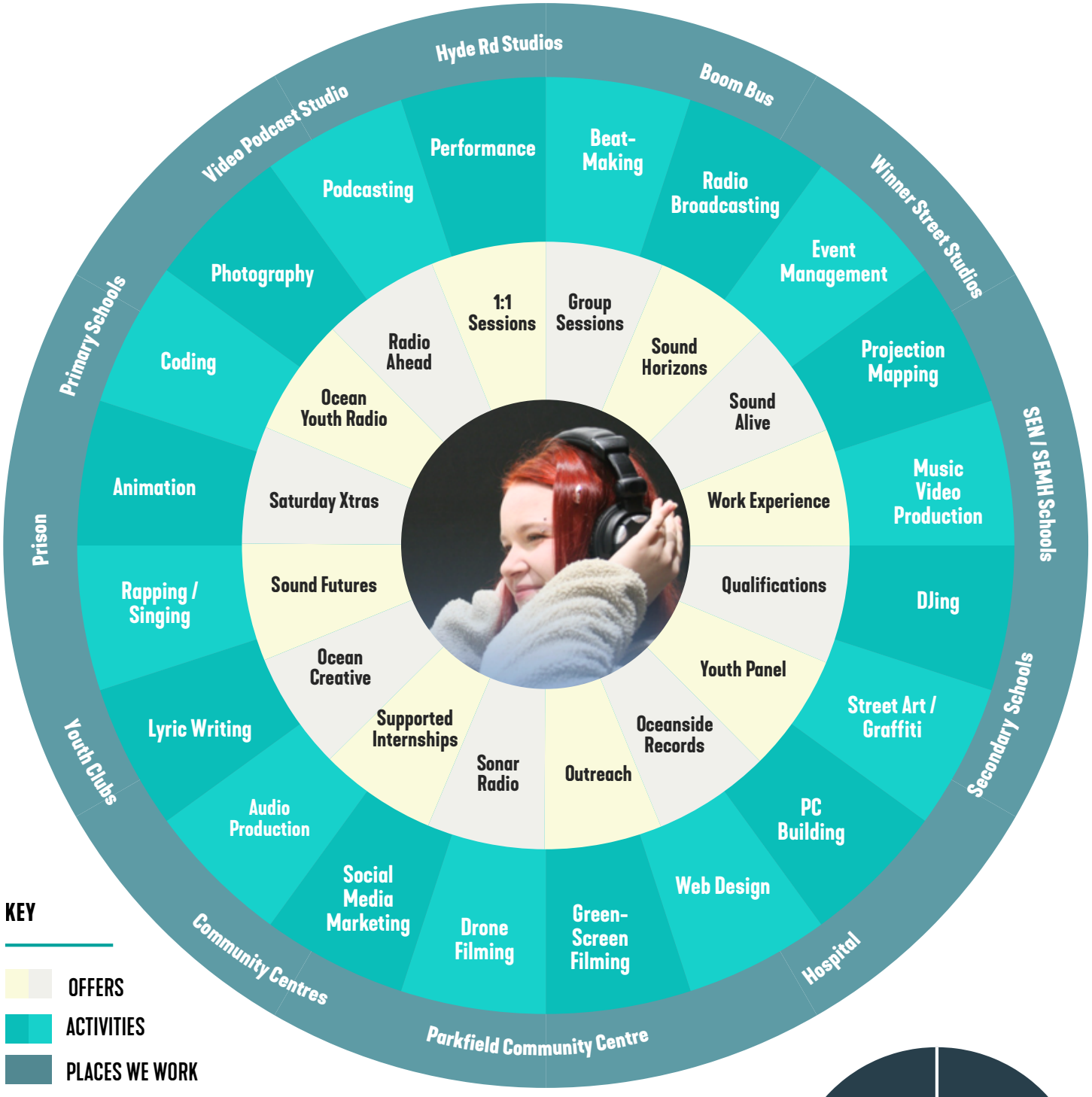


Sound Communities Team
Impact Event, Stage Left, Feb 25

WHAT WE DO

HOW WE WORK

Explore our offer for young people at a glance — the support, activities and places we work. Everything is designed around young people, so they can get involved in whichever areas suit their interests and goals:



KEY

- OFFERS
- ACTIVITIES
- PLACES WE WORK

OUR STRANDS

The strands are the six core areas that shape our mission, blending guiding principles, key offers, and practical actions to focus our work on alternative provision, employability, rehabilitation, production, early intervention, and community.



WHAT MAKES US SPECIAL

REIMAGINING WHAT'S POSSIBLE. CREATING LASTING IMPACT.

We are proud to support some of the most marginalised young people in South Devon to re-engage with sustained education, employment, or training. By focusing on creativity, intrinsic motivation, and trusted relationships, our work helps young people reimagine what's possible and positively change their lives.

Young people are at the heart of everything we do. Our trauma-informed approach meets them through their interests, builds trust, and enables us to respond holistically to their educational, mental health, and wider needs. From trust, everything becomes possible.

This impact is seen in increased participation in education, reduced NEET levels, greater confidence in next steps, and more positive contributions to their communities.

Research backs our approach: creativity heals trauma, trust and consistency build self-esteem, and inspiration builds belief. It is our responsibility as parents, partners, commissioners, and leaders to trust that young people can achieve better life opportunities.

Our work is delivered through a unique model combining alternative provision, production arms, and employment pathways, a strengths-based ecosystem. Production arms act as incubators, letting young people take ownership, find their voice, and experience belonging.

We aim to keep participants engaged for as long as they need, to ensure lasting change and support them to move on when ready. Through this pioneering model, we are transforming lives but also widening Torbay's cultural and educational offer, making it a better place to live for everyone.

Past Particpant

I WAS TOLD I'D NEED TO MOVE TO LONDON FOR A RADIO CAREER, BUT SOUND COMMUNITIES GAVE ME REAL EXPERIENCE AND SHOWED THAT SUCCESS IN THE SOUTH WEST IS POSSIBLE.



Image credit: Carey Marks Photography

AP Session, March 25

THEORY OF CHANGE

THE NEED

We work with some of the most vulnerable young people in some of the most deprived areas across Torbay and South Devon. These marginalised young people often face isolation, low confidence, limited opportunities, lack of agency, voice and trusted relationships.

INPUTS

OUR METHODOLOGY

- Focus on creativity & intrinsic motivation
- Consistency & trusted relationships
- Meet them where they're at
- Peer-led & peer-to-peer support
- A safe space to call their own
- Inspiring, passionate & creative, expert practitioners

ACTIVITIES

SUPPORTING MOST MARGINALISED YOUTH

- Youth-led initiatives
- Education & early intervention
- Creative production
- Rehabilitation
- Mentorship & guidance
- Peer learning
- Work readiness

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

EMPOWERING YOUTH VOICE

- Increased sense of belonging & reduced social isolation
- Qualifications & production skills
- Ability to express creativity
- Increased confidence, self-belief, aspirations & positive identity
- Youth-initiated social action
- Engagement in positive communities of interest
- Development of life, employability & enterprise skills

IMPACT

WHICH IN TIME LEADS TO MORE EMPOWERED FUTURES THROUGH...

- Increased school attendance
- Completion of school
- Progression to further/higher education
- Greater life opportunities & agency
- Improved capacity & understanding of healthy choices
- Moving from NEET to EET
- Supported progression in & into work
- Increased job retention & satisfaction
- Involvement in ongoing social action through strengths-based communities of interest

OUR MISSION

To engage and mobilise marginalised young people. We will help them to lead production opportunities together, to improve their wellbeing and facilitate expression, creativity and agency.



WHAT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE SAY



GCSE Photography AP Session, June 25

YOUNG PEOPLE WE WORKED WITH IN 2025 SAID THAT ENGAGING WITH SOUND COMMUNITIES:

89%
Encourages them to be creative

89%
Makes them feel confident expressing how they feel

76%
Makes them feel like their opinion matters

80%
Teaches them useful new skills

74%
Makes them feel more confident

89%
Makes them feel that their voice is heard

80%
Makes them more aware of the things that they can achieve

76%
Helps them feel more confident about taking their next steps in life

On 2nd day of AQA YL, Windmill Centre, 15yo, April 25

I'VE DECIDED TO MISS SEEING THE NEW MARVEL FILM WITH MY FRIENDS TO COME TO THE SECOND DAY OF COURSE TODAY.

Mayfield Primary School pupils, Radio Ahead sessions, 10yo

ENJOYED IT SO MUCH! IT'S TOO GOOD!

I LIKE IT BECAUSE IT IS VERY AWESOME.

Alternative Provision student, 16yo, Sept 25

THE FIRST FEW WEEKS CAN BE TOUGH AS YOU GET TO KNOW EVERYONE BUT IT'S A GREAT PLACE - MY CONFIDENCE HAS GROWN MASSIVELY SINCE JOINING. I FEEL LIKE I'M PART OF THE FAMILY NOW SO KEEP PERSEVERING!!

Sound Futures Participant, 21yo, March 25

I'VE LOVED EVERY MINUTE OF THIS PROJECT.

Alternative Provision student, 15yo, June 25

IF IT WASN'T FOR SOUND COMMUNITIES, I'D HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'D BE DOING!

WHAT OUR PARENTS SAY

Parent, Alternative Provision, Feb 25

I HAVE SO MUCH GRATITUDE TOWARDS EVERYONE WORKING WITH MY CHILD, THIS PROVISION HAS GENUINELY BEEN LIFE CHANGING FOR HER.

Parent, Ocean Youth Taster Day, March 25

JUST WANTED TO SAY THANK FOR TODAY, SHE IS ABSOLUTELY BUZZING. I LOVE SEEING HER SO HAPPY LIKE THAT.

Bridges Outreach Project, Feb 25

MY SON CAME HOME REALLY POSITIVE TODAY AFTER A FEW DOWN DAYS. WHEN I ASKED HIM HOW IT WENT HE SAID: "IT WAS ACTUALLY DECENT!"
HE'S SENT ME THE LITTLE MUSIC PIECE HE MADE AND SEEMS VERY PROUD OF IT SO THANK YOU!!!

Parent, Alternative Provision, Nov 25

I HAVE WATCHED MY DAUGHTER GO FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH - SHE'S SHOWN DETERMINATION AND CONFIDENCE THAT SHE'D LOST OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS AND MADE FRIENDS WHO UNDERSTAND HER.

Parent, Alternative Provision, Nov 25

HE ALWAYS COMES HOME SMILING, IT'S SO NICE TO SEE AND TO SEE HIM GETTING OUT OF THE HOUSE AND DOING SOMETHING AGAIN.

Parent, Ocean Academy, Aug 25

THE STAFF WERE SO WELCOMING AND FRIENDLY - ALL 3 OF MY CHILDREN CAME OUT BUZZING, EXCITED TO GO BACK THE NEXT DAY. BEST HOLIDAY CLUB THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED. CAN'T THANK YOUR STAFF ENOUGH.

PARENTS & CARER RESPONDEDENTS* REPORTED POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR THEIR YOUNG PEOPLE...

100% See skills and learning benefits

100% Trust Sound Communities staff

100% See positive impact on mental health

100% Feel their young person is listened to

100% Say it supports skills development

100% Say it gives young people a voice

98% Say it creates a strong sense of community

100% Say it provides inspiring young role models

Parent, Ocean Academy, Aug 25

INCREDIBLE PROJECT RUN BY INCREDIBLE PEOPLE.

Parent, Sound Futures, Aug 25

YOU HAVE ALL GONE ABOVE AND BEYOND AND DO A MARVELLOUS JOB WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF TORBAY.

Parent, Parkfield Summer Outreach, Aug 25

WE WERE LUCKY ENOUGH TO FIND THE BOOM BUS IN PAIGNTON – MY BOYS HAD A BLAST LEARNING TO DJ. THE LADS RUNNING IT WERE JUST BRILLIANT AND REALLY RALLIED THE KIDS. VERY IMPRESSED.

Parent, Alternative Provision, Nov 25

YOU REALLY ARE MY SON'S LIFELINE. HAVING A PLACE HE FEELS ACCEPTED AND THAT HE BELONGS IS BETTER THAN THERAPY.

* Data from Sound Communities Impact Survey 2025. Percentages reflect respondents who selected 'agree' or 'strongly agree'. Not all respondents answered every question.

ALTERNATIVE PROVISION



Alternative Provision session, April 25

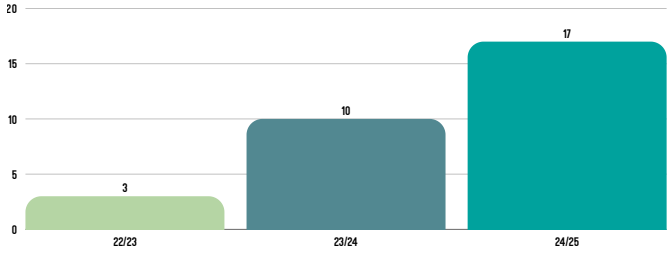
image credit: Carey Marks Photography

Alternative Provision (AP) is education for children and young people who cannot attend mainstream or specialist schools for a wide variety of reasons; the vast majority of whom have special educational needs requiring an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP).

Our AP curriculum evolves steadily year on year, driven by the interests of the young people we work with, and now includes street art, animation, planning and designing social media campaigns, music video production, instrumentation, green-screen filming, drone footage, live music performance, event planning, coding using Sonic Pi and Scratch, GCSE Photography and projection mapping, all expanding the opportunities for creative expression and skills development.

Referrals come from schools and local authorities across the county, including Torbay, Plymouth, and Devon County Council. We also welcomed referrals from a range of other partners, including parents and carers, social care teams, the Youth Justice Service, NHS, and virtual schools. We worked with 18 different schools this year across Devon.

70% INCREASE IN QUALIFICATIONS



The substantial rise in qualifications on the previous academic years highlights the engagement and progress our young people are making, especially those least likely to access formal qualifications. Many of the young people we support would not otherwise have the opportunity to gain recognised qualifications.

AP student

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE MAKING MUSIC AND GETTING QUALIFICATIONS FOR DOING IT - PROUD OF MYSELF.

QUALIFICATIONS → INCREASED CONFIDENCE → FURTHER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES → EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

STUDENTS WE WORK WITH

During the Autumn term of 2025, 33 young people aged 11 to 18 accessed education through Sound Communities. This cohort includes young people facing significant social, economic, and emotional barriers—many of whom struggle to engage in traditional education settings. Of these young people:

88% EXPERIENCED MULTIPLE SCHOOL BREAKDOWNS PRIOR TO ENGAGING WITH US

62% EXPERIENCED MORE THAN 3 ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES* (ACES)

52% HAD SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL & MENTAL HEALTH (SEMH) AS A PRIMARY NEED ON THEIR EHCP

66% WERE NOT PREVIOUSLY ENGAGING WITH ANY EDUCATION SERVICES AT ALL

AP Student, 16yo, Dec 25

> THERE'S SO MUCH STABBINGS AND ALL THAT, EVERYWHERE, AND MUSIC IS BETTER INNIT? I WOULD PREFER FOR PEOPLE TO GET INTO MUSIC - YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU WANT WITH IT. I LOVE IT HERE.

This year we strengthened our support for young people by introducing dedicated Learning Mentors, each responsible for the holistic development of their young people, supporting not only learning outcomes but also social, emotional and personal growth.

We were awarded approved provider status for multiple local authorities through competitive procurement processes, strengthening access routes and sustainable provision.

Our post-16 support was expanded, with young people receiving tailored guidance to explore next steps, access information, attend open days and navigate referral processes. This included supported visits to industry and education settings such as the Glastonbury Festival site set-up, Kaarst Art Gallery (see image), Superb Media, Big Wave Marketing, South Devon College and Access Creative College, helping young people make informed, confident decisions about their futures.

Parent, Dec 25

> YOU GUYS ARE AMAZING AT ENTERING MY SON'S WILD AND WONDERFUL WORLD.

AP student, 17yo, Oct 25

> IT'S THE BEST START OF A SCHOOL YEAR FOR ME IN AGES. HAVING LESS PEOPLE IN THE LEARNING SPACE AND A 1:1 TEACHING SET UP IS GOOD FOR ME.



Kaarst Art Gallery AP visit, Sept 25

The following percentages show the proportion of students who agreed or strongly agreed with statements beginning, 'Coming to Sound Communities as part of my education...'

80% helps me to make positive choices

88% makes me feel confident expressing how I feel

97% makes me feel like my opinion matters

100% teaches me useful new skills

88% makes me feel more confident

94% makes me feel that my voice is heard

97% encourages me to be creative

64% makes me feel connected to other young people

*Having more than 3 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in the UK means you've experienced significant childhood adversity, placing you in a high-risk category for developing long-term physical and mental health problems, behavioural issues, and substance misuse, as a higher ACE score indicates a greater likelihood of "toxic stress" impacting brain development and overall health. [Public Health Wales, 'The Welsh Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study' 2016]



MEET GRACE

It all began with Truffle, our therapy dog. Grace was struggling to enter the premises for her first alternative provision session with us due to extremely high levels of anxiety. But when she saw our Director Mike walking him past the car where she and her mum were sitting, something clicked - she hopped out and took her first steps into our studios alongside Truffle and the next stage of her education journey.

Grace's mum met Mike by chance at a meeting for parents who were reflecting on their young people's struggles with CAMHS. This ended up with him inviting them to drop in one Saturday for a no-pressure visit – nothing school-like about it. Grace is an autistic young person who struggled in both mainstream and specialist education from the age of 10. Years of unmet needs led to severe anxiety, school-based trauma and burnout. Her mum, Jane, explains, 'Grace has a complex diagnosis with several co-occurring conditions, which regularly result in severe levels of fatigue and anxiety, often making engagement with learning extremely challenging.'

Since joining us at the end of Y9 as part of her EOTAS [Education Otherwise Than At School] package however, Grace's self-belief has grown and her trust in education has begun to heal.

Elle, Workshop Practitioner

IN THE BEGINNING, GRACE WOULD ONLY WORK IN A SEPARATE ROOM – I COULDN'T PERSUADE HER OUT, AND NOW I CAN'T DRAG HER AWAY FROM EVERYONE!

She has gained AQAs in DJ Skills and Music Production Software and achieved a distinction in the RSL Level 1 Creative Music Industry qualification. Most importantly, she has rebuilt confidence, connection with peers, and a sense of belonging.

Initially, Grace would only work separately with a practitioner, but now she thrives in shared spaces, supported by her trusted staff relationships. She is part of the young people's sounding board, attends regular sessions, and has performed her poetry to a large audience, achievements that once felt impossible.



Grace

COMING HERE HAS HELPED ME BLOSSOM - MY PERSONALITY, ALL THE FRIENDS THAT I'VE MADE, AND JUST ME IN GENERAL

Jane says: 'Sound Communities has become a constant source of safety, energy and joy for Grace and although she still faces difficult days, the flexible approach and trauma-informed support enables her to keep engaging.' Recently, she amazed everyone by stepping onto the stage at our impact event to share how profoundly coming to us had changed her life. Now, she is beginning to imagine a future in music, media or the performing arts – on her own terms.

INVISIBLE PROGRESS

J is a 21 year old who suffers from anxiety and extremely low self-esteem. He doesn't believe that people would want to pay for his production skills, which is his main career goal. He aspires to be a freelance studio engineer, but can't see how he'd be able to do that due to his difficulties around social skills. He is smart and knowledgeable, working to a near industry standard, on course for a distinction due to the exceptional quality of his work.

J is an elective mute, communicating entirely with computer notepads. He arrives by taxi in a way that makes him appear as small as possible, head down, shoulders hunched, face to the floor and hair over his eyes – if he could wish himself transparent or throw on an invisibility cape, he would do so.

Since starting alternative provision with us ten months ago, we've seen some incredible progress. J likes the small scale of things here, compared with the FE college he was at before; he finds our two recording rooms, the predictability of working only with two practitioners and the lack of crowds, chaos and noise, a welcome reprieve. Meeting young people where they're at, providing a safe space free from judgement, accepting them as they are, is what we do.

Working alongside our skilled, calm team, J has slowly begun to thrive, visibly more relaxed, daring to creep out of his shell.

J is working things out, starting to see the self-imposed limits of his perfectionism, approaching occasions when things don't go to plan like a true Creative, able to improvise in the moment. He's started daring to share other things about himself which is another way we know that the trust is there. Some days, he still can't make it in due to the tiredness of anxiety, but he'll make sure to produce the work at home.

Charlie, Workshop Practitioner

> J IS REMARKABLE, SHOWING INCREDIBLE GROWTH - DESPITE THE CHALLENGES HE FACES, HIS DETERMINATION AND COURAGE TO CONTINUE TO SHINES THROUGH. HE'S A PLEASURE TO WORK WITH AND AN INSPIRATION TO THOSE AROUND HIM.

Another way we know that our therapeutic approach is working is that J can now tolerate working with more than one person in the same space, which might not sound like much, but it's huge; it's the difference that allows him to record artists live and take on projects and take the first steps towards his goal of mixing tracks for artists for a living.

Yesterday, he made it out of the recording room at Winner St and came over into our main recording studio at Hyde Rd (see image) to record a session for his RSL. It was a beautiful recording.



Photograph taken by J

EARLY INTERVENTION



Issy performing at Ibis Styles, Deller's Cafe, Aug 25

EARLY INTERVENTION PROVIDES SUPPORT BEFORE PROBLEMS ESCALATE, OFFERING THE RIGHT HELP QUICKLY TO PREVENT STRUGGLES TURNING INTO CRISES. ALL SESSIONS ARE FULLY FUNDED, GIVING YOUNG PEOPLE FREE ACCESS THANKS TO YOUTH MUSIC, CHILDREN IN NEED, AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.

GET REMIXED runs weekly throughout the year as an early-intervention after-school club for care-experienced young people, delivered in partnership with Torbay Virtual School. Through music, film and photography, young people build confidence, social connection and creative skills in a safe, supportive environment designed to reduce barriers to engagement.

SATURDAY XTRAS offers weekly 1:1 music sessions using industry-standard equipment with a professional producer to record high quality original tracks. The programme is heavily over-subscribed and supports early intervention by giving young people a positive outlet for emotional expression, leading to improved confidence, songwriting and performance skills, and progression to performances and releases.

SOUND HORIZONS creates an inclusive, welcoming space for young people who want to play instruments in a band setting, where confidence grows and friendships form. By removing cost and commitment barriers, the instrument-based programme opens the door to collaboration for those who often find this difficult, while championing emerging local talent and strengthening Torbay's grassroots music scene.

Saturday Xtra Participant, June 25

I GET EXCITED THAT MY MUSICAL CREATIONS CAN COME TO LIFE!

100%
CREATIVITY
Saturday Xtra participants* agreed this project helped them be creative

116 sessions
of free, creative, early intervention support and mentoring

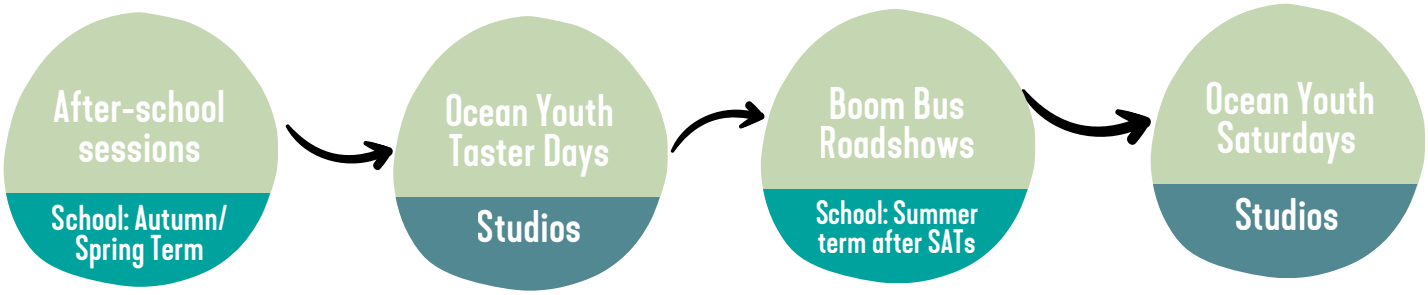
Tracey Powell, Manager, Torbay Virtual School

I'VE SEEN YOUNG PEOPLE GO FROM HIDING UNDER A TABLE TO CONFIDENTLY PREPARING TO PERFORM THEIR OWN SONG IN FRONT OF 300 PEOPLE – THAT'S THE POWER OF THESE SESSIONS

*75% of respondents strongly agreed and 25% agreed

RADIO AHEAD

Radio Ahead is a transition programme supporting vulnerable Year 6 pupils as they move from primary to secondary school - a known flashpoint for increased anxiety and disengagement, particularly for pupils already facing challenges. Pupils are signposted into Ocean Youth, ensuring consistent support throughout their journey.



Radio Ahead seeks to build confidence, aspiration and emotional expression across the academic year. Schools reported back that of the 87 pupils that engaged with the project and completed the evaluation, 92% stated that they were feeling more confident about their transitions to secondary school. They also reported:

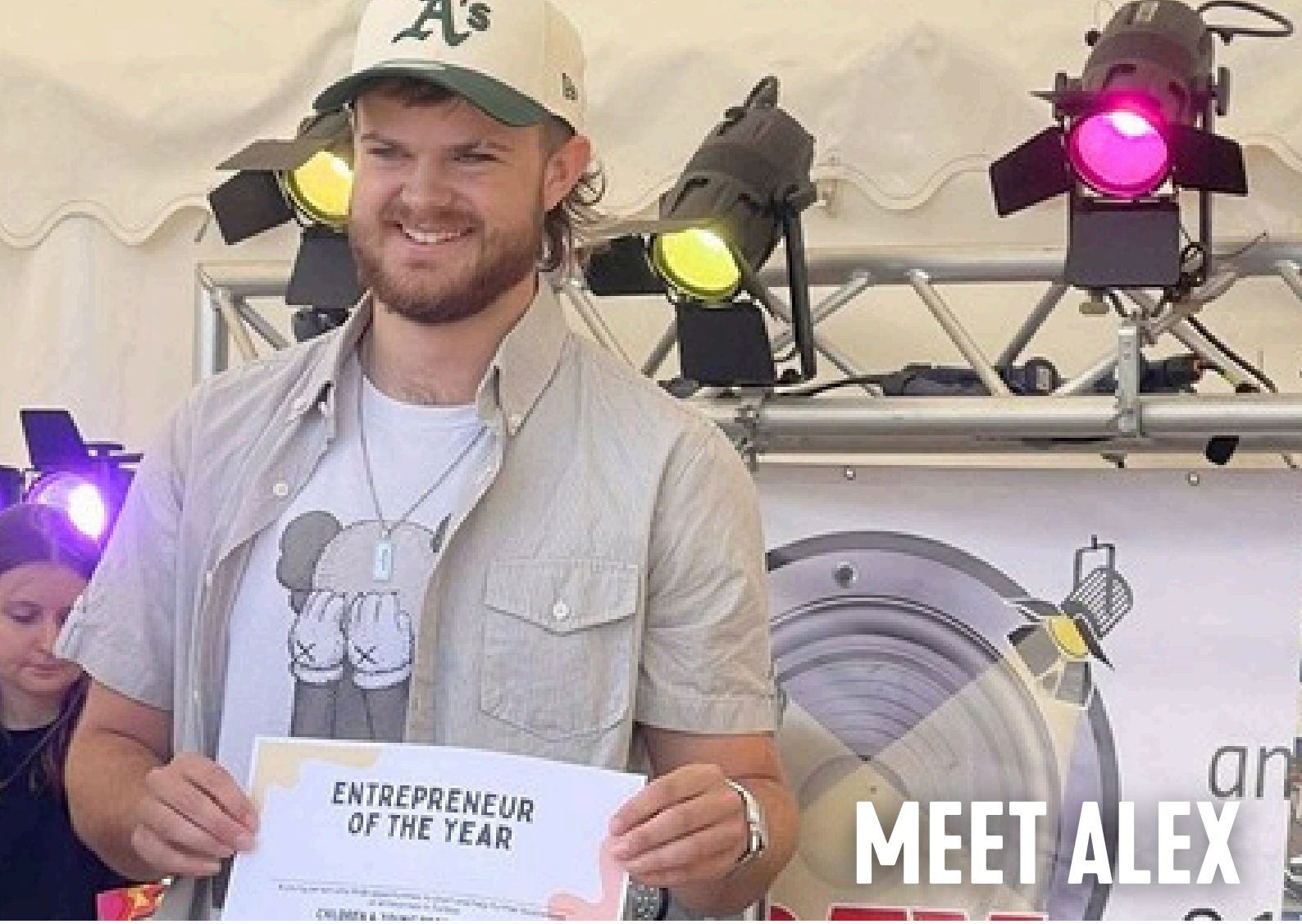
92% an increased sense of belonging
BELONGING

90% an increased sense of self-confidence
CONFIDENCE

97% an improvement in their mental health
MENTAL HEALTH



Radio Ahead: Y6 Transition Roadshow, Roselands Primary



MEET ALEX

In summer 2024, Alex was 18 and had just completed a TV and Film course at South Devon College. Passionate about turning his newly launched business Send Media into a creative success, he had a strong vision and portfolio but not yet the confidence or practical experience to translate it into a viable business. Unemployed and unsure what to do next, he visited the Job Centre, where he met Callum and was introduced to the Sound Futures employability programme.

At the time, Alex said that he 'had very little knowledge of business or finance or much real professional work experience' so the course became a vital stepping stone. On it, he learnt entrepreneurial skills, was supported to understand business models, pricing, and the world of freelance work through 1:1 mentoring. He also got to chat with local industry professionals like Big Wave Marketing who visited, supporting him to develop a stronger sense of belonging within a creative community.

Alex continued to improve his videography skills, explored graphic design, and developed the confidence to speak with clients professionally. After seeing his creative work in action, we asked him to create our 2024 Impact Film, which he proudly presented to a large crowd, including Torbay's MP Steve Darling, while co-hosting with Callum, advocating for marginalised young people at the Sound Communities 2024 Impact Event. On the back of this, Torbay Council commissioned him to produce their UKSPF impact video for their entire programme – a huge honour.

Soon afterwards, Alex's next paid commission was directing a music video for an Oceanside Records artist - another huge success.

Alex's achievements quickly grew as he co-hosted his first photo exhibition 'In Motion', successfully selling prints and showcasing his photography. His efforts were recognised publicly when he won Entrepreneur of the Year at the CYP Awards and invited as a guest on Torbay Council's Bizcast Podcast. His work with The Laughter Lab led to opportunities alongside well-known comedians such as Jen Brister and Inbetweeners star Joe Thomas.

Alex continues to build his creative enterprise through Send Media, with a focus on producing music videos and remains an active part of our support network, reflecting the value he felt from being part of a strengths-based community of interest.

Callum Elliott, Employability Lead

> ALEX IS A TESTAMENT TO WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE ARE EMPOWERED TO LEAD + CREATE. WE'RE THRILLED TO SEE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE THRIVE AS CREATORS, STORYTELLERS, AND CHANGEMAKERS, AS WELL AS GETTING WORK READY.

Alex's journey illustrates the powerful impact of Sound Futures: transforming aspirations into real-world outcomes, supporting progression into employment, and nurturing a positive identity rooted in creativity and self-belief.

IN ALEX'S OWN WORDS...

What's your journey with Sound Futures been like in 3 words?

Fun, informational and exciting.

Alex's Dad

Alex has faced trials and challenges over the years, so it fills me with joy knowing he is able to be himself in this much-needed community of young people.

How has Sound Futures helped to improve your skills and confidence?

This course has just helped me so much with my confidence. Like when I was out filming, I could just film and not worry. Now, I'm here to film, that's what my job is. It's also helped my confidence to speak my ideas. Sometimes I don't like to speak to people, I don't feel fully comfortable with them, but I feel like I can now speak to people in a more professional manner when I don't know them, which is very useful.



ENGAGEMENT IN A POSITIVE COMMUNITY OF INTEREST



MOVING FROM NEET TO SELF-EMPLOYED

Best parts?

I really enjoyed when Simon Beer from Big Wave Marketing came in to talk about marketing as that's something I'm genuinely interested in. It was cool to get information about how to how to do the basic marketing. It's opened up another door for me to look into it further.

What's next for you now Sound Futures is over?

I'm going to go full-time videographer and photographer with my own production company Send Media. I've already got a few clients, some as far as Newquay at the moment, hoping to one day move to there. I've got another video commission to do for Sound Communities and yeah, it's all going well.

BETTER LIFE OPPORTUNITIES, GREATER CHOICE

I made Send Media back in 2020 when I was just filming my mates biking on my phone and GoPro. The name stems from the extreme sports phrase 'send it' meaning 'just go for it.' I wanted the name to reflect my eagerness to encourage people/ businesses to just 'send it' and strive for their goals.

My name is Alex Webb. I am a videographer, and I have graduated from the Sound Futures course. Over and out.

DAN'S STORY

When we first met Dan, he was withdrawn, always accompanied by his dad. He lives with a condition that affects his mobility and hearing and causes mild learning difficulties, leading to social isolation, low confidence, and growing mental health challenges as he began questioning why he was different from his peers.

For Dan, being part of RadioAhead has been transformative. The creative, accessible environment offered an early sense of belonging, allowing him to discover his voice both literally and figuratively through radio workshops. Supported by trained youth leaders and peers with shared experiences, he began to feel understood and valued, and over time grew confident enough to attend independently.

A key barrier for Dan has often been the physical strain of taking part. At the Paignton Festival, he initially expected to remain seated in the Boom Bus while others walked the route. With encouragement, he chose to walk alongside the group using his walker, determined to represent Ocean Youth. Soon after, he sang live on national TV in the Children In Need Live choir, both huge moments that marked milestones for him and his family.

What began as an opportunity to become involved in a school project has now grown into finding a place of belonging; somewhere Dan is always welcomed, accepted, and able to be truly himself, providing a genuine sense of agency. Becoming a regular presenter has boosted his connection to the Ocean Youth group. It allows him to connect with local listeners and create shows that are meaningful to him, all of which feeds into feeling positive about himself and gives him a real sense of home from home.

Guy, Dan's Dad

> DAN LOVES BEING PART OF OCEAN YOUTH. WHEN WE SEE FRIENDS, HE LIKES TO TALK ABOUT HAVING HIS OWN SHOW - HOW HE PLANS THEM, GETS IDEAS, HOW THE SHOW WORKS, AND HE GETS REALLY PROUD AND EXCITED.

As Dan prepares for sixth form, plans are in place for him to help establish a school radio station, run clubs for younger students, and develop a media pathway. His dad reflects: 'Radio bypasses his mobility issues and gives him a purpose - it's shaped his next two years and changed how we see his future.'



Ocean Youth Radio Show, July 25



Dan, with Daisy and fellow finalists, Sept 25

WINNER OF BBC DEVON YOUNG HERO AWARD

In September, we were absolutely delighted to hear that Dan, one of Ocean Youth's most inspiring young presenters, had won the prestigious Young Hero Award at the BBC Devon 2025 Make a Difference Awards!

The award honours someone under 16 who has made an outstanding contribution to their community – and Dan is a perfect example, showing remarkable dedication to helping others through his fundraising, campaigning and passionate radio presenting.

Dan

> I HELP OTHERS BY BEING KIND AND HELPING WHEREVER I CAN, WHETHER THAT'S AT MY SCHOOL OR OUTSIDE MY SCHOOL. I JUST DO THE BEST I CAN.


Dan with DJ Joozy



Dan with Daisy and BBC reporter Jo Loosemore at Ocean Youth Studios

PRODUCTION ARMS

We recognise that many young people want not only to build professional skills, but also to support others, to belong, and continue being creative. Our production arms - Sound Alive, Ocean Creative, Ocean Youth (including the Sonar Radio team) and Oceanside Records - offer a space to join a community, take ownership, and grow within a supportive entrepreneurial framework — all youth-led.


Taken by Student, GCSE Photography AP Session

NEARLY HALF OF OUR DELIVERY TEAM ARE UNDER 25 YEARS OLD

Production arms act as incubators, letting young people take ownership, find their voice, and experience belonging. Each one offers real-world experience in commissioned content, budgeting, strategy, and team leadership. Young people develop meaningful professional and interpersonal skills, making creative and financial decisions with guidance from Project Managers and industry practitioners.

OUR PROGRESSION PATHWAYS

WE AIM TO KEEP PARTICIPANTS ENGAGED FOR AS LONG AS THEY NEED, TO ENSURE LASTING CHANGE, SUPPORTING THEM TO MOVE ON WHEN THEY'RE READY

STRANDS	PRODUCTION ARMS	FURTHER SKILLS	NEXT STEPS
Early Intervention • Saturday Xtras • Schools			Paid employment, education or training externally or Paid employment as Young Leader with Sound Communities and/or Developing Creative Practice
Alternative Provision	Sound Alive Events Ocean Creative Oceanside Records Ocean Youth Radio / Sonar	Work Experience Supported Internships Qualifications Youth Panel	
Employability • Sound Futures • Internships			
Community • Outreach • Creative Media Lab • Sound Horizons			
Rehabilitation • Prisons • Probation			

SOUND ALIVE



This is My Circus, Oct 25

MAKING EVENTS POP

Sound Alive's mission is to create a platform for emerging local performers who often struggle to get the opportunities to play live. It hires out a professional PA system, powerful projector and provides young sound engineers for live events.

Jack, our Young Leader and Sound Alive Lead, won funding from Innovation UK to develop this new arm. Responsible for all of the kit purchasing, monitoring, budgeting, marketing and project evaluation, he is now generating income which is re-invested into further cultural opportunities for our young people as well as further industry-level tech. He also manages the booking of young local performers who are establishing themselves as artists, supporting them from their first song to delivering an entire live set.

Our young people realised that many organisations wish to hold events requiring professional sound equipment, technicians and exciting new performers. We are fortunate to have a wealth of young talent at Sound Communities, alongside the capacity to train future industry professionals.

Performer, Sound Alive Participant, Dec 25

WORKING WITH SOUND ALIVE HAS BOOSTED MY STAGE CONFIDENCE, SHARPENED MY PROFESSIONAL SKILLS, AND TAUGHT ME HOW TO SHOW UP FOR REAL EVENTS

18 LIVE EVENTS
28 PERFORMANCES
17 PERFORMERS

Sound Alive provided the sound system and young performers for the Ibis Styles Hotel over the Summer, This is My Circus event and the sound-tech infrastructure for the Connecting Narratives Safer Communities event run by Torbay Council. Involvement with Sound Alive provides hands-on technical training, performer development, a sense of community and real-life employment prospects through professional skills.

CREATIVE YOUNG PEOPLE + PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES = SELF-CONFIDENCE + EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

OCEANSIDE RECORDS

This production arm has been thriving for 4 years, led by 2 young practitioners who enthusiastically support young performers in writing, recording, and producing their own music about their experiences in Torbay. Oceanside also produces music videos and hosts an energetic Instagram and Tik Tok. In its short history it has achieved over half a million views, in-person BBC Spotlight coverage for a locally viral music video, and was winner of the Youth Music National 'Best Music Video' award. Its artists have performed at 7 festivals, had an exhibition at Kensington Palace, recorded 10 quality music videos, had radio features including BBC Radio 1, 1 XTRA, Kiss FM and work with over 24 young vulnerable participants.

24 PARTICIPANTS

10 MUSIC VIDEOS

9 TRACKS RELEASED

500,000 TOTAL VIEWS ACROSS ALL PLATFORMS

*cumulative totals to date

Liam, co-founder of Oceanside and Sound Communities trauma-informed practitioner: 'We meet young people where they are. Instead of traditional engagement models, Oceanside uses modern music like rap and drill as the hook. We turn something often seen as a risk into a tool for change to create something that didn't exist locally. Oceanside is a youth-led creative pathway that feels real, current, and respected, giving young people a reason to show up, stay engaged, and feel heard.'

Jarvis, co-founder of Oceanside: 'Our long-term ambition is to become a permanent, trusted pathway for young people across South West Devon. Not a one-off project, but a platform that grows alongside us - we want our producing, recording, and music promotion skills stronger, sharper and more professional. Consistency is key: running regular cyphers, sessions, and events so young people can keep creating, building confidence, and feel a sense of belonging. Oceanside is a home to many young people.'



C28, Album Cover





OCEANSIDE HOSTED TORBAY'S FIRST CYPHER, GATHERING RAPPERS ACROSS SOUTH DEVON TO FREESTYLE OVER BEATS, FEEDING OFF EACH OTHER'S ENERGY, SHOWCASING CREATIVITY, AND SPARKING A LITTLE FRIENDLY COMPETITION TOO...



Image credit: Send Media



JARVIS' STORY

When Jarvis met our team three years ago at a Torbay Business Fair, he described himself as 'a bit lost'. Since then, we've supported his journey to becoming a workshop practitioner and helped nurtured his remarkable talent for music-making and mentoring, skills he's now working hard to turn into a career. Words by Jarvis. September 2025.

I am beyond grateful for my journey with Sound Communities - it's shaped me personally and professionally and given me a real passion for life. I'm also grateful to be in Torbay right now, where morale is often low as it inspires me that the changes I've made can motivate others to do the same.

Working with young people, I often see parts of myself in them. It reminds me of my own struggles growing up, and teaches me more empathy. I used to carry a chip on my shoulder, getting into hairy situations. I felt stuck, unfulfilled, and a bit aimless. I was abusing substances and had some self-destructive habits, which made me feel even more empty. After thinking I was going to die from an overdose, I realised I needed to change.

That moment became a turning point, I knew I needed to start 'making' in life, rather than just 'taking'. I quit substances and stopped drinking, stepped away from old circles, and began to focus on building a future I can be proud of, making healthier choices for myself.

From day one at Sound Communities, I was welcomed into a supportive environment where creativity comes first - it's not just about the professional equipment, but about the culture of encouragement and community. They saw my commitment and gave me opportunities to perform, learn and grow.

After shadowing sessions in 2023, I joined the team as a practitioner and youth leader. Today, I'm a full-time member of the delivery staff team working one to one with a number of young people.

Mark, Learning Lead + Line Manager

> JARVIS IS A SHINING EXAMPLE OF WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED WHEN SOUND COMMUNITIES GETS TO WORK ALONGSIDE TALENTED YOUNG PEOPLE OVER A PROLONGED PERIOD OF TIME.

I regularly access Saturday Xtras, which allows me to work on my own music with a professional producer for no cost. When other young people of Torbay see the content I am creating starting to gain traction, they become inspired by it, knowing that you can do things with your life even when you come from a deprived area.

WE ARE ALWAYS ON THE LOOK OUT FOR PRACTITIONERS WHO CAN WHO CAN INSPIRE THE AMAZING YOUNG PEOPLE WE SUPPORT. JARVIS IS NOW A FULLY TRAINED UP MEMBER OF OUR CREATIVE COMMUNITY - SHARING HIS SKILL AND LOVE OF MUSIC, ROOTED IN HIS LIVED EXPERIENCE, AND HELPING A NEW GENERATION.

My younger self feels like a distant past life because of how drastically things have changed - I've been all around the South West performing my original J-Reflection tracks, playing at festivals like Love Summer, Yarty Party and Camp Bestival.

I now have teaching qualifications and am working on projects helping other young rappers release music through Oceanside and Sound Communities Records, funded by Youth Music's Catalyser fund, which I co-run. I get to create, mentor, and lead and am trusted with real responsibility. My focus is on passing the same positive impact into Torbay and beyond, through my music. This is the most fulfilled I have ever been.

Jarvis' Mum

JARVIS WAS STRUGGLING TO FIND HIS WAY BEFORE AND COULDN'T ENVISION ANYTHING FOR HIMSELF IN TORBAY - IT'S AMAZING TO SEE HIM NOW, HELPING OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE AS WELL AS GETTING TO CREATE, WHICH IS WHAT HE LOVES!



Bright Future Prize Winner's Ceremony, Kensington Palace, June 25

Earlier this year, I wrote a bid for the Ardonagh Trust and was gassed to win their international Bright Future Award along with a grant to organise Torbay's first youth-led music festival: Tor-VYBZ. I'm determined to tackle the myth that 'nothing happens in the Bay' and make it a self-sustaining annual event that cements Torbay as a creative hub for young people.



Torquay Tropical, September 2025

OCEAN YOUTH RADIO



Ocean Youth Radio Presenters, Feb 25

EXPRESSION, CREATIVITY & BELONGING

OCEAN YOUTH is our youth-led community radio station driven by an outstanding team of young people. Our remit is to give young people a pro-social safe space to explore their interests, develop professional radio skills, make podcasts and broadcast from events across our area. This year, the youth-designed Ocean Youth App, online broadcast and the station's social media enabled Ocean Youth to reach an astonishing 8,950 people every month!

SONAR is our radio pathway for young people aged 16+ offering a much needed safe space for older young people to express themselves and create with peers. Sonar is a real community, hosting live events, DJ mixes and a wide range of radio show subjects from mental health and musicals to books!

THE 300 SECONDS PODCAST is a podcast series created by the Ocean Youth team. Presented and produced by young people, the podcasts are an ARIAS Award-winning safe space for young people to explore mental health and their lived experience. This year, the team launched a supplementary 300 Seconds Resource Pack to support a new 300 Seconds series on suicide prevention. This series is one of the chosen legacies for the Torbay Baton of Hope, the UK's largest suicide prevention initiative.

Ocean Youth Parent, May 25

SHE KNOWS THAT SHE'LL GET LISTENED TO. THAT GIVES HER SO MUCH CONFIDENCE. WE COULDN'T BE HAPPIER.

35
REGULAR PRESENTERS

74,407
LISTENS

1,000+
RADIO SHOWS PRODUCED + PRESENTED

1,000,000+
SOCIAL MEDIA VIEWS

Ocean Youth and Sonar presenters reported that they felt:

100%
CREATIVITY
able to to express their creativity

81%
BELONGING
an increased sense of belonging & reduced social isolation

96%
CONFIDENCE
an increase in self-confidence, self-belief & aspirations

OCEAN CREATIVE

Production arm Ocean Creative delivers commissioned work across branding, social media, film-making, photography, web design and physical arts projects and is an expansion of Ocean Digital, with additional capacity from our new Visual Arts Lead. At the core of Ocean Creative is a means for young people to work on paid commissions in a safe and supported way, learning new skills, exploring potential career paths and delivering high quality creative projects to demanding briefs. In 2025, Ocean Creative undertook a variety of community-facing commissions including the production of a series of short films called 'Change Conversations', from LocalMotion Torbay, helping to explain systems change to the wider public and the Hear & Now website.

LARGE-SCALE ARTWORKS

Our Visual Arts Lead has been supporting groups of young people to re-energise and re-invigorate community spaces across Torbay in the creation of inclusive large-scale graffiti-based urban art in open spaces as well as re-interpreting paintings on display at Torre Abbey.



CREATIVE CAREER PATHWAYS

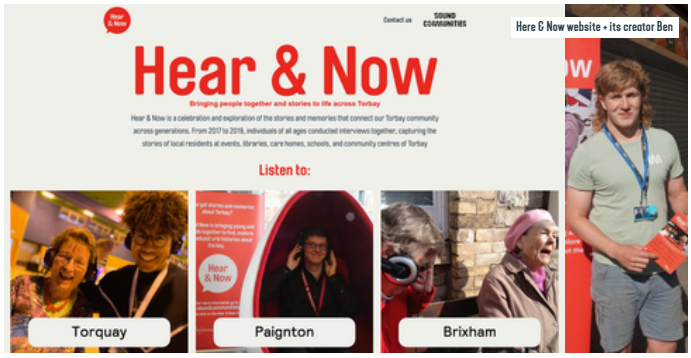
By blending commissioned projects with digital creativity like animation, photography and video with youth-led approaches through workshops, drop-ins, and open-access 1:1s, Ocean Creative brings meaningful participation and outcomes that feel relevant and accessible to young people which builds confidence, skills, and a lasting connection to culture within their communities.





RE-INVIGORATING COMMUNITY SPACES

Ocean Creative were commissioned to run a community arts day at Parkfield for pupils at Mayfield School and young people using the skate park. The aim of the day was to show how creativity, music and street art can bring people together and activate public space.



STORYTELLING THROUGH YOUNG EYES

For Torre Abbey's exhibition, Sound Futures graduates volunteered their time to help plan and deliver a day which brought over 100 people together for art and music workshops, and a Q&A with the young artists. This was part of the 'Outside The Lines' exhibition in which young people from across the Bay reinterpreted artwork inspired by classic pieces in the Abbey's collection.

LEARN CREATIVE SKILLS + EARN FROM MAKING + EXPORE CAREER PATHWAYS = SELF-CONFIDENCE

COMMUNITY



Paignton Carnival, July 25

2025 has been amazing for outreach, with all our sessions targeting areas of deprivation and anti-social behaviour, giving young people the chance to be creative and have their voices heard on their terms and their doorsteps.

The Boom Bus, equipped with DJ decks, silent disco kit, podcasting, and live radio gear, brought energy and fun to street corners, parks, and community spaces across Torbay and Devon. This year, we delivered an epic 260 hours of outreach, engaging 2575 young people in over 250 sessions at events like Torbay Tropical and The Torbay Airshow.

Through ongoing support at The Windmill Centre and The Acorn Centre, we provide weekly creative after-school and holiday clubs, using music and radio to help local teenagers build confidence and make healthier choices year-round. When asked what he would be doing if he wasn't joining a Boom Bus session on a Friday evening outside his school, one student said:

Year 10 Student, Paignton Academy

> ... I'D JUST BE SAT AT HOME WAITING TIL I TURNED 18 TO FIGURE OUT WHAT I'M GONNA DO

30 Boom Bus events attended throughout the year

2575 young people engaged through community sessions

260 hours of outreach delivered throughout the year

999 hours of free inclusive creative experiences offered to our communities

251 sessions of open access creativity delivered

Funding from the Million Hours Lottery and the Police and Crime Commissioner has strengthened our capacity to deliver consistent outreach in areas with high levels of antisocial behaviour.

Imagine This, Community Partner

> HEARING A YOUNG PERSON SAY YOUR PROJECT AT WINDMILL COMMUNITY CENTRE WAS "BETTER THAN EXPECTED" SAYS EVERYTHING. THANK YOU FOR DELIVERING SOMETHING THAT GENUINELY MATTERS.

REHABILITATION

This year marked the second year of our collaboration with prisoners at HMP Channings Wood, supporting creative expression through music-making. Because our programme is NHS-funded through the OPD* Pathway, we work with some of the prison's most vulnerable men, whose complex mental health needs require specialist, relational approaches.

Working weekly with a group of men towards L1 DJing, Music Production and Lyric Writing qualifications, building technical skills alongside confidence, the men create music that reflects their lived experiences, exploring past choices, personal challenges, regret, and their hopes for building better futures for themselves and their families. We were thrilled to continue facilitating these sessions throughout 2025 and look forward to seeing this deeply rewarding strand of work grow even further.

Participant

EVERYTHING THAT I'VE DONE WITH LIAM + CHARLIE HAS BEEN ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT - I HAVE REALLY ENJOYED IT - I HAVE A PASSION FOR MUSIC, SO IT HAS REALLY BEEN AMAZING

PARTICIPANT'S LYRICS:

...Incarcerated strong inside
Darker debate wrong type of life
Stubborn but I keep my pride
Wouldn't want to see what's bottled up inside
Found myself on my knees praying
Sounds and things that I've felt and being straying
apparently the issue is confidence and dedication, clarity
Listening, wanting success and inspiration, vanity
Finding myself significantly wrecked
The unkind lack of wealth prohibiting respect
Time to make less mistakes
Crimes, fake mess, a sacred haven
Despite prison I'm still alive
Wrong or right? A criminal killing time
Of all things I refuse to fear
Boredom lingers, chose life to become more clear
Excited for a shot at a fresh start
Put it all right and got a next session in the arts



Participant

THIS HAS BEEN MY FAVOURITE OPD* SESSION SO FAR, INFORMATIVE, INTERESTING, ILLUMINATING AND I'VE BEEN GROOVING DOWN TO THE MUSIC.

* Offender Personality Disorder

Image taken by AP GCSE Photography Student, Jan 25



SOUND FUTURES

Sound Futures Graduates, 2025

CREATIVE EMPLOYABILITY DONE DIFFERENTLY

Marginalised 16-24s in Torbay join Sound Futures to identify, develop and apply their skills in 1:1 support and in group projects lead by them.

Over 10 weeks, small groups design and deliver creative projects centred on personal strengths and shared values. Staff support by using key enabling technologies; role modelling working practices; and making specific industry connections bringing the projects to life. Young people show what they can achieve when they are in the driving seat, learning what they want to learn, and working how they want to work as a direct contrast to mainstream education and training.

This year saw the course grow as continued UKSPF funding allowed it to go from strength to strength. 33 young people completed the course and took the next steps on their journey, deciding to return to college, gain more experience through volunteering, or heading straight into work. Each young person registered to the Sound Futures Skills and Employability course needs a holistic approach to supporting a healthy life, of which employment is only a part.

Underpinning traditional employability skills, we also supported young people with: staying alive week to week as they managed suicidality and mental ill-health; finding safe housing as they face risks of homelessness; completing key paperwork to secure appropriate education; accessing and appealing benefits; managing the criminal justice system; speaking out for the first time about abuse; accessing support for sexual assault; managing physical disability; acknowledging self-worth; becoming young parents; processing medical diagnoses; staying safe in the community; independent living; and much more besides.

44 young people supported

341 sessions of creative employability delivered

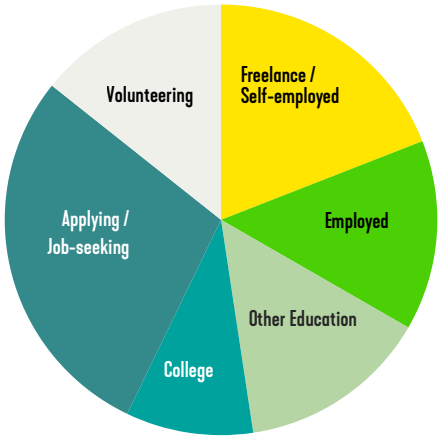
1512 hours of one to one and group contact time

The success and impact of Sound Futures has evidenced that the young NEET population of Torbay require more from our employability offers - more than simple connections with employers or a CV touch up, more than interview practice or job coaching. They need trusted adults and a meaningful time to facilitate the transition into safe and thriving adulthood to make positive change in their lives.

BEYOND SOUND FUTURES...

Year 1 participants returned to deliver live commissioned work, using the skills and expertise gained from completing the course last year. Outside The Lines was one such commission, where five young people drew on their experience having set up the Bay Creates Art Showcase in December 2024, to bring a mixed arts event to Torre Abbey. Celebrating the work from young artists in exhibition, by inviting Ilsham and Kings Ash primary schools, STEPS at Paignton Academy, and Turning Heads to the abbey for an amazing afternoon of music, art, and workshops.

51 MEANINGFUL DESTINATIONS SECURED:



*destinations not counted as 'outcomes' also include joining wellbeing projects + other community projects

75% COMPLETION RATE - HIGHER THAN NATIONAL AVERAGE*

2025 Sound Futures young people reported feeling super confident or confident in terms of their:

77% PROBLEM SOLVING

80% MOTIVATION
to seek work, training or education

81% TEAMWORK

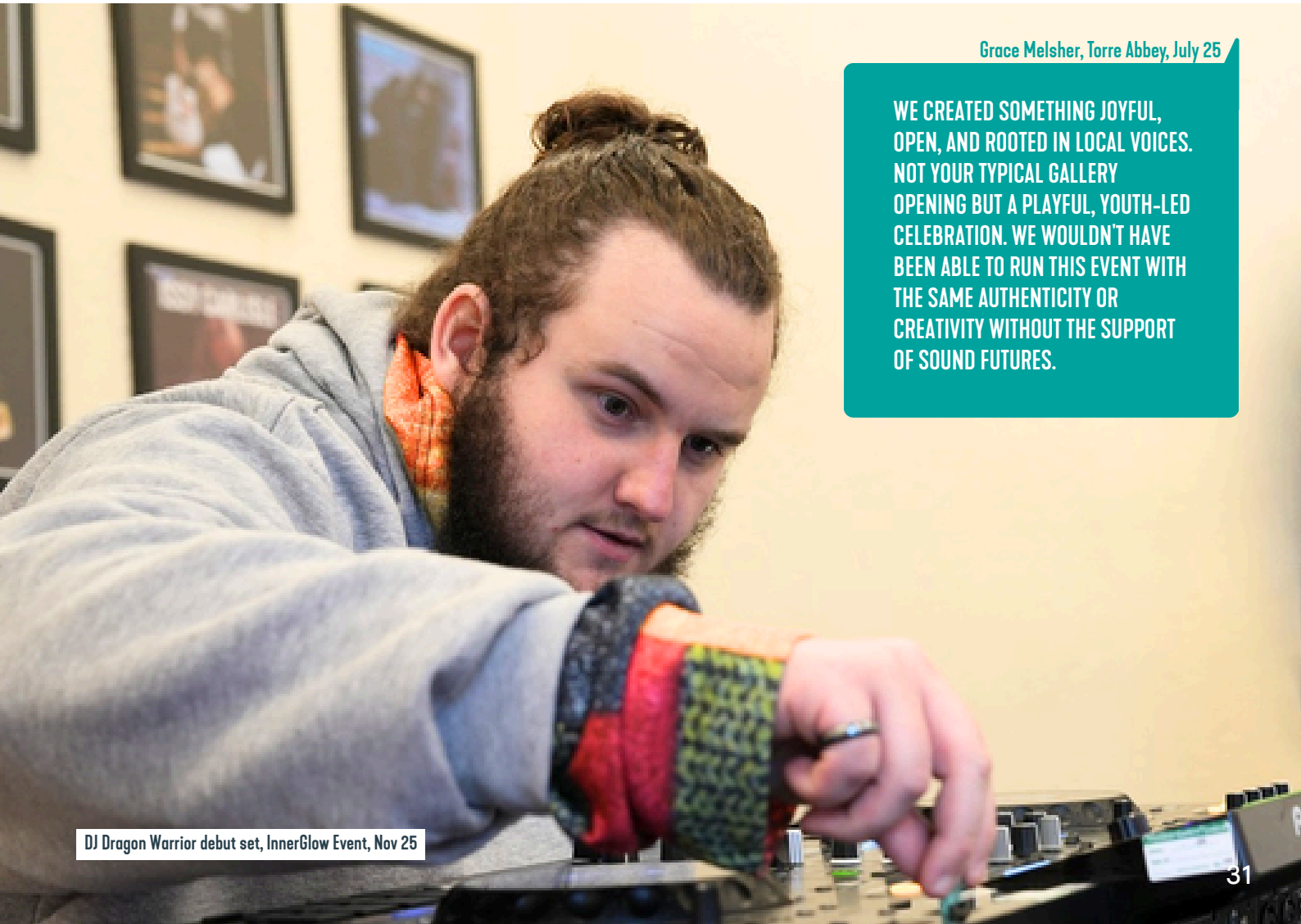
PARTICIPANTS SAID:

GOT PAPERWORK TO OPEN BANK AND JOB.

I GOT TO BE AROUND PEOPLE MY OWN AGE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 7 YEARS.

THERE ISN'T ONE DAY I HAVEN'T WANTED TO COME IN. THEY WELCOME US ALL IN, IT FEELS LIKE HOME.

*compared to national average of 71% for adult employability skills 'bootcamps' - GOV.UK



Grace Melsher, Torre Abbey, July 25

WE CREATED SOMETHING JOYFUL, OPEN, AND ROOTED IN LOCAL VOICES. NOT YOUR TYPICAL GALLERY OPENING BUT A PLAYFUL, YOUTH-LED CELEBRATION. WE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO RUN THIS EVENT WITH THE SAME AUTHENTICITY OR CREATIVITY WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF SOUND FUTURES.

DJ Dragon Warrior debut set, InnerGlow Event, Nov 25

15 YEARS AT A GLANCE...

2011
IN THE BEGINNING...
Kate Rudman meets Mitch Knight (Pumpitlouder) at the School for Social Entrepreneurs and first start to develop the idea for supporting young people in Torbay through their shared interest in teaching, music and radio broadcasting



2011
1ST PROJECT AT SOUNDART RADIO
Kate develops a project at Soundart Radio in Dartington and collaborates with Mike Cook on its delivery

2012
SOUND COMMUNITIES CIC IS OFFICIALLY BORN!



2012
PARKFIELD XTREME RADIO
Torbay Youth Service invites Sound Communities to set up Parkfieled Xtreme Radio with local young people



2013
OCEAN YOUTH RADIO LAUNCHES

2014
CHILDREN'S WEEK
Sound Communities sets up at Torbay's Children's Week runs music and radio taster sessions from a porta cabin

2015
SC MOVES FROM PARKFIELD INTO PAIGNTON LIBRARY

2016
OCEAN YOUTH RADIO BROADCASTS LIVE
Jack, Jason, Ricardo and gang join Ocean Youth Radio and broadcast live on FM Radio from Torquay's Riviera Centre



2018
HEAR & NOW PROJECT LAUNCHES
Intergenerational oral history project



2019
FIRST PREMISES OPENS
Winner St Studios opens following extensive renovations funded through Virador



2020
SOUNDLIFE PODCASTS
We supported young people through the Covid Pandemic lockdowns with the Soundlife podcasts aimed at tackling youth loneliness

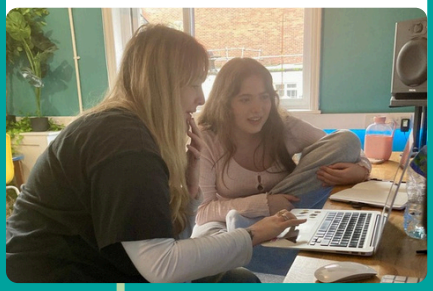
2020
BOOM BUS
Funding secured for our Boom Bus – a mobile radio and music studio bringing creative opportunities directly to young people across Torbay.



2021

ALTERNATIVE PROVISION BEGINS

With our first premises ready to go, we opened our doors to the first alternative provision students - young people not coping with mainstream education



2024

SOUND FUTURE LAUNCHES

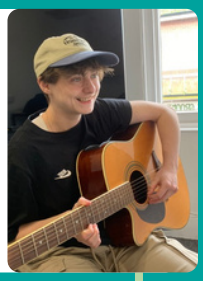
Our UK Shared Prosperity Fund–supported employability programme begins, offering a flexible, targeted, and iterative model shaped by the needs and feedback of young people



2024-25

INTERNSHIPS LAUNCHED

Our first one year Supported Internship begins for Fintern the Intern



2024

ARIAS AWARD: 300 SECONDS

By young people for young people, the 300 Seconds Podcast series, offering powerful insights into mental health issues, is recognised with Silver ARIAS Award



2023

COMMUNITY CHAMPION AWARD WIN

Recognised by the Torbay Business Awards for making "a huge impact for young people," we amplified our mission to empower young peoples' futures

2023

OCEANSIDE RECORDS WINS BEST MUSIC VIDEO

'Welcome To Torbay' video wins best music video at Youth Music Awards in London. The Oceanside Records appeared live on BBC Spotlight after video went viral.



2025

REGISTERED ALTERNATIVE PROVISION PROVIDER

Awarded approved provider status for multiple local authorities through competitive procurement processes, strengthening access routes and sustainable provision.

2022-23

BIGGER PREMISES

Move into new premises: Hyde Rd Studios, with performance area, creating a vibrant, open space where our provision can flourish, award-winning productions are made, and young people and the wider community came together to grow South Devon's cultural scene



2024-25

SOUND ALIVE EVENTS LAUNCH

New production arm launch with Innovate UK funding — offering youth-led event services with professional equipment hire, live performance support, projection mapping and creative tech, making events pop



2026

YOUTH-LED MUSIC FESTIVAL

Jarvis wins Ardonagh's global Bright Future Award kick-starting first youth-led music festival in Torbay - watch this space!

2024

LOCAL YOUTH CENTRES PARTNERSHIP

Million Hours Lottery funding enables ongoing outreach with Acorn and Windmill Community Centres to help reduce ASB and support young people in some of Torbay's most high-need areas



2024-25

YOUTH-LED PRODUCTION ARMS INVESTMENT

We continue to build Oceanside Records, Ocean Youth Radio, Sound Alive, and Ocean Creative into sustainable, resilient, youth-led cooperatives that empower young creators to lead, innovate, and sustain their own creative futures.



WHAT OUR PARTNERS SAY

OUR PARTNERS, COMMISSIONERS AND FUNDERS AGREE THAT SOUND COMMUNITIES:

97% BELONGING
creates a sense of community + feeling of pride to come from Torbay

EDUCATION 100%
supports learning and skills development, understands / responds to the different needs of young people

100% CREATIVITY
encourages creativity by building confidence, providing latest technologies and inspiring role models

EMPLOYMENT 97%
provides progression pathways, training opportunities and signposts to support

Devon High Sheriff, Caroline Harlow, March 25

I COMMISSIONED BOWLZY TO WRITE AND PERFORM A SONG. FOR ME, THIS IS THE MAGIC THAT SOUND COMMUNITIES ENGENDERS IN YOUNG PEOPLE: WHEN THEY ARE VALUED AND SUPPORTED. HE WAS SO PROFESSIONAL IN HIS APPROACH AND PERFORMED IN FRONT OF 60 PEOPLE. MY GUESTS MENTION HIS PERFORMANCE TO THIS DAY.

Steve Darling, MP Torbay, Dec 25

I'VE BEEN INVOLVED WITH SOUND COMMUNITIES FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, AND SO HAVE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF SEEING THE MASSIVE IMPACT THIS ORGANISATION HAS ON YOUNG PEOPLE. THEY CLEARLY FILL UP THE TANK OF LOVE AND CONFIDENCE THAT WE ALL NEED TO BE FUNCTIONING HUMAN BEINGS.



Matt Griffiths, CEO, Youth Music, April 25

I REALLY ADMIRE HOW SOUND COMMUNITIES' WORK IS INFORMED AND DEVELOPED BY AND WITH YOUNG PEOPLE. THEIR WORKFORCE EMBRACES DIVERSE, EMERGING CREATIVES WHO HAVE AN ACUTE SENSE OF WHAT'S NEEDED IN TORBAY.

Local Supported Housing, Dec 25

WE HAVE SEEN THE HEART SOUND COMMUNITIES HAS FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE. THEY ARE A BEACON OF HOPE AND SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN TORBAY

Paediatric doctor, Torbay Hospital, April 25

SOUND COMMUNITIES ARE INCREDIBLE - I SEE THEM ON THE WARD AND THE CHILDREN LIGHT UP. TEENS MAKING THEIR OWN MUSIC DJ SETS AND LITTLE TODDLERS DANCING TO THE MUSIC ON THE DECKS.

Beth Harris, Libraries Unlimited, Sept 25

WE WERE BLOWN AWAY AFTER WORKING WITH SOUND COMMUNITIES. THEY BROUGHT TOGETHER A GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE TO RECORD SHORT AUDIO STORIES FOR OUR PROJECT THE OUTDOOR EXPLORER CLUB. IT'S GREAT TO BE ABLE TO WORK WITH AN ORGANISATION THAT ADVOCATES FOR YOUTH VOICES.

HOW TO SUPPORT US



Alternative Provision Session, Dec 2025

WHY WE NEED YOUR HELP

All our opportunities are free, ensuring cost is never a barrier for families in Torbay, who continue to experience the highest levels of deprivation in the South West. Our creative, trauma-informed approach, shaped alongside young people over 12 years, supports emotional regulation, relational capacity and meaning-making — outcomes strongly linked to improved long-term health, education and wellbeing.

While our focus is always on personal and relational change, this work also prevents costly downstream challenges. Public Health England estimates adverse childhood experiences cost public services in England over £16 billion each year*, much of which is preventable through early, relational support.

Sustaining this work is challenging in a fragmented funding landscape, where short-term, outcome-restricted funding often fails to align with our theory of change. Flexible core funding and donations enable us to do what we do best — consistently, creatively and in partnership with young people.

Our provision is a dynamic ecosystem of interconnected strands, designed to adapt as young people's needs change. This allows us to respond at scale while maintaining the depth, trust and relational consistency that make our work effective.

To do that, we need long-term, values-aligned supporters who believe — as we do — that investing early in young people transforms lives, interrupts cycles of adversity and strengthens communities.

[Source: BMJ 2020]

1. DONATE

Please consider supporting our work today by making a regular or one-off gift to Sound Communities. Your support helps us build human capital and materially change young people's lives through creativity, education, belonging, real-world employment, and leadership.

donate here

2. SPONSOR A YOUNG PERSON

Fund a year of bespoke training, mentoring, or alternative provision for a young person.

3. JOIN CIRCLE OF GIVING

Become part of our private funding community, committed to long-term impact and shared learning.

4. OTHER WAYS TO GIVE

Support doesn't always mean money. You can also contribute through offering: a work experience opportunity for a young person; skills, expertise, or mentoring; or in-kind support or partnerships.

We'd love for you to join us — in whatever way feels right for you.
Please contact: info@soundcommunities.co.uk

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR FUNDERS



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