



# The Social Value of the OnSide Network of Youth Zones

November 2024



# SROI Analysis of the OnSide Youth Centres

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# Assurance Certificate



## Statement of Report Assurance

Social Value International certifies that the report

The Social Value of the OnSide Network of Youth Zones

satisfies the requirements of the assurance process with the below limitation.

Limited application of Principle 4 'Only include what is material': The report has a restricted scope which limits the analysis to the intended beneficiary group of the activity. Consequently, there is a risk that material outcomes have been excluded.

This should be considered when making any decisions based on the report.

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Assurance here is against the Principles of Social Value only and does not include verification of stakeholder engagement, report data and calculations.

Awarded 06/11/2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Carpenter".

Signed

Mr Ben Carpenter  
Chief Executive Officer  
Social Value International



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## Acknowledgments

This report has been co-authored by Tim Goodspeed, Charlotte Österman and Nicola Lynch.



# 1. Executive Summary

OnSide commissioned this Social Return on Investment study to further their understanding of the social value generated by the OnSide Network of Youth Zones. Social value is defined by Social Value International as “the importance people place on different aspects of their wellbeing and the changes they experience in these aspects of wellbeing.” Measuring social value, therefore, is a useful way to determine how organisations are impacting upon the wellbeing of individuals and communities.

While Youth Zones undoubtedly create ripples of change that likely affect wellbeing of families, staff and volunteers, OnSide’s vision is clear: “Our vision is for every young person across the UK to be happy, healthy, and able to thrive. We want to empower the UK’s youth to lead positive, fulfilling lives [...]” In keeping with this key priority and to provide insights to better manage value created for young people, this analysis zooms in on their experiences, placing young people at the heart of the study to better understand and measure the impact these spaces have on their wellbeing.

This study was carried out by a team of 3 Accredited SROI Practitioners supported by OnSide delivery and management staff. The researchers had access to OnSide’s own bank of relevant data and visited 4 Youth Zones to carry out independent qualitative research. 51 young people were interviewed and a further 784 responded to an online survey.

The headline findings from the study are that...

**OnSide Youth Zones support young people to feel free to have fun, to feel safe and to feel confident in themselves**

**AND**

**For every £1 of costs there was a return of over £13 of social value in terms of young peoples’ wellbeing.**

Other positive outcomes reported by the young people involved include ‘being myself’, feeling ‘less lonely’, having ‘more confidence around other people’ and ‘discovering who I really am.’ Although much smaller in scale than the positive outcomes some negative outcomes were also reported by young people as shown in the table below. The valuations in the study have been calculated using the WELLBY methodology - the only wellbeing valuation methodology recognised by HM Treasury’s Green Book supplementary guidance: wellbeing (UK Government, 2021). The table below shows the top outcomes generated by Youth Zones and the total value they provide. The 3 outcomes with the most negative wellbeing valuation have also been included.

| Outcome  | Quantity | Unit Value | Causality | Total Value |
|--|----------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| At Youth Zone I am free to have fun                                    | 36,918   | £3,119     | 50%       | £57,925,497 |
| I feel safer at Youth Zone than other places I can go in my spare time | 32,183   | £3,119     | 51%       | £50,779,624 |

|   |        |         |     |             |
|---|--------|---------|-----|-------------|
| My self-confidence is better through coming to a Youth Zone               | 38,397 | £2,480  | 45% | £43,172,811 |
| I am more lonely through coming to a Youth Zone                           | 1,257  | -£1,793 | 33% | -£754,078   |
| Through coming to a Youth Zone my confidence around other people is worse | 2,515  | -£1,015 | 30% | -£768,710   |
| At Youth Zone I am not free to have fun                                   | 961    | -£2,015 | 48% | -£919,960   |

Whilst a few outcomes fall in a tight bracket from £37M - £39M the top three are in a clear order:

**In terms of the most important outcomes to young people shown by this research, Youth Zones help young people feel free, safe and confident.**

For total running costs of £21M for the period April 2023 to March 2024 across the network of 14 Youth Zones £292M of social value was created. In other words, for every £1 of costs there was a return of over £13 of social value in terms of young people's wellbeing.

Sensitivity analyses were also carried out as part of this study to explore what other external factors might affect this social value calculation. When considering these other factors, the study concludes a SROI ratio somewhere in the range of £1: £6.8- 18.2.

## 2. Introduction

In a UK where 4.2 million children live in poverty 1.3 million young people have been forced to give up out-of-school activities because they simply cannot afford them. This is a UK where 1.5 million children were referred to mental health services in a year, where only 47% receive the recommended physical activity they need and where one in three young people from disadvantaged backgrounds fear they will fail in life (Prince's Trust, 2022). This is a UK where wealth and opportunity is unequally distributed and growing up is often a struggle.

OnSide is a national youth charity that believes **all** young people should have the opportunity to discover their passion and their purpose. Its mission is to empower young people to lead positive, fulfilling lives by providing access to incredible spaces and exceptional youth work, delivered by outstanding people, where they are needed the most.

Through youth centres (called 'Youth Zones') across some of the most deprived areas of the UK OnSide have five goals:

- GOAL 1: Giving young people a safe exciting place to go to have fun, build their social networks and support their personal development
- GOAL 2: Helping young people to lead healthier, happier lives
- GOAL 3: Enabling young people to better face the challenges of life
- GOAL 4: Supporting young people to raise their aspirations and fulfil their potential
- GOAL 5: Strengthening communities by supporting young people to be empowered, active, responsible citizens





Progress towards these goals is measured within the organisation on an ongoing basis. By delivering these goals OnSide aim to deliver five core (expected) outcome themes:

- Confidence: Self-esteem and self-efficacy
- Social skills: Relationship and communication skills
- Emotional skills: Emotional intelligence and resilience
- Health and wellbeing: Physical, mental and emotional
- Aspirations and achievement: Motivation and determination (OnSide Youth Zones, 2023, p. 7)

These things matter to people. But *how much* do they matter? The answer to this question is what a social value and Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis sets out to explore.

Social value is about understanding the relative importance that people place on changes to their wellbeing and using the insights we gain from this understanding to make better decisions (Social Value International, 2023).

To understand this value and to guide our exploration we apply the Principles of Social Value (Social Value International, 2023):

- Principle 1: Involve Stakeholders
- Principle 2: Understand What Changes
- Principle 3: Value the Things That Matter
- Principle 4: Only Include What Is Material
- Principle 5: Do Not Overclaim
- Principle 6: Be Transparent
- Principle 7: Verify the Result



- Principle 8: Be Responsive<sup>1</sup>

The type of social value analysis carried out in this report is SROI. SROI is one way of communicating this social value created by Youth Zones in financial terms, in the common nominator of money, whilst adhering to the Principles.

Through the Principles, we investigate the changes experienced by people, *and from their perspective* we seek to understand how they have been affected, positively or negatively, to then quantify these changes (outcomes), impacts and social value generated.

Many different people are likely to experience outcomes that affect their wellbeing through the Youth Zones. A youth centre not only impacts the young people who attend but can also affect those who work and volunteer there, as well as create a ripple effect on the families and carers of those young people. However, at the core of this analysis are the perspectives of the young people themselves, focusing on how they are affected by the Youth Zones and estimating the value created for them.

## 2.1 Background

Social value information is becoming a crucial part of the tendering and bidding process, highlighting how organisations will add value to the wider community through their contract work. Across the Network, the OnSide team is seeing a growing demand from potential funders, corporate donors and wealth advisors for this kind of information. An assured SROI report not only meets these requests but also offers accountability to the communities where OnSide operates. Most importantly, it provides valuable insights that help to continuously improve and maximise the positive impact on the young people whose lives are touched by OnSide's efforts.

# 3. Scope

## 3.1 About OnSide

OnSide is a pioneering national youth charity determined to make sure that all young people have the opportunity to discover their passion and their purpose.

The Network has big ambitions - to fund and launch state of the art, multi million-pound youth centres (called 'Youth Zones') in the UK's most disadvantaged areas. OnSide's story began in the North West in 2006 when its founder entrepreneur, Bill Holroyd, became chair of the successful Bolton Lads and Girls Club. Bill realised very quickly the transformative impact of high-quality youth facilities for young people in towns and cities across the country, and it was this vision that inspired the creation of OnSide to take Youth Zones to communities nationwide.

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<sup>1</sup> Comment from authors: Principle 8 is the newest Principle and is yet not included in the Assurance Framework that this report has been accredited to.

## 3.2 About the Youth Zones

Every OnSide Youth Zone aims to be a vibrant, safe and inspiring space, offering thousands of young people from diverse backgrounds a wide range of activities, trusted support from Youth Workers and specialist programmes. They open outside of school hours (5 evenings a week plus weekends) all year-round at an affordable price designed to minimise barriers to entry (50p a time, plus £5 a year membership).

Each Youth Zone is made possible by a unique collaboration between philanthropists, local authorities, and businesses of all sizes, together with local young people who help shape the Youth Zone to meet the needs of young people from that area. Over 500 local and national businesses, philanthropists, charitable foundations and local authorities have contributed more than £150 million for Youth Zones since 2008. This has enabled the development of the vibrant national OnSide Network of 15 Youth Zones which between them support around 55,000 young people a year. Each Youth Zone is an independent local charity and part of the federated OnSide Network.

With 7 new Youth Zone projects underway and more in the pipeline the Network is extending its reach to even more young people across the country.

The scope for this analysis was:

- Project name: Social Return on Investment (SROI) of the OnSide Network of Youth Zones
- Locations: 14 Youth Zones in England  
(Future Youth Zone (Barking & Dagenham), Unitas Youth Zone (Barnet), Blackburn and Darwen Youth Zone, Bolton Lads and Girls Club, Carlisle Youth Zone, Inspire Youth Zone (Chorley), Legacy Youth Zone (Croydon), HideOut Youth Zone (East Manchester), Manchester Youth Zone, Mahdlo Youth Zone (Oldham), Warrington Youth Zone, Wigan Youth Zone, The Hive Youth Zone (Wirral), The Way Youth Zone (Wolverhampton))
- Duration: April 2023 - March 2024
- Beneficiaries: Young people visiting the Youth Zones

The main and targeted beneficiaries of OnSide's work are the young people visiting the centres. However, previous commissioned reports by Amion (2015) and Ask for Research (2019) showed outcomes for other stakeholders and institutions, such as the local community, justice system and health care systems. In early consultation with the OnSide team it was agreed to dedicate a higher level of resource and rigour towards understanding the changes experienced by young people and carry out an analysis focused on their experiences that would be robust enough to go through external report assurance by Social Value International.

As a result, for the scope of this SROI study, we assume that the changes experienced by the young people are the ones expected to be most important to understand and manage to provide meaningful information on how to maximise social value – *for them*.



### 3.2.1 Inputs

In SROI, inputs refer to the financial value of the investment (Social Value UK, 2019). Inputs can come in many forms, including money, time, donations, emotional input, social capital, etc. For those without a clear market price already established we use different valuation techniques to estimate how much non-financial investments by different stakeholders are worth in financial terms.

The main stakeholder group for this analysis (young people) contribute their time when attending the Youth Zone and a small financial cost in the form of membership fees and entrance costs. However, we have decided not to include these inputs directly in the core SROI model for several key reasons:

- Opportunity cost of time: Most of the young people attending Youth Zones are not of working age and therefore do not have direct access to the labour market. Given the expectation for them to be in school or other forms of education, the opportunity cost of their time is minimal compared to older stakeholders. As such, while their time has value, it does not fit within traditional economic models of labour and opportunity cost in the same way as adult participation might.
- Financial inputs: Although some Youth Zones charge a nominal membership fee (ranging from £5-10) and a per-visit fee (approximately 50p), these costs are minimal and are often covered by parents or carers rather than the young people themselves.

For this analysis, the value of young people's input is considered better understood as supplementary rather than central to the analysis. Nonetheless, while the contribution of young people is not included in the Value Map, it has been acknowledged in sensitivity analysis (Chapter 8).

In practice, the financial contribution to attend Youth Zone is a very small part of the Youth Zones income streams. The main sources of funding come from a mixture of government funding (including the MyPlace scheme for the first 4 Youth Zones the OnSide developed, and more recently the Youth Investment Fund), local authority (land as well as finance) and private donations. The sources for revenue funding to cover the operating costs include:

- Local authorities (with a minimum three year funding agreement up front)
- Private donations
- Corporate sponsors
- Grant funding and contracts to deliver particular activities - for example, the employability project 'get a job' (Amion, 2015, p. 18) and a small amount from
- Income raised by the Youth Zone from various activities - membership/entrance fees, café/catering service; and room hire/facility hire

For this analysis we've included the total input of these stakeholders as the running costs of the Youth Zones, taken from Youth Zones' financial accounts.

The total reaches £20,970,000, which has been included in Value Map. The breakdown per centre is available on request from the OnSide team.

As these running costs don't include wear and tear to buildings and equipment, which would increase the inputs and decrease the SROI ratio, an estimate for capital depreciation has been included in the sensitivity analysis to explore how big that effect would have been.

Youth Zone activities use volunteer resources. Estimating that the Youth Zones have 400 volunteers, who volunteer 8 hours per month (The National Council for Voluntary

Organisations, 2019) and the value of their time is at least UK minimum wage of £10.42 (UK Government, 2024) we can also include what their time would have cost OnSide if it was not volunteered for free.

This input was estimated at £400,128 and is included in the Value Map.

The total inputs (or investment) included in this analysis are, therefore, £21,370,128.

### 3.2.2 Outputs

Outputs are the quantitative summary of an activity (Social Value UK, 2019).

As the activity we are analysing are the OnSide Youth Zones, the output is the number of visits by young people during the period of the analysis. According to OnSide's own impact report for 2022/23 there 618,493 engagements in 2022/23 (OnSide Youth Zones, 2023, p. 3).

We recognise that there is a risk that the number may have increased and decreased slightly between the reporting period for the impact report and the reporting period for this report. However, as the actual SROI calculation calculates the value of the outcomes experienced, and not the outputs, it is a risk we are considering minor in this analysis and it will not affect the SROI ratio itself.

### 3.3 About the SROI Analysis

This analysis is an evaluation of the social value generated by 14 Youth Zones for their primary beneficiaries (young people) during a one year period from April 2023 to March 24. The evaluation focuses on all activities associated with attending a Youth Zone, with the objective of understanding the social value these activities have created over the course of the year. The Youth Zones in scope for this analysis were:

- Future Youth Zone (Barking & Dagenham)
- Uitas Youth Zone (Barnet)
- Blackburn and Darwen Youth Zone
- Bolton Lads and Girls Club
- Carlisle Youth Zone
- Inspire Youth Zone (Chorley)
- Legacy Youth Zone (Croydon)
- HideOut Youth Zone (East Manchester)
- Manchester Youth Zone
- Mahdlo Youth Zone (Oldham)
- Warrington Youth Zone
- Wigan Youth Zone
- The Hive Youth Zone (Wirral)
- The Way Youth Zone (Wolverhampton)

## 4. Stakeholders

Stakeholders are people who experience change in their lives (outcomes) as a result of an activity or intervention and are not limited to only intended beneficiaries (Social Value International, 2019).

It was therefore important to first understand who the Youth Zones affect, before it was decided where to dedicate the focus and resources allocated for this SROI analysis.

### 4.1 Stakeholder Analysis

Identifying the full range of stakeholders for OnSide Youth Zones was a multi-stage process that involved both a review of relevant literature and consultations with various groups. This process ensured that we considered who, in addition to the beneficiaries, might experience material changes as a result of the Youth Zone activities.

Initially and even prior to project initiation a desktop analysis was started by the report team which highlighted young people, their families, volunteers and staff as expected stakeholders.

At project initiation the details of the impact data that OnSide already captures for many stakeholders was shared. It became clear through further discussion that the aspiration for this report was to focus the research efforts on - with higher levels of rigour - understanding the changes experienced by the main beneficiaries: young people. To complement this a small sample of parents/carers would also be consulted to understand their perspectives on changes experienced by the young people.

A fuller literature review of OnSide's previous research was conducted during these conversations to identify key stakeholder groups likely to be affected by the activities of OnSide Youth Zones. Based on this review, several primary stakeholders were identified in the literature including young people who attend the Youth Zones, Youth Zone staff and youth workers, parents, local community members, and various public service entities such as Local Authority services, schools, Jobcentre Plus, Police, and Health services (Ask for Research Ltd, 2019, p. 9), as well as policy makers and funders (Amion, 2015, p. 12).

From a SROI view, not all of these stakeholders are expected to experience outcomes as we understand them and assess them within an assured SROI report, as for this analysis we focus on the stakeholders that have experienced changes that affect their **wellbeing** therefore state actors and policy makers are not stakeholders here.

Expanding the literature review further, there is previous research that indicates the potential material stakeholders and outcomes affecting wellbeing for e.g. the following three:

#### *Families*

As a young person is most often part of a family entity, the effect on that individual and the changes they experience, can have a ripple effect onto their parents, carers and family members. Although no accredited SROI report for specifically youth centres were found, there is evidence in other contexts supporting the claim that families may experience changes as a result of their children engaging in an activity under analysis. Below provides a couple of examples.

A forecast SROI carried out for Essential Living Future's Contribution investigated the effect of a residential trip for young people of NEET and as it set out to widened the young person's experience and furnished them with the confidence and aspiration there are some similarities to Youth Zones. It study found that, albeit to a proportionally small value when compared to other stakeholders' outcomes, families did indeed experience the following material outcomes when the young person engaged in the activity:

- Family member has better communication with young person
- Family member feels less stressed
- Family member spends more time with young person (Essential Living Future's Contribution, 2016, p. 32)

Another example of how families can be affected by initiatives targeted at young people comes from the SROI evaluation of a training and job placement program by Norte Joven Association in Spain. It concludes that the program has a direct impact on the families and tutors and the following material outcomes are found for families and legal guardians:

- Improved mental health
- Better functioning families
- Time freed up for the parents (The Social Consulting Agency, 2022, p. 268)

However, it can be noted that also in this study, the estimated total social value created through these outcomes for families (€147,543.98) are small when compared to the estimated total social value created for the main beneficiaries (€1,211,079.61) (The Social Consulting Agency, 2022, p. 255).

### *Staff*

As a result of their employment, it is likely that staff are also experiencing wellbeing outcomes as a result of OnSide. A previous report by the report authors but for another charitable sector (i.e. charity shops) gives an example of outcomes that a member of staff in a charitable organisation might experience:

- More empathy
- Feeling that I am 'giving back' to others
- Feeling that I am 'giving back' to the planet
- More self-confidence
- Feeling adequately compensated financially for work
- Feeling more distress (from H&S concerns)
- Feeling part of a community
- More financial choice and independence (Charity Retail Association, 2023)

### *Volunteers*

The same study mentioned above, also assessed outcomes experienced by volunteers and found the following being relevant to volunteers in charity shops:

- More empathy
- Feeling that I am 'giving back' to others
- Feeling that I am 'giving back' to the planet
- More self-confidence
- Feeling adequately compensated financially for work
- Feeling less distress (from H&S concerns)
- Feeling part of a community
- More financial choice and independence (Charity Retail Association, 2023)



OnSide works in a different sector of course, but the charitable nature of the work might lead to similar outcomes.

Through consultation we refined our understanding of who might be materially impacted by the Youth Zone activities and ensured that our stakeholder list was as comprehensive as possible at the early stages of the project. The process of stakeholder engagement was designed to be inclusive and reflective of the diverse groups connected to the Youth Zones. Stakeholders themselves were invited to share their thoughts on who else they thought might have experienced changes in the qualitative and quantitative research, and further stakeholders were added. This iterative process allowed us to identify additional stakeholders and refine the categorisation of existing ones.

Stakeholder list:

- Young people
- Families of young people
- Volunteers
- Staff
- Community members
- Local schools
- Jobcentre Plus
- Police
- Health services
- Policy makers
- Funders

### *Consideration of sub-groups*

During the planning stage we considered the potential for materially different outcomes among sub-groups of stakeholders. sub-groups were identified based on several criteria that may affect their experience of the outcomes, such as age, gender, ethnicity and location, and in both the qualitative and quantitative research staff collecting data were encouraged to include a diverse and representative sample. Evidence from both qualitative and quantitative data collection was used to analyse whether these sub-groups experienced different outcomes. For instance, the outcomes for young people might vary significantly depending on their age or which Youth Zone they attend.

In the quantitative phase, our analysis included an "About You" section in surveys to capture sub-group data across the above mentioned criteria. There is of course a risk and limitation to this analysis from not having further criteria, however, the importance of keeping the survey short to encourage completion by a larger sample was considered of higher importance.

## 4.2 Deciding which Stakeholders to Include

The stakeholder analysis for OnSide Youth Zones was, as already explained, an iterative process, building on the various consultations with stakeholders and especially the OnSide team.

Some important judgement calls had to be made at this stage. While we recognised that more stakeholders, such as families, staff, and volunteers, might experience outcomes, our analysis from this point focused on young people. This decision wasn't taken easily and was made in consultation with the OnSide team, revisiting the scope and purpose of the analysis.

Being an organisation to empower the UK’s youth to lead positive, fulfilling lives by providing access to incredible spaces and excellent youth work, the primary goal for OnSide is to obtain information that can better manage the impact and value created for young people. Principle 8 emphasises the importance of being responsive (Social Value International, 2022) and we wanted to capture the data that would be most likely to provide useful, actionable insights for operational, tactical and strategic decision-making and support continuous improvement to meet the vision and mission of the organisation. In addition, this was especially relevant to OnSide’s, as albeit being an organisation with impressive social value data collection and previous report, these reports had often assessed the young peoples’ perspectives with significant less rigour, which hadn’t fully captured the detailed impact from their viewpoint. Our decision to focus on one stakeholder group, aimed to fill in that gap to a higher level of rigour and therefore increased confidence in the results.

A review of the literature also indicated that while material outcomes had been identified for families, staff, and volunteers in other SROI studies, the value created for these groups was often significantly less compared to the value for the primary beneficiaries (young people). Nevertheless, we acknowledge that excluding these stakeholders poses a limitation to this report and that material outcomes to other stakeholders might have been missed. This decision also increases the risk that the total estimated social value across all stakeholder groups might have differed had more groups been included. Although we can only speculate on the outcomes for these other stakeholders and their value, the literature consistently showed positive outcomes for e.g. families, suggesting their inclusion would likely increase the total value estimate rather than reduce it.

It's a recommendation for future reports to re-assess the rationale for these stakeholder groups inclusion/exclusion. As any organisation, OnSide is on a social value journey and expanding the number of stakeholders might be a reasonable next step to determine if any material outcomes were missed for other stakeholders.

The below table provides a simplified summary of what stakeholders were included in the SROI analysis, which should be noted, focus on measuring social value as “*a broader definition of value that includes the worth or importance stakeholders place on changes (impacts) to their wellbeing that are not captured through ‘traditional’ financial accounting*” (Social Value International, 2022). That doesn’t mean that other stakeholders and their value are not important, simply that their value is not what a social value and SROI analysis sets out to assess.

*Table Stakeholder inclusion/exclusion*

| <b>Stakeholder</b>              | <b>Potential Outcomes</b>  | <b>Reason for Inclusion/Exclusion</b>  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Young People</b>             | Change in confidence, social skills, emotional skills, health and wellbeing, aspiration and achievements | <b>Included:</b> Outcomes likely to affect wellbeing of individuals, recommendation of OnSide following consultation + review of previous research (OnSide Youth Zone, 2023, p. 7) |
| <b>Families of Young People</b> | Change in family relationships,  | <b>Excluded:</b> While they may  |

|                          |   |   |
|--------------------------|---|---|
|                          | communications, stress  | experience secondary outcomes, the focus is on direct outcomes for young people.<br>Attribution is the main reason for exclusion of this stakeholder group, as there is much attribution to be judged and assigned to other activities and others for this to be relevant. For example, a change in behaviour of a young person and how that then affects their family members may result from more than the Youth Zone attendance. |
| <b>Volunteers</b>        | Change in feeling that I am 'giving back' to others, feeling part of a community, self-confidence, empathy  | <b>Excluded:</b> While they are likely to experience changes that affect wellbeing, their outcomes are less central to the primary objectives of the Youth Zones and the management focus for this study.   |
| <b>Staff</b>             | Change in feeling that I am 'giving back' to others, part of a community, empathy and self-confidence (as established in a recent SROI by the authors "The Value of Giving Back SROI Report, 2023") | <b>Excluded:</b> While they are likely to experience changes that affect wellbeing, their outcomes are less central to the primary objectives of the Youth Zones and the management focus for this study.   |
| <b>Community Members</b> | Change in community cohesion, safety, civic pride   | <b>Excluded:</b> Albeit composed by individuals that may experience changes affecting wellbeing, the indirect benefits to community members are extremely difficult to measure and attribute specifically to the Youth Zones.   |
| <b>Local Schools</b>     | Change in student behaviour, attendance, better   | <b>Excluded:</b> Not outcomes   |

|                        |  |   |
|------------------------|--|---|
|                        | academic performance   | affecting individuals' wellbeing.   |
| <b>Jobcentre Plus</b>  | Change in employment prospects for young people and youth unemployment | <b>Excluded:</b> Not outcomes affecting individuals' wellbeing.   |
| <b>Police</b>          | Change in youth crime and community relations                          | <b>Excluded:</b> Not outcomes affecting individuals' wellbeing.   |
| <b>Health Services</b> | Change in mental and physical health outcomes for young people         | <b>Excluded:</b> Not outcomes affecting individuals' wellbeing.   |
| <b>Policy Makers</b>   | Informed decision-making, evidence of effective youth interventions    | <b>Excluded:</b> Not outcomes affecting individuals' wellbeing.   |
| <b>Funders</b>         | Return on investment, sense of achievement, influence on youth policy  | <b>Excluded:</b> While funders are essential for the continuation of Youth Zones their outcomes are not related to individual wellbeing |

As the list above indicates the only stakeholder group included for outcomes consultation in this SROI analysis is Young People. In some cases when consulting children and young people proxy groups are used to express their opinions. For us it was important to (as far as possible) engage with the young people themselves and create an environment where they felt open to share.

During the qualitative research the OnSide team who works closely with these young people helped the interviewer (Nicola Lynch) through introducing her to young people on site at the Youth Zones. During quantitative research the OnSide team was on hand to help young people fill in the survey. This brings in an increased risk of influence and the potential for the unconscious biases of the interviewer or survey helper to influence the young person's responses, however, the approach was judged the most appropriate option, as the priority was that the young people felt comfortable with and safe during the process.

A small number of parents/carers were also interviewed to understand their perspective on the changes experienced by the young people they parent or care for. They were not consulted on the changes they experienced themselves.

## 5. Understanding Outcomes

Building on the collective decisions about which stakeholders to include and how, a stakeholder engagement plan was developed to ensure a thorough understanding of the outcomes experienced by the young people involved with OnSide Youth Zones.

Table Stakeholder Engagement Plan

| Stakeholders    | What we think changes for them (why they are included)  | Size of group | What biases might there be in the group?  | How will we make a sample as representative as possible?  | Target number to be involved (sample size)            | Method of involvement  |
|-----------------|---|---------------|---|---|---|--|
| Young People    | Change in confidence, social skills, emotional skills, health and wellbeing, aspiration and achievements              | 55,000        | The main risk of bias is towards reporting positive change. We mitigated for this by explicitly asking about negative change. | We will work with the teams on site at each visit to ensure a range of young people are interviewed | 40 for interview and 600 for survey respondents       | Interviews with young people in person at Youth Zones                        |
| Parents/ carers | It was decided that parents/carers would be consulted on their perceptions of the changes experienced by young people | Unknown       | The main risk of bias is towards reporting positive change. We mitigated for this by explicitly asking about negative change. | We will work with the teams on site at each visit to ensure a range of young people are interviewed | 20 for interview. This group were not to be surveyed. | Interviews with parents when on site to conduct interviews with young people |

Following the initial literature review and insights from previous research the expected outcomes were noted by part of the report writing team. This exercise excluded Nicola Lynch who would be carrying out the interviews - to reduce the risk of her being biased towards expected outcomes and open to what the young people were sharing with her in their stories. Therefore, these expected outcomes did not serve as any guide for conversations with stakeholders, but as a preparatory tool for the team to later reflect on and to understand the possible range of changes that might emerge from discussions.

The questions used during the interviews with young people were based on a template (Social Value UK, 2019) designed to capture, in the stakeholders' own words, what changes for them, what leads to those changes, and how these affect their overall wellbeing (see Annex C). Some questions were open-ended to allow for the full story of change to emerge enabling us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the true social value created. We also

included direct questions about unintended and negative outcomes as well as exploratory questions regarding attribution and duration.

It was essential to understand the causal relationships between different outcomes and any prominent 'chains of events.' To assess this the interviewees were asked probing questions such as "How does that make you feel?", "Why is that important to you?", and "What happened next?" to draw out deeper insights.

All qualitative engagements for this project were carried out through in-person interviews with young people at the Youth Zones. This approach allowed for a more personal and direct connection with the participants which was crucial for gathering accurate and detailed qualitative data. However, due to logistical constraints, not all Youth Zones could be visited. This limitation was mitigated by incorporating quantitative data collection from a broader sample ensuring that the overall findings are still representative.

To boost participation the Youth Zones' management and staff played an instrumental role in inviting a diverse range of young people to take part in the interviews, ensuring that the sample was as representative as possible. Despite some logistical challenges, the engagements exceeded the planned number, covering a wide range of participants and increasing the reliability of the data. In person interviewees were not asked to confirm characteristics such as gender and age in writing to ensure that every conversation remained as easy and comfortable as possible for the interviewed person. It was important to the ethical stance of both the interviewer and the OnSide teams that all engagement with the interview process was voluntary. This means we did not impose a target for certain characteristics to be represented in the samples at each Youth Zone visit (as we were dependent both on which young people were present at each session that was visited and their willingness to be interviewed.) Nonetheless, many young people chose to self-disclose a range of characteristics during the interviews. We know that the age range represented was 8-19, that male, female and non-binary persons were represented and some young people additionally disclosed that they had a range of diagnoses relating to neurodiversity.

Parent/carer engagement :

It was agreed in early scoping discussions with OnSide that a small sample of parents/carers would be interviewed for the purposes of 'triangulation.' By this we mean testing if *their* perspectives on any changes experienced by the young people differed to those of the young people themselves. Our intention was to interview a sample of approximately 20 parents/carers on site when the young people's interviews were happening. This was undeliverable in the end due to securing availability and consent within the right timeframe but the interviewer did carry out a small number of interviews by phone (4) and some parents/carers sent feedback by email or text message (another 4.)

We do not feel that enough data was gathered to give confidence in its application to this study but it is worth noting that the parents/carers who **were** interviewed did confirm the findings from the young people themselves. They identified self-discovery, freedom and confidence as key positive outcomes and again identified negative peer experiences as a negative outcome.

"It's been such a positive experience for her. It's changed so many things for the better. In her own words, she can be herself, no judgement. She doesn't have to try and fit in, her friends there understand her. The youth workers are



very supportive and encouraging. Her self esteem/confidence has improved dramatically, Youth Zone have recognised her talents and she's had so many great opportunities with her singing and football. Her sense of self worth has soared with the opportunity to be a young leader... it's inspired her to become a youth worker. The Youth Zone has given her a safe place to go and taken her away from groups who were leading her down the wrong path (due to her vulnerability and her need to fit in / mask). Being there is teaching her about relationships and building her social and communication skills...It's her safe place and she's been coping much better at school and home because the Youth Zone is a place she can share her worries or be distracted from them.”

*Written feedback from parent/carer*

“There has been a few incidents of fighting at the X centre that my youngest witnessed and she hasn't ever witnessed anything like this before so it did upset her quite a lot.”

*Written feedback from parent/carer*

*Table Summary of Qualitative Engagements*

| <b>Stakeholders</b> | <b>No. of locations</b> | <b>No. of Youth Zones</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Young People        | 4                       | 4                         | 51           |
| Parents             | N/A                     | 2                         | 8            |

### **A note on our approach to qualitative research : principles, language and framing**

The three key social value principles underpinning our approach to the qualitative research were ‘involve stakeholders’, ‘understand what changes’ and ‘value what matters’ (Social Value International). Understanding and valuing are cognitive and emotional processes that belong to each stakeholder and are not to be determined by the listener or evaluator. The practitioners who carried out this SROI share a deep commitment to faithfully representing the stories of change shared by stakeholders. We believe we can only do this by ensuring all stakeholders feel safe and supported in our conversations. We also believe that faithful representation means retaining the language used by the young people in this study. In this particular study we were interviewing young people across an age range of 8-19. Some young people chose to disclose that they had diagnoses relating to neurodiversities. Some young people were communicating in English as their second language. Every young person had the right to engage with the interview in a way which was comfortable to them and use language that was meaningful to them. Our approach was to retain the language used by the young people as being the most faithful representation of the changes they experienced.

We raise this issue here not only to ensure full transparency in our approach but also because this approach can present technical challenges in adhering to guidance around concepts like the articulation of ‘well defined outcomes.’ The reality is that people in

conversations about personal change do not usually use language like 'I experienced increased confidence.' One particular challenge in retaining the stakeholder's language comes when people use statements rather than change language due to the specific framing they are given in the interviews. In all the interviews young people were given very specific framing that asked them to share the changes they had experienced **due to their engagement with the Youth Zone**. Their responses to this specific request included changes like "I feel free to have fun." When 'disembodied' from the interview setting this can read as a statement rather than a well defined outcome but it must be read as a change expressed in relation to the conversation. In the full experience of the conversation this change was described in relation to other settings in the young people's lives e.g. many young people shared that most of the spaces they live, work and play in are restrictive to some degree and by comparison the Youth Zone was a space in which they felt truly free to have fun.

It remains central to the approach of the practitioners involved that the stakeholder perspective is what we are trying to understand and value when we undertake an SROI. We have therefore chosen to retain the language shared with us by the young people in our articulation of the outcomes for the study. We ensured in both the qualitative and quantitative phases that any changes were presented and framed in the context of the young people's engagement with the Youth Zones (see Annex D for the framing of questions in the online survey.)

## 5.2 Deciding on Relevant Outcomes and sub-groups to include

An analysis of the qualitative data was undertaken to establish which outcomes were experienced by the young people attending OnSide Youth Zones and to identify the most significant outcomes for inclusion in this study.

The first step in this process began during the data collection phase. After each interview with young people at the Youth Zones, the outcomes they mentioned were systematically noted and recorded in handwritten notes on site. These were later transferred to Miro and further analysed as described below. Interviews were not recorded to ensure the comfort, anonymity and safety of the young people involved.

It was crucial to identify not only the various outcomes but also the interconnections between them for each stakeholder group. These interconnections provided insights into the "what leads to what" of the change process, often referred to as the chain of events. Understanding these chains is essential for defining outcomes that describe specific changes for the stakeholder group, allowing for better resource allocation decisions aimed at maximising social value.

As the second step of qualitative data analysis, all identified outcomes were organised on a Miro board. Any duplicate outcomes were removed and the remaining outcomes were grouped into themes that appeared to describe the same change. This form of qualitative data analysis is guided by professional judgement, as the broad range of outcomes must be refined into well-defined outcomes. Well-defined outcomes are those that lead to better resource allocation decisions being made to maximise social value (Social Value International, p. 7).

As described above the process of articulating well-defined outcomes was underpinned by the principle that we would stay as close to the language used by the young people as

possible. The process was iterative, involving several rounds of refinement. To ensure the quality and accuracy of the outcome definitions, second opinions were sought from SROI practitioners and co-authors Charlotte Österman and Tim Goodspeed, who had not participated in the interviews. Their more external perspective added valuable objectivity to the process. We also worked with a steering group of OnSide staff throughout the project and spent a significant amount of time discussing the outcomes generated through the qualitative phase.

The assumptions made during this phase included:

- That the outcomes described during the qualitative phase would be a ‘good enough’ representation of the wider group’s experiences to take forward to the survey.
- That we would remain true to the language used by the young people themselves to describe change and what matters most to them.
- That the difference between ‘self’ and ‘social’ confidence would be understood in the context of the survey. The young people interviewed were very clear that these were two separate outcomes so we assumed that this distinction would be clearly understood in the reading of the survey also. As the table below shows we extended the wording around self and social confidence to mitigate for any risk of confusion.
- That juxtaposing ‘I feel bullied’ and ‘I feel safer’ as opposites on a spectrum of change was an appropriate mechanism for eliciting meaningful responses to the online survey.

This rigorous approach to data analysis helps enhance the likelihood that the outcomes included in this report are those most likely to reflect the true experiences and impacts on the young people involved with OnSide Youth Zones.

The outcomes were considered by young people to have resulted from their attendance at Youth Zones. Following these qualitative stages, outcomes were sense checked by OnSide before proceeding and all of them were considered relevant for inclusion. Finally, the outcomes found were also consistent with our literature review. Therefore, outcomes shown to be caused by outputs in the theory of change should be considered relevant (material) and analysed further quantitatively.

Qualitative findings were also reviewed for relevant sub-groups, however none were found: within the group of young people interviewed there were no outcomes reported significantly more by any one group of young people.

### 5.2.1 Outcome chains

This is a graphical illustration of the results of the analysis showing the sequence of outcomes identified by the young people. The chains are included here to reflect the sequence of activities and outcomes **as experienced and described by the young people** during interviews. We have not ‘translated’ these outcome chains into the language of impact evaluation but we have grouped the young people’s individual stories into the most commonly described chains.



Note : OnSide has a fully elaborated Theory of Change based on their own research available for review through their website (OnSide, 2024). Our goal in presenting the outcome chains as above is to represent the specific experiences shared with us during the qualitative phase of this particular study and not to duplicate the Theory of Change that already exists.

We use the careful analysis and representation of outcome chains to help us avoid double-counting and therefore avoid over-claiming. It is especially challenging when describing granular wellbeing outcomes, however, to impose a linearity that has an absolute clear endpoint. Even at an individual level people's experiences of changes in their wellbeing are neither static nor cleanly chronological. In finding and articulating *common* chains across

wide and varied groups this gets even more challenging as one person may describe an outcome as an endpoint that for another sits 'mid-chain.'

In spite of these challenges it is extremely important that we seek to avoid double-counting positive outcomes in particular that would then lead to claiming an over-inflated value.

- Our first test to avoid double-counting outcomes in this context was to ensure we stayed as true to the feedback given during the qualitative research as possible. All the outcomes described above as the 'main outcomes' (that we subsequently valued) were outcomes that young people stated as 'concluding' or final outcomes in their own experiences of change.
- A second test was one of reasoning. In creating the chains above we condensed rich conversations about change into short outcome labels and combined individual young people's experiences into expressions that were a 'best fit' across a group. We therefore reason out and articulate below some of the differences in the experiences shared that may not be immediately obvious from the 'shorthand labels.'

**1. More Self Confidence** This outcome describes the young peoples' internal belief in their abilities and worth. It is a personal, introspective feeling of assurance in their own capabilities and decisions.

**2. More Social Confidence** Social confidence specifically refers to the young people's ability to interact effectively and comfortably with others in social settings. It involves comfort and courage in engaging with peers when participating in group activities as well as presenting and performing in front of varied audiences. Both of these are distinct from an internal sense of self-worth.

**3. Feeling Free to Have Fun** This outcome is about experiencing joy and leisure without constraints. It reflects a sense of liberation and enjoyment in activities which is separate from confidence or self-discovery. With this outcome young people articulated a key distinction between how they felt in Youth Zones as compared to other environments such as school or home where they felt constrained by both rules and expectations. There was an emphasis on noise, movement and freedom from externally imposed timescales.

**4. Discovering Who I Really Am** This outcome really centred on identity formation and the young people's ability at Youth Zones to really explore and understand their personal values, beliefs, interests, strengths, weaknesses and preferences. It is a deeper and longer process of self-discovery distinct from simply feeling confident or having fun and very much involved having the space to get things wrong or try things out that didn't ultimately 'fit.'

**5. Feeling Free to Be Myself** While linked to discovering their identity, this outcome emphasises the young peoples' **expression** of their true self in an environment without fear of judgement or repercussion. It involves the outward celebration of their individuality and the strength to set aside the weight of other peoples' expectations.

**6. Feeling Safer** This outcome relates to the young people's sense of security and protection within the environment provided by the Youth Zones. Feeling safer is about both physical and emotional safety for the young people and it interacts with but is distinct from confidence or identity-related outcomes.

**7. Feeling Less Lonely** This outcome focuses on social connectedness and the reduction of isolation. It highlights the importance of relationships, belonging and community, which is different from individual feelings of confidence or an individual identity.

Through centering the young people's voiced experiences and articulating those in more detail above we are comfortable that each of the identified outcomes addresses different aspects of personal development and social interaction that lead to improved wellbeing overall. We are confident that each one contributes uniquely to the youth zones' overall impact on wellbeing without presenting a high risk of double-counting.

When we reviewed the three outcomes *most valued* by the young people (following the conclusion of the quantitative analysis) we revisited them again to test further for any significant risk of double-counting and therefore over-claiming. We are confident that each of the 3 most valued outcomes is separate and unique according to the following logic...

**1. At Youth Zone I am free to have fun** This outcome focuses on the ability to engage in enjoyable activities without constraints. It emphasises the environment provided by the Youth Zone, which allows young people to participate in recreational and leisure activities freely. The primary element here is the sense of liberation and enjoyment, which is about having opportunities for entertainment and relaxation that might not be available elsewhere.

**2. I feel safer at Youth Zone than other places I can go in my spare time** This outcome describes the sense of security and protection that the Youth Zones provide. It highlights the physical and emotional safety that young people experience in this environment compared to other places. Feeling safer is about reducing anxiety or fear of harm, which directly impacts the young people's willingness to engage in activities but is distinct from the notion of having fun or building confidence.

**3. My self-confidence is better through coming to a Youth Zone** This outcome describes the young people's internal growth and their belief in their own abilities as a result of attending a Youth Zone. Improved self-confidence involves gaining skills, receiving positive reinforcement, and achieving personal growth. It is an internal change that affects how individuals perceive themselves and their capabilities, separate from feeling safe or having fun.

In summary, **Freedom to have fun** is about enjoyment and leisure, **Feeling safer** is about security and protection and **Improved self-confidence** is about personal growth and positive self-perception.

While staying as true as possible to the stakeholders' direct experiences is, for us, ethically important and helps ensure that the outcomes reflect their lived realities, it does come with certain impact measurement risks. Different individuals may interpret their experiences in varied ways which can increase the risk of double-counting. For example, one person may see an outcome as a distinct endpoint, while another might view it as part of a larger process. This introduces a slight risk of over-claiming the total social value. Additionally, staying close to subjective accounts, though crucial for accuracy, can challenge the clear separation of outcomes and may lead to overlap, particularly when outcomes are interconnected or nuanced in nature.



Nonetheless, as there is also a significant risk in steering away from the stakeholders' experience which could result in measuring the wrong things, the limitation and risk to the report is considered less than it would have been if we overly edited the insights mentioned and emphasised in the qualitative research. We also tested in the sensitivity analysis what would be the effect if, for example, a percentage of the outcomes with highest risk of overlap actually overlapped. See 10.3.4 for an expansion of this sensitivity testing which showed that these factors were not overly sensitive in the model. This increases our confidence in the overall results and reduces the likelihood of over-claiming due to double-counting.

## 5.2.2 Outcomes Matrix

The table below provides an overview of the results from the qualitative data analysis and how we approached the construction of outcome statements for the subsequent survey.

There is only one stakeholder group in this study (young people) and the outcomes below are expressed uniformly. However, it's important to note that while the outcomes are presented similarly, the pathways or 'chain of events' leading to these changes can differ depending on individual experiences and the below is a simplification of reality. The 'original code' refers to the language used most commonly by the young people themselves during interviews. The 'outcome statements' are the options offered to the young people in the online survey to support them in identifying changes that might have happened in both positive and negative directions.

In the matrix below green illustrates positive outcomes and red represents negative outcomes as mentioned by stakeholders during the qualitative analysis.

*Table Outcomes matrix*

| <b>Original Code</b>           | <b>Outcome Statements taken through to quantitative analysis</b>   |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Confidence in myself           | <p>My self-confidence is better through coming to a Youth Zone</p> <p>OR</p> <p>My self-confidence is worse through coming to a Youth Zone</p>                               |
| Confidence around other people | <p>Through coming to a Youth Zone my confidence around other people is better</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Through coming to a Youth Zone my confidence around other people is worse</p> |
| Feeling free to be myself      | <p>It is easier to really be myself at Youth Zone</p> <p>OR</p>  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | I can't be myself at Youth Zone   |
| Discovering who I really am                        | At Youth Zone I discovered who I really am (for example the things I like and don't like or what my own opinions are)<br><br>OR<br><br>Youth Zone discouraged me from finding who I really am |
| Feeling bullied                                    | I feel bullied at Youth Zone<br><br>OR<br><br>I feel safer at Youth Zone than other places I can go in my spare time  |
| Being free to have fun                             | At Youth Zone I am free to have fun<br><br>OR<br><br>At Youth Zone I am not free to have fun  |
| Feeling less lonely                                | I am less lonely through coming to a Youth Zone<br><br>OR<br><br>I am more lonely through coming to a Youth Zone  |
| Feeling safer at a Youth Zone than in other places | I feel safer at Youth Zone than other places I can go in my spare time<br><br>OR<br><br>I feel bullied at Youth Zone  |

## 6. Measuring Outcomes

An online survey was constructed to measure all the relevant outcomes.

### 6.1 Data Collection

The online survey had 784 responses. Some of these were incomplete or unusable for other reasons. After the data was cleaned 689 responses remained to be analysed.

## 6.2 Profile of Young People

Respondents were profiled in the 'About You' section of the survey by age, gender, ethnicity and geography.

*Table Age*

|                 |     |     |
|-----------------|-----|-----|
| Younger than 8  | 19  | 3%  |
| 8 - 12 yrs old  | 330 | 48% |
| 13 - 16 yrs old | 228 | 33% |
| Older than 16   | 110 | 16% |

*Table Gender*

|                                       |     |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Boy or man                            | 327 | 48% |
| Girl or woman                         | 320 | 47% |
| Nonbinary                             | 15  | 2%  |
| Prefer not to say                     | 9   | 1%  |
| Prefer to self-describe               | 8   | 1%  |
| I am not sure or questioning          | 5   | 1%  |
| I don't know what this question means | 2   | 0%  |

*Table Ethnicity*

|                                       |     |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Asian/Asian British                   | 71  | 10% |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British | 118 | 17% |
| White British                         | 372 | 54% |
| Other White background                | 37  | 5%  |
| Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups          | 61  | 9%  |
| Other ethnic group                    | 26  | 4%  |

*Table Geography*

|                               |    |    |
|-------------------------------|----|----|
| Barking & Dagenham Youth Zone | 49 | 7% |
| Barnet Youth Zone             | 61 | 9% |

|                                 |    |     |
|---------------------------------|----|-----|
| Blackburn and Darwen Youth Zone | 66 | 10% |
| Bolton Lads and Girls Club      | 51 | 7%  |
| Carlisle Youth Zone             | 12 | 2%  |
| Chorley Youth Zone              | 44 | 6%  |
| Croydon Youth Zone              | 56 | 8%  |
| East Manchester Youth Zone      | 42 | 6%  |
| Manchester Youth Zone           | 38 | 6%  |
| Oldham Youth Zone               | 43 | 6%  |
| South Bristol's Youth Zone      | 1  | 0%  |
| Warrington Youth Zone           | 55 | 8%  |
| Wigan Youth Zone                | 45 | 7%  |
| Wirral Youth Zone               | 75 | 11% |
| Wolverhampton Youth Zone        | 51 | 7%  |

The sample was representative of gender, age, ethnicity and geographical coverage when compared to data that OnSide held for the total population of 50,975 young people that attended the Youth Zones in the scope of this report, during the period covered by this report.

### 6.3 Analysis of material sub-groups

Survey results were checked for any materially different results in any potential sub-groups. The criteria that informed the profiling characteristics (above) were developed already at the planning stage and in consultation with the OnSide team (see e.g. sub-groups under 4.1 Stakeholder Analysis). They were subsequently asked in the 'About you' section of survey and later analysed quantitatively to understand if different sub-groups had a different experience of the outcomes and if the results needed further analysis and reporting by sub-groups.

For each profiling characteristic the spread of results for each outcome quantity was compared with the proportion of each potential sub-group in the survey sample. For example, the % of young people by age, was compared with the % of respondents experiencing a change in self-confidence:

*Table Self-confidence and age - Example of how analysis of material sub-groups was done*

| Potential sub-group | Population | % | Outcome | % |
|---------------------|------------|---|---------|---|
|---------------------|------------|---|---------|---|

|                | Count      |     | Quantity   |     |
|----------------|------------|-----|------------|-----|
| Younger than 8 | 19         | 3%  | 15         | 3%  |
| 8 -12          | 330        | 48% | 256        | 49% |
| 13 - 16        | 228        | 33% | 161        | 31% |
| Older than 16  | 110        | 16% | 86         | 17% |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>687</b> |     | <b>519</b> |     |

A 20% variance was considered the threshold to make a sub-group material. A judgement was made about outliers. For example, in the population above by age, the sample of younger than 8 years olds was small, and where this resulted in few responses from this group, they were considered outliers and the 20% variance criteria was applied to the remaining groups where there were a reasonable sample of responses to consider. For example, all the negative outcomes had significantly lower quantities; therefore, the sample of younger than 8 years olds was often only one or two young people (or none) and where a variance of more than 20% was observed it was not considered an indication of a material sub-group as the variance only represented one or two individual responses.

In conclusion, apart from outliers, no sub-groups were found with this level of variance in terms of the quantity of any outcome reported by different groups.

Similarly, the responses for the value of each outcome were assessed to see if the range of values reported were more than 20% from the average value for each outcome.

Also here it was concluded that, apart from outliers, no sub-groups were found with this level of variance in terms of value of any outcome reported by different groups.

## 6.4 Quantity of Outcomes

This section provides insights into the extent of change experienced by the young people as a result of their involvement with OnSide Youth Zones.

### 6.4.1 Indicators

Indicators are ways of knowing that change has happened (Social Value UK, 2019, p. 38). In this study, outcome indicators were gathered through the survey where the young people themselves reported the changes they experienced. This allowed us to determine how stakeholders in our sample experienced each specific outcome. Additionally, the young people provided insights into how much change had happened (depth) and whether the change was positive or negative, as the questions on outcomes were designed to allow for both the positive and negative impact experienced.

The average responses from the survey were used to populate the SROI Value Map (Annex B). While this introduces a potential risk of different experience within the sample group, we set out to counteract this by surpassing our target number of young participants,

encouraging diverse survey distribution and through checking for significant sub-groups within the data (see section 6.3 above). These measures helped us mitigate risks as much as possible within the project's scope.

The indicators used in the survey enabled both the frequency and depth of outcomes to be measured.

In terms of frequency (the number of young people who reported experiencing an outcome) alone, the most important outcome was self-confidence. The following table shows the outcomes in order of how many young people reported each outcome.

| <b>Outcome</b>   | <b>Responses</b> | <b>% of sample</b> |
|--|------------------|--------------------|
| My self-confidence is better through coming to a Youth Zone                | 519              | 75%                |
| At Youth Zone I am free to have fun  | 499              | 72%                |
| I feel safer at Youth Zone than other places I can go in my spare time     | 435              | 63%                |
| Through coming to a Youth Zone my confidence around other people is better | 431              | 63%                |
| It is easier to really be myself at Youth Zone                             | 409              | 59%                |
| I am less lonely through coming to a Youth Zone                            | 399              | 58%                |
| At Youth Zone I discovered who I really am                                 | 321              | 47%                |
| Through coming to a Youth Zone my confidence around other people is worse  | 34               | 5%                 |
| My self-confidence is worse through coming to a Youth Zone                 | 24               | 3%                 |
| I can't be myself at Youth Zone  | 20               | 3%                 |
| Youth Zone discouraged me from finding who I really am                     | 19               | 3%                 |
| I am more lonely through coming to a Youth Zone                            | 17               | 2%                 |
| I feel bullied at Youth Zone   | 16               | 2%                 |
| At Youth Zone I am not free to have fun                                    | 13               | 2%                 |

These survey results from 689 young people were extrapolated into the total population of 50,975 young people that the sample represents. Both sets of figures, for the sample and the population are shown in the Value Map.

However, when asked how big each outcome was, the average depth of each outcome showed that self-confidence was the least important of the positive outcomes in terms of



how big the change was for those that experienced that it; feeling free to have fun was the most important outcome in terms of depth alone:

| Outcome  | Average depth |
|--|---------------|
| At Youth Zone I am free to have fun  | 1.59          |
| I feel safer at Youth Zone than other places I can go in my spare time     | 1.55          |
| I am less lonely through coming to a Youth Zone                            | 1.52          |
| It is easier to really be myself at Youth Zone                             | 1.45          |
| At Youth Zone I discovered who I really am                                 | 1.44          |
| Through coming to a Youth Zone my confidence around other people is better | 1.39          |
| My self-confidence is better through coming to a Youth Zone                | 1.38          |
| At Youth Zone I am not free to have fun                                    | 1.29          |
| I am more lonely through coming to a Youth Zone                            | 1.17          |
| I feel bullied at Youth Zone   | 1.02          |
| Through coming to a Youth Zone my confidence around other people is worse  | 0.97          |
| I can't be myself at Youth Zone  | 0.94          |
| Youth Zone discouraged me from finding who I really am                     | 0.80          |
| My self-confidence is worse through coming to a Youth Zone                 | 0.66          |

#### *Reflection on choice of indicators*

As noted earlier the indicators were self-reported by the young people, who are considered the best placed to describe the changes they experienced. No additional indicators were incorporated into the analysis. Below is a reflection on the choice of these indicators.

The original SROI Guide from 2019 (Social Value UK, 2019, p. 38) advises that relying solely on self-reported, subjective measures carries risks, which can be mitigated by supplementing them with objective indicators. For the outcomes analysed in this context, some potential objective indicators might include:

- Records of incidents or conflicts reported within the Youth Zones as a possible measure of a sense of safety among young people.
- Observing to what extent young people smile, laugh or show other physical signs of having fun.

However, these indicators are in no way perfect (and perhaps not even ethical in the latter). Integrating different methodologies introduces its own risks to the analysis. For this study, objective indicators for all outcomes using the same methodology for its creation was not available and was early discarded as an option as this kind of mismatch can create challenges when different indicators measure slightly different aspects of change - and as it can be further from the stakeholder's own experience. According to updated guidance, and in particular the latest Principle 8 from 2022, consistency and comparability between relative importance is more than accuracy of individual indicators (Social Value International, 2022, p. 21). This supports the decision to rely solely on subjective self-reported indicators for all outcomes.

In our professional opinion young people are the best judges of their own experiences, so asking them how they recognise change and consulting them on the choice of indicators can in future studies further enhance confidence that the changes observed are real and that the selected indicators are appropriate for this context.

## 6.5 Duration of Outcomes

Duration explains how long (usually in years) the outcomes will last (Social Value UK, 2019). In the survey, young respondents were asked how long they thought their chosen changes would last if they could no longer attend a Youth Zone. It is important to note that some outcomes, such as self-confidence, are likely to change as young people experience natural developmental milestones. Therefore, when considering the duration of outcomes, we must also take into account deadweight and attribution (see Section 6.7.1 for more details).

One risk associated with surveys is that respondents misinterpret the question, potentially considering the duration of outcomes without linking them directly to OnSide's influence (Question 7 on duration can be seen in Annex D). To mitigate this risk and minimise the chance of overclaiming the duration of outcomes, every outcome statement (originating from Question 5 in the survey) explicitly referenced OnSide. For example, respondents were asked how long changes like "My self-confidence is better through coming to a Youth Zone" or "My self-confidence is worse through coming to a Youth Zone" would last, rather than asking about self-confidence in general.

The survey results were used to calculate the average duration for each outcome, with estimates ranging from 2.4 to 3.4 years, depending on the specific outcome experienced. Since these durations are based directly on survey responses, we can maintain a relatively high level of precision in estimating the duration of outcomes for young people as the primary stakeholders. Detailed information on the duration of each outcome can be found in Annex B: Value Map, with further explanation of how the social value evolves over time provided in the Future Value section.

## 6.6 Value of Outcomes

The practice of Social Return on Investment analysis includes the valuation of wellbeing outcomes to stakeholders to see which outcomes are most important to them.

This is not always practised in cost benefit analysis. However, Government guidance recommends that this is done. The Social Value Act (UK Government, 2012), requires consideration of social value. HM Treasury guidance on cost benefit analysis in the Green Book also **recommends** that this is done (UK Government, 2022) and recent supplements, i.e. 'Green Book supplementary guidance: wellbeing', **requires** that wellbeing is evaluated and valued (UK Government, 2021).

In this analysis we aimed to prioritise the SROI principle of stakeholder involvement. This empowers users directly to tell us how much they valued their outcomes using a consistent comparable scale. Values for participants in this report are, therefore, all from primary data.

Another benefit of a consistent comparable scale is that there is no method bias between any outcome valuations for participants, enabling confident comparison and conclusion about the most important outcomes to them, from their perspective.

## Relative Valuation

The relative importance of outcomes was established through a weighting question using a qualitative ordinal scale. Survey respondents were asked how important each outcome they had experienced was to them:

“For each of the changes you have selected, please think about how important the change you experienced was to you.

- not important to me at all
- not very important to me
- important to me
- very important to me
- extremely important thing to me”

Responses were coded from 0 to 4 and an average for each outcome used to represent the weighting of each outcome, and, therefore, the relative value of all outcomes to stakeholders can then be concluded on a consistent comparable scale.

Weighting was the preferred valuation method as it uses primary data and provides more opportunities for a consistent and fair evaluation of outcomes than traditional financial proxies from secondary and multiple sources using inconsistent techniques that are not comparable.

All the outcomes were valued by participants; but they struggled to prioritise them to any significant degree. This is a common effect. The outcomes that respondents are being asked to value have been identified through focus groups in answer to questions about what has changed in their life. These questions result in people identifying important changes first and not an exhaustive list of unimportant changes. It is natural to respond to such questions with the most important things first, and not to mention unimportant changes.

This is a deliberate part of the process. One of the principles of SROI is to assess materiality and the process is designed to efficiently find the most important outcomes. It is not a weakness, therefore, when we find all outcomes are valued by participants. In many ways, the most important outcomes are identified by the process in the qualitative stages, and the valuation in the quantitative stages only serves to provide some further definition. Again, this is common when rigorous qualitative consultation is carried out.

The priority order of outcomes, in order of importance to stakeholders is shown in the following table. (These are the mean values, per person, for each outcome, according to stakeholders).

Where weightings of outcomes are close together, conclusions should not be made about the absolute order of value in a relatively small sample size. For example, in the table below, most positive outcomes fall in a tight range from 2.93 to 2.82

However, two outcomes do emerge above this range. It should also be noted that the outcomes are now in a different order again from the tables above showing only the frequency or depth of the outcomes.

In terms of the value that young people put on the outcomes they achieved, neither of the outcomes at the top of the previous tables are most important; feeling safer is the highest valued outcome.

| Outcome  | Weight |
|--|--------|
| I feel safer at Youth Zone than other places I can go in my spare time     | 3.17   |
| At Youth Zone I am free to have fun  | 3.08   |
| At Youth Zone I discovered who I really am                                 | 2.93   |
| I am less lonely through coming to a Youth Zone                            | 2.93   |
| It is easier to really be myself at Youth Zone                             | 2.92   |
| Through coming to a Youth Zone my confidence around other people is better | 2.87   |
| My self-confidence is better through coming to a Youth Zone                | 2.82   |
| My self-confidence is worse through coming to a Youth Zone                 | -1.46  |
| Through coming to a Youth Zone my confidence around other people is worse  | -1.65  |
| Youth Zone discouraged me from finding who I really am                     | -1.79  |

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| I feel bullied at Youth Zone                    | -2.19 |
| I can't be myself at Youth Zone                 | -2.25 |
| I am more lonely through coming to a Youth Zone | -2.41 |
| At Youth Zone I am not free to have fun         | -2.46 |

## Monetary Valuation

Putting a price or monetary value on a change in someone's life has many challenges, including technical and moral. A short discussion of some of these issues and why SROI puts a monetary value on a change in someone's life is appended (see Annex E).

However, without it, or another appropriate common unit, it is not possible to compare the impact achieved across multiple stakeholders groups to conclude the most important changes overall; and calculate the total social value.

For these reasons, a valuation was developed to anchor the relative values (weights) against. The valuation was developed with primary data from young people that attend Youth Zones using the Wellbeing Valuation method.

## Wellbeing Valuation

Wellbeing valuation is a way of showing what a change in an individual's life (an outcome) is worth to them (in terms of their income). It uses statistical analysis of a dataset to look at two things:

1. What happens to an individual's wellbeing if they experience the outcome?; and
2. What happens to an individual's wellbeing if their income changes?

The valuation combines the answers to these two questions:

3. If we know what happens to an individual's wellbeing as their income changes, then we can calculate how much income they would need to get the same amount of wellbeing as they have from achieving the outcome

This is what a wellbeing valuation tells us – the equivalent amount of income required, to get the same change in wellbeing, that results from experiencing the outcome.

Data from OnSide for self-reported wellbeing on a scale and self-confidence (one of outcomes in the analysis identified by young people) was analysed. In this example the

outcome we are trying to value, therefore, is an increase in a young person's self-confidence. In the data we found that giving a 1 point higher score for self-confidence contributed 0.55 to an individual's score for wellbeing.

This was found by a statistical analysis using a multiple-linear regression. The regression model not only included wellbeing and self-confidence, but also available data on physical health, geography, age, gender, ethnicity and income of each young person. Therefore, the result is more than a correlation (when wellbeing goes up, coincidentally self-confidence is also observed to go up). The change in wellbeing for an individual is inferred to be the effect of the change in self-confidence because the model controls the result for the individual's physical health, geography, age, gender, ethnicity and income (things that we also know affect wellbeing).

Finally, a standard valuation for 1 point of wellbeing on the scale is called a WELLBY and is published by HM Treasury in the Green Book supplementary guidance: wellbeing (UK Government, 2021). The value is £13,000. Therefore, as in this case the results show a 0.55 effect on an individual's wellbeing, the value of the change in self-confidence is  $0.55 \times £13,000 = £7,164$ .

Monetary valuation of outcomes for young people is always a challenge as young people often do not have all the income for their needs; rather their needs are provided for by parents and carers. Therefore, the alternative cost to parents or the household would be used if traditional alternative spend was used as a financial proxy for an outcome. Similarly, the Wellby references household spend for the final stage of putting a monetary valuation on the effect of confidence on Youth Zone member's wellbeing. Whilst there is work underway to understand wellbeing valuation for children better (Little and Parkes, 2024) it is in early stages and has not been reviewed or adopted by HM Treasury, in the way that the Wellby has (UK Government, 2021).

This approach is the best fit for the purposes of this analysis (including comparing the outcomes in this analysis to show their relative importance) because:

- Data from OnSide showing the effect self-confidence has on Youth Zone members' wellbeing was used to derive the value for the anchor (rather than data from the national adult population)
- The consistency of the monetary value references used enables comparison across outcomes without any risk of source or method bias; and
- The calculation of the total social value provides a baseline to improve on if the method is repeated.

### Moderating the valuation

This value for self-confidence represents the change in self-confidence as a result of young people attending Youth Zones. However, for the scope of this analysis we are producing an annual model of investment and social return. The average period in the data that young people attended Youth Zones was 1.9 years. The value of £7,164 is, therefore, divided by 1.9 years to represent a year's change in self-confidence for an average young person attending Youth Zones.

Individual scores for the depth of change for each outcome (see above) were also used to modify (or discount) valuations so that the valuation of each outcome reflected the magnitude of the change. For example, if the average score for an outcome was the top

score on the depth scale of a 'Very big change' then 100% of the valuation was used. If not, valuations were adjusted according to the average magnitude reported by young people in the survey results.

The calculations for the monetary value of each outcome are shown in the Value Map.

## 6.7 Causality of Outcomes

Causality involves understanding how one thing leads to another, but in social value and SROI studies, it also involves recognising which outcomes were not directly caused by our activities. In the SROI Value Map, this concept is represented in the columns following the impact calculation, which reduce the value (or future value) through factors such as deadweight, attribution, drop off, and displacement - all of which are addressed individually below.

For attribution and deadweight, the young people were consulted directly on a rate for each of the outcomes through the survey (more in 6.7.1 Deadweight and attribution). However, questions regarding drop off and displacement were intentionally excluded from the survey.

Furthermore, a single question deliberately combined deadweight and attribution: "For each of the changes you have selected, could it be down to something else or someone else, or could it have happened anyway during the period you attended or is it all down to the Youth Zone - what do you think?"

The decision to limit these questions was made during our consultation with the OnSide team and poses a limitation to the analysis as it potentially reduces the level of rigour of these estimates.

The decision was based on past experience of getting youth zone members to complete questionnaires. Options for surveys were presented to the OnSide project steering group together with pro's and con's of each option, for a decision. Longer versions of the surveys could include questions to evidence additional value to the state, and questions for deadweight, attribution, displacement and drop off.

The judgement required a balance of a good enough sample of data to represent the population of 55,000 young people (which would require the shortest survey possible); and all the questions (above). Based on advice from other practitioners and on research of other assured reports, the minimum possible for the assurance standards appeared to be the question used.

It should be noted that OnSide gave up the opportunity to add value to the state to this report in order to reduce the survey length and in practice the shortened survey still resulted in a high dropout rate with 30% of responses not making it to the end of the survey. This suggests the judgement was correct to reduce the survey to this bare minimum and without this the response rate and completion rate would have been further affected, risking not having enough data to confidently extrapolate survey results into a population of 55,000.

Therefore, although the survey questions used potentially reduce the level of rigour of results; so would a longer survey as it would result in a smaller sample at best. At worst, a longer survey could have prevented the study being completed with the available resources.



### 6.7.1 Deadweight and attribution

Deadweight is a measure of the amount of an outcome that would have happened if the activity had not taken place, and it is calculated as a percentage (Social Value UK, 2019, p. 56).

For instance, if all young people across the UK in 2023 felt an increase in self-confidence, regardless of their involvement with Youth Zones, we need to account for that by adjusting the amount of the outcomes claimed in this analysis. Additionally, it is important to recognise that young people naturally experience developmental milestones, such as increasing self-confidence, as they grow older. This inherent progression in their lives must be considered when estimating how much of the outcomes can truly be attributed to the Youth Zones.

Attribution shows the part of deadweight for which you have better information and where you can attribute outcome to other people or organisations (Social Value UK, 2019, p. 59).

Both deadweight and attribution are calculated as a percentage.

Young people were asked about deadweight and attribution in the survey through the question: “For each of the changes you have selected, could it be down to something else or someone else, or could it have happened anyway during the period you attended or is it all down to the Youth Zone - what do you think?”

Four options were provided for responses:

- A response of “all of it is down to the Youth Zone” indicates 100% causality and no change in outcome would have happened without Youth Zones.
- A response of “most of it is down to the Youth Zone” indicates 67% causality
- A response of “some of it is down to the Youth Zone” indicates 33% causality
- A response of “none of it is down to the Youth Zone” indicates 0% causality meaning all of the outcome would have happened anyway and/or is attributed to another source.

The Value Map shows the average amount of the outcome value to be deducted that young people in the survey indicated was not down to Youth Zones (as a result of deadweight and attribution).

### 6.7.2 Displacement

Displacement is another component of impact and is an assessment of how much of the outcome displaced other outcomes elsewhere (Social Value UK, 2019, p. 57).

In consultation with the OnSide team, it was agreed that young people would not be likely to understand in a survey, and discern between, three different questions for attribution, deadweight and displacement.

The qualitative data collection provided insights which has guided the rate of displacement used. To estimate the displacement of impact, discussion with OnSide revealed that there was potential for Youth Zones to be displacing other outcomes, for example, feeling less lonely as result of coming to a Youth Zone may leave peers and friends that don't come to Youth Zones feeling more lonely as a young person moves from spending time in a social group outside of Youth Zones, to investing a lot of their socialising during their time at Youth

Zones. It was judged that most peers and friends would have other friends and opportunities to socialise, so there is little risk of 100% displacement, but a potential effect that should be included.

It was judged that a displacement rate of 35% should be applied across all outcomes and stakeholders as a very rough estimate and includes a risk to the analysis. Considering the range of potential negative impacts to others that could be displaced across all groups - most of which we do not have detailed insights into, compounded by the fact of not being able to include more stakeholder groups in this analysis – it was prudent to maintain a global displacement percentage across all outcomes.

The Value Map shows the average 35% of the outcome value to be deducted for displacement for all outcomes.

The following table shows what is left after the deductions for deadweight, attribution and displacement. In other words, for each outcome how much is judged to be down to Youth Zones.

| <b>Outcome</b>   | <b>Causality</b> |
|--|------------------|
| I feel safer at Youth Zone than other places I can go in my spare time     | 51%              |
| At Youth Zone I am free to have fun  | 50%              |
| It is easier to really be myself at Youth Zone                             | 48%              |
| At Youth Zone I am not free to have fun                                    | 48%              |
| I am less lonely through coming to a Youth Zone                            | 47%              |
| At Youth Zone I discovered who I really am                                 | 47%              |
| Through coming to a Youth Zone my confidence around other people is better | 46%              |
| My self-confidence is better through coming to a Youth Zone                | 45%              |
| I am more lonely through coming to a Youth Zone                            | 33%              |
| I feel bullied at Youth Zone   | 30%              |
| Through coming to a Youth Zone my confidence around other people is worse  | 30%              |
| I can't be myself at Youth Zone  | 29%              |
| My self-confidence is worse through coming to a Youth Zone                 | 24%              |
| Youth Zone discouraged me from finding who I really am                     | 22%              |

## 7. Total Value

### 7.1 Material Outcomes

Thresholds to determine which outcomes were material were qualitative (for relevance) and quantitative (for significance). For completeness they are all included here (repeating those included earlier in the qualitative stages).

| Materiality threshold  | Analysis   |
|--|--|
| Outcomes shown to be caused by outputs in the theory of change should be considered relevant and analysed further quantitatively.        | All outcomes were considered by young people to have resulted from their attendance at Youth Zones. Following these qualitative stages, outcomes were sense checked by OnSide before proceeding and again, all were considered relevant for inclusion. Finally, the outcomes found were consistent with our literature review.   |
| Any outcome that has a significant value to the young people in the study should be considered material and included.                    | As can be seen by the tables above, the least experienced positive outcome was still experienced by 47% of young people; and when valued, the lowest total value of the positive outcomes was still contributing 10% of the total value.   |
| Negative outcomes that either have significant value or provide opportunity for learning and improvement of delivery should be included. | Excluding negative outcomes could risk overclaiming the total value and miss opportunities for transparency (Principle 6) and organisational learning to improve practices (Principle 8). Although some are low in value, they could all be significantly undervalued according to Horowitz and McConnell (2002) (table 4a - the difference between a negative unit change in anything and its positive opposite change of the same unit is on average 7 times larger or at least 10 times larger for public or non-market goods). |

Therefore, all outcomes were judged material.

### 7.2 Most Important Outcomes

When the combined quantity, value and causality of the outcomes was calculated, the total value to participants of each outcome can be derived for the annual model the scope aimed to show (an annual investment and annual social return for an ongoing intervention).

The Total Value is the number of young people that experienced the outcome (Quantity) times the relative importance that young people placed on each outcome (Unit value in monetary terms) times the amount of the outcome judged to be down to Youth Zones (Causality).

$$\text{Quantity} \times \text{Unit Value} \times \text{Causality} = \text{Total Value}$$

In order of total value, the most important outcomes in terms of value to young people were as follows:

| Outcome  | Quantity | Unit Value | Causality | Total Value         |
|--|----------|------------|-----------|---------------------|
| At Youth Zone I am free to have fun  | 36,918   | £3,119     | 50%       | £57,925,497         |
| I feel safer at Youth Zone than other places I can go in my spare time     | 32,183   | £3,119     | 51%       | £50,779,624         |
| My self-confidence is better through coming to a Youth Zone                | 38,397   | £2,480     | 45%       | £43,172,811         |
| It is easier to really be myself at Youth Zone                             | 30,259   | £2,697     | 48%       | £38,969,547         |
| I am less lonely through coming to a Youth Zone                            | 29,519   | £2,818     | 47%       | £38,898,425         |
| Through coming to a Youth Zone my confidence around other people is better | 31,887   | £2,519     | 46%       | £37,093,740         |
| At Youth Zone I discovered who I really am                                 | 23,748   | £2,676     | 47%       | £29,563,309         |
| My self-confidence is worse through coming to a Youth Zone                 | 1,775    | -£606      | 24%       | -£262,330           |
| Youth Zone discouraged me from finding who I really am                     | 1,405    | -£908      | 22%       | -£283,830           |
| I feel bullied at Youth Zone   | 1,183    | -£1,410    | 30%       | -£508,122           |
| I can't be myself at Youth Zone  | 1,479    | -£1,347    | 29%       | -£582,757           |
| I am more lonely through coming to a Youth Zone                            | 1,257    | -£1,793    | 33%       | -£754,078           |
| Through coming to a Youth Zone my confidence around other people is worse  | 2,515    | -£1,015    | 30%       | -£768,710           |
| At Youth Zone I am not free to have fun                                    | 961      | -£2,015    | 48%       | -£919,960           |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>   |          |            |           | <b>£292,323,167</b> |

Whilst a few outcomes fall in a tight bracket from £37M - £39M, the top three are in a clear order: **in terms of most important outcomes to young people shown by this research, Youth Zones make young people feel free, safe and confident.**

## 8. Social Return

Finally, if all the value analysed is compared with the investment and inputs required to create the value, a ratio of return can be calculated. The SROI calculation is a simple one at the end of the process: the ratio is the total value divided by the total investment. However, to do this confidently, both the total value and the total investment figures should be consistent in rigour, period they cover and completeness.

The inputs for this analysis are further discussed in the sensitivity analysis.

For total costs of £21M for April 2023 to March 2024, Youth Zones created £292M of social value. In other words, for every £1 of costs there was a return of over £13 of social value in terms of young people's wellbeing.

## 9. Future Value

Future value acknowledges that the social value of outcomes will change over time. Duration refers to how long (typically in years) the outcomes will persist after a young person's engagement with a Youth Zone in 2023. The extent of these outcomes is expected to diminish over time due to the influence of other factors, resulting in lower attribution to the Youth Zones. To account for this, drop-off is calculated for outcomes lasting more than one year (Social Value UK, 2019, p. 61), which applies to the 14 outcomes in this study.

Duration was assessed with a higher level of rigour, as it was directly addressed in the survey. However, for drop-off, a more simplified approach was employed, relying on professional judgements to complement the duration and qualitative data, which introduces a risk to the analysis.

## 10. Sensitivity Analysis

As emphasised throughout this report, the SROI analysis was developed using a combination of desktop data analysis, stakeholder engagement, subjective indicators, and a series of professional judgments. It is crucial to evaluate the extent to which the results might change if certain assumptions made in earlier stages were adjusted, and this is where sensitivity analysis comes into play. It's through altering these factors we get an estimate of within what range we expect the SROI to fall.

The following reflect on the results of the sensitivity analysis and provide further details on the factors that were tested.

### 10.2 Altering factors

The first part of this sensitivity analysis involved altering various factors with e.g. certain percentage change, to assess their impact on the final SROI ratio. The findings are

presented in the table below. Initially, each factor relevant to outcomes was tested individually. The per outcome analysis revealed that no single factor, when adjusted in isolation, had a significant impact on the SROI ratio. Consequently, the table in 8.4 reflects the results of the sensitivity analysis when a factor was simultaneously adjusted for all outcomes.

## 10.3 Scenarios

Following that, a number of scenarios that have been picked up as relevant during the analysis were investigated to understand how they would affect the final SROI ratio.

### 10.3.1 Young people time and cost

In the present model, time dedicated by young people has not been included as an input, which does pose an impact risk and risk of overclaiming. To address this, we can test for how including estimates of the value of young people's time would affect the model and SROI ratio.

However, keeping in mind that most of the young people attending Youth Zones would not be working due to age, availability of jobs and the expectation to be in school rather than in work, in this scenario, we assign a theoretical monetary value to acknowledge that it has value to them.

Using an opportunity cost valuation, we make a rough estimate that the 50,975 young people on average attend 1.5 hours a week and that the value of their time is £5.28 (UK Government, 2024).

There is also an annual membership (of £5) and per visit entrance fee (of 50p) for most Youth Zones, which when included in the estimate gives us the number below. However, we're noting that it is possible, and perhaps likely, that this full cost may be paid by parents and carer rather than the young people. So the estimate below, is for both the assumption behind the opportunity cost valuation and this, likely to be higher than the actual input by the young people themselves.

Input young people with this estimate: £21,433,615.

### 10.3.2 Depreciation of buildings

Using running costs for the Youth Zones themselves as the only input, neglects the fact that wear and tear is likely to affect the buildings and equipment as well.

After consultation with the OnSide team on a previous estimation, they provided an average annual estimate for the depreciation of the 14 buildings in this study.

Input depreciation of buildings: £1,680,000

Please note, this is only the annual depreciation of the buildings itself and does not include the equipment.

### 10.3.3 Negative outcomes

The method used in this study assumes the value of the outcomes are the same for all outcomes, regardless of if they are negative or positive in direction, which is in line with common practice in SROI and the Green Book Guidance recommendations. But there's also behavioural economics literature that suggests that losses are often valued higher than equivalent gains in HM Treasury's Green Book supplementary guidance: wellbeing (UK Government, 2021). This effect is also shown in a review between willingness to accept (WTA) and willingness to pay (WTP) studies, which helps us understand how big the difference in value between a positive and negative outcome can be. Comparing WTA and WTP studies, shows that the difference can be as high as 10 times larger and the review does calculate that for health and safety there is a mean WTA/WTP ratio of 10.06 (Horowitz & McConnell, 2000, p. 27). In this sensitivity analysis, it has been tested what effect a 10 times higher value for negative outcomes have.

### 10.3.4 Risk of overlap between outcomes

In 5.2.1 Outcome chains, we provided a detailed overview of how the outcomes found in the qualitative research were analysed and summarised for the survey. Significant efforts were made to stay true to the stakeholders' own words and reduce risk of double-counting and overstating impact, nonetheless, it is still possible that some of the survey respondents didn't distinguish the difference between the outcomes in the same way as the young people interviewed. For this reason scenarios with four outcomes where the wording has a larger risk to be misinterpreted in a way that would risk double-counting, have been tested for sensitivity.

|  | Outcomes tested for overlap  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  | Risk of double-counting  | Compared to   |
| a) Social self-confidence reduction by 50%       | Through coming to a Youth Zone my confidence around other people is better | My self-confidence is better through coming to a Youth Zone |
| b) Worse social self-confidence reduction by 50% | Through coming to a Youth Zone my confidence around other people is worse  | My self-confidence is worse through coming to a Youth Zone  |
| c) Easier to be myself reduction by 50%          | At Youth Zone I discovered who I really am                                 | It is easier to really be myself at Youth Zone              |
| d) Can't be myself reduction by 50%              | Youth Zone discouraged me from finding who I really am                     | I can't be myself at Youth Zone                             |

A 50% by reduction above refers to a 50% decrease in the number of people who reported experiencing an outcome that may already be included in the outcome chain for the outcome to the right.

### 10.3.5 Alternative valuations for anchor value

The relative values in this analysis are from primary data – they come directly from service users' responses to the survey – giving a high degree of confidence in the order of outcomes and the wellbeing valuation was created specifically for this stakeholder group.



Nonetheless, converting these relative values into monetary values could also have been done with alternative values through secondary research. Other potential values were investigated and applied to the model in this analysis to see if materially different results could be achieved; and so, test the sensitivity of this judgement.

For consistent comparison, values investigated in this sensitivity analysis use the same monetary valuation technique: Wellbeing valuation and/or a WELLBY (Frijters, Krekel, Sanchis & Santini, 2024).

|           | <b>Outcome</b>   | <b>Source</b>  |   | <b>Valuation</b> |
|-----------|--|--|---|------------------|
| a) OnSide | Self-confidence  | OnSide   | BASELINE                                  | £7,164           |
| b) OnSide | Self-confidence  | OnSide   | END                                       | £9,450           |
| c) USoc   | Self-confidence  | USoc   | USoc Youth                                | £9,516           |
| d) OSVB   | Self-esteem  | OSVB   | USoc Youth (Open Social Value Bank, 2024) | £9,490           |
| e) HACT   | Confidence (youth)   | HACT   | GVE (Global Value Exchange)               | £9,283           |
| f) GVE    | Confidence in young people                                     | Improved confidence, from improved confidence cost (not wellbeing valuation)       | GVE (Global Value Exchange)               | £215             |
| g) GVE    | Motivation and confidence to take decision to develop business | Cost of Assertiveness and Self-Confidence Training (in-house), by Social Value Lab | GVE (Global Value Exchange)               | £1,556           |

Wellbeing valuation is the valuation method we believe provides the highest level of rigour. Nonetheless, we do want to highlight that if another technique such as below was used, the SROI ratio significantly reduces. For transparency included in the table below, however, not in the sensitivity analysis itself.

|        | <b>Outcome</b>   | <b>Source</b>  |                             | <b>Valuation</b> | <b>New SROI ratio</b> |
|--------|--|--|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| f) GVE | Confidence in young people                                     | Improved confidence, from improved confidence cost (not wellbeing valuation)       | GVE (Global Value Exchange) | £215             | 0.41                  |
| g) GVE | Motivation and confidence to take decision to develop business | Cost of Assertiveness and Self-Confidence Training (in-house), by Social Value Lab | GVE (Global Value Exchange) | £1,556           | 2.97                  |

## 10.4 Table

Table Sensitivity analysis

| Factor changed  | SROI ratio | New SROI ratio | Difference |
|---|------------|----------------|------------|
| <i>Estimates of deadweight, attribution and drop-off</i>      |            |                |            |
| Deadweight and attribution - increase by 10%                  | 13.68      | 11.83          | -1.85      |
| Deadweight and attribution - decrease by 10%                  | 13.68      | 15.52          | 1.84       |
| Deadweight and attribution - increase by 20%                  | 13.68      | 9.99           | -3.69      |
| Deadweight and attribution - decrease by 20%                  | 13.68      | 17.37          | 3.69       |
| Displacement - increase by 10%                                | 13.68      | 11.57          | -2.11      |
| Displacement - decrease by 10%                                | 13.68      | 15.78          | 2.10       |
| Displacement - increase by 20%                                | 13.68      | 9.47           | -4.21      |
| Displacement - decrease by 20%                                | 13.68      | 17.89          | 4.21       |
| Drop off – 100% (only year 1), i.e. 0 in drop off cell        | 13.68      | 13.68          | 0.00       |
| <i>Financial proxies</i>                                      |            |                |            |
| Anchoring value – increase by 10%                             | 13.68      | 15.05          | 1.37       |
| Anchoring value – decrease 10%                                | 13.68      | 12.31          | -1.37      |
| Anchoring value – increase by 20%                             | 13.68      | 16.41          | 2.73       |
| Anchoring value – decrease 20%                                | 13.68      | 10.94          | -2.74      |
| Negative outcomes – scenario 3 increase by 1000%              | 13.68      | 11.96          | -1.72      |
| Alternative valuation – scenario 5 b) OnSide                  | 13.68      | 18.04          | 4.36       |
| Alternative valuation – scenario 5 c) Usoc                    | 13.68      | 18.17          | 4.49       |
| Alternative valuation – scenario 5 d) OSVB                    | 13.68      | 18.12          | 4.44       |
| Alternative valuation – scenario 5 e) HACT                    | 13.68      | 17.73          | 4.05       |
| <i>The quantity of the outcome</i>                            |            |                |            |
| Increase number of young people by 10 %                       | 13.68      | 15.05          | 1.37       |
| Decrease number of young people by 10 %                       | 13.68      | 12.31          | -1.37      |
| Increase number of young people by 20 %                       | 13.68      | 16.41          | 2.73       |
| Decrease number of young people by 20 %                       | 13.68      | 10.94          | -2.74      |
| Risk of overlapping – scenario 4 a)                           | 13.68      | 12.81          | -0.87      |
| Risk of overlapping – scenario 4 b)                           | 13.68      | 13.70          | 0.02       |
| Risk of overlapping – scenario 4 c)                           | 13.68      | 12.99          | -0.69      |
| Risk of overlapping – scenario 4 d)                           | 13.68      | 13.69          | 0.01       |
| <i>The value of inputs, where valued non-financial inputs</i> |            |                |            |
| Input – Local Authorities, etc. increase by 10%               | 13.68      | 12.46          | -1.22      |
| Input – Local Authorities, etc. increase by 20%               | 13.68      | 11.43          | -2.25      |
| Input – Volunteers increase by 10%                            | 13.68      | 13.65          | -0.03      |
| Input – Volunteers decrease by 10%                            | 13.68      | 13.70          | 0.02       |
| Input – Volunteers increase by 20%                            | 13.68      | 13.63          | -0.05      |
| Input – Volunteers decrease by 20%                            | 13.68      | 13.73          | 0.05       |
| Input – scenario 1 young people                               | 13.68      | 6.83           | -6.85      |
| Input – scenario 2 deprivation of buildings                   | 13.68      | 12.68          | -1.00      |

## 10.4 Summary

According to the sensitivity analysis the largest risk to the model lay within the decision to exclude the young people's input. However, it should be noted that the estimate used for testing this is a very ambitious one where all the Youth Zone attendees were working and earning money (instead of attending) and paid their entrance fees themselves. This is in reality unlikely to be the case for all, so its effect on the final SROI ratio is expected to be smaller than what our analysis showed. The other input factors were not sensitive.

The anchoring value is, as expected, having a significant effect on the overall SROI ratio. But to avoid overclaiming the value used in the analysis itself is the smaller of the options available which reduces this risk.

Large changes to deadweight and attribution and displacement does affect the model. Drop off doesn't affect the SROI ratio as it's not including future value. In addition, when drop off was tested for changes to the SROI ratio with future value included, the factor didn't show sensitivity. Through further stakeholder engagement, confidence in the assumptions behind displacement could be improved in future studies, albeit, it's not where the model is most sensitive.

Testing for reduced quantity of outcomes where there was a risk of overlapping (scenario 4), showed that these factors were not sensitive in this model. This increases the confidence in the results as the risk that is associated with this, is unlikely to have a large effect on the end result presented.

To conclude, the sensitivity analysis shows a full SROI range of **£1: £6.8- 18.2**. The wide range indicates that there are sensitive factors in our analysis, and this provides a limitation of the report and a risk. It is therefore a recommendation for any future analyses to focus on achieving higher rigour for the identified sensitive factors. This will help increase confidence in the SROI ratio.

## 11. Conclusions

The OnSide Youth Zones create a positive social impact and generate value for those who use them that go far beyond the financial investment made in their running. As a place where young people go to feel free to have fun, to feel safe and to feel confident in themselves the Youth Zones make a significant positive difference to those young people.

In this study we've focused on the social value created for young people as the main stakeholder group that the Youth Zones affect and it's only this value that is being reported through this report. However it is highly likely that a significant amount of other positive value is generated for the local community and other stakeholders as highlighted by the literature review.

The OnSide Youth Zones create an overwhelmingly positive impact as can be seen in this table that describes the total value of each outcome, in order of priority to young people:

| Outcome  | Quantity | Unit Value | Causality | Total Value         |
|--|----------|------------|-----------|---------------------|
| At Youth Zone I am free to have fun  | 36,918   | £3,119     | 50%       | £57,925,497         |
| I feel safer at Youth Zone than other places I can go in my spare time     | 32,183   | £3,119     | 51%       | £50,779,624         |
| My self-confidence is better through coming to a Youth Zone                | 38,397   | £2,480     | 45%       | £43,172,811         |
| It is easier to really be myself at Youth Zone                             | 30,259   | £2,697     | 48%       | £38,969,547         |
| I am less lonely through coming to a Youth Zone                            | 29,519   | £2,818     | 47%       | £38,898,425         |
| Through coming to a Youth Zone my confidence around other people is better | 31,887   | £2,519     | 46%       | £37,093,740         |
| At Youth Zone I discovered who I really am                                 | 23,748   | £2,676     | 47%       | £29,563,309         |
| My self-confidence is worse through coming to a Youth Zone                 | 1,775    | -£606      | 24%       | -£262,330           |
| Youth Zone discouraged me from finding who I really am                     | 1,405    | -£908      | 22%       | -£283,830           |
| I feel bullied at Youth Zone   | 1,183    | -£1,410    | 30%       | -£508,122           |
| I can't be myself at Youth Zone  | 1,479    | -£1,347    | 29%       | -£582,757           |
| I am more lonely through coming to a Youth Zone                            | 1,257    | -£1,793    | 33%       | -£754,078           |
| Through coming to a Youth Zone my confidence around other people is worse  | 2,515    | -£1,015    | 30%       | -£768,710           |
| At Youth Zone I am not free to have fun                                    | 961      | -£2,015    | 48%       | -£919,960           |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>   |          |            |           | <b>£292,323,167</b> |

However, as in any SROI, it should be noted that there are also stakeholders that are experiencing negative change. Although to a much smaller degree than the positive change there are young people that experience negative changes. It is therefore a recommendation of this report to:

- a) Use this as feedback for the OnSide teams to examine how to improve practices and spot these situations and individuals in order to support them
- b) Conduct a future social value analysis to dive deeper into sub-groups to help guide the OnSide team in what the characteristics of these potential sub-groups might be and target more specifically anyone affected by negative changes

As authors of this report we are delighted to highlight the substantial positive impact that the Youth Zones have made on the lives of young people. We hope that the Youth Zones will continue to foster positive development for years to come and we look forward to seeing how OnSide evolve and prosper in their mission to empower young people to lead positive, fulfilling lives.



## 12. Verification

The research team worked closely with a steering group of OnSide delivery and management staff to challenge and verify the findings at each step of the SROI process.

The report has also successfully gone through an external assurance process. Social Value International certifies that the report satisfies the requirements of the assurance process with the limitation of it has restricted scope which limits the analysis to the intended beneficiary group.

A copy of the Assurance Certificate is available on page 3 of this report.

## 13. Recommendations

For the OnSide team:

- **Acknowledge positive impact**  
Celebrate and recognise the large positive impact and value that is being created for young people through the Youth Zones
- **Create targeted strategies to tackle negative outcomes**  
Take on board feedback relating to the negative outcomes to further improve and minimise those areas where some young people are experiencing negatives as a result of attending the Youth Zones

For future social value studies:

- Consider including additional stakeholder groups  
It's a recommendation that future SROI analyses re-assess the rationale for excluding some stakeholders that may have experienced outcomes affecting their wellbeing, such as families, staff and volunteers.
- **Further explore sub-groups, in particular relating to the negative outcomes**  
In this study no material sub-groups were found from the About You criteria in the survey, but to further help OnSide team tackle the negative outcomes that this study couldn't attribute to any specific sub-group, it is a recommendation to further explore if there are differences between different users' experience. This information should help the teams better minimise the negative outcomes that were picked up by this study.
- **Consult an Advisory Group of Young People**  
There was an intention to for this project to consult an Advisory Group of young people that attend Youth Zones to dive into the language of the outcomes, assumptions and the results of the study. In practice the timings of when this group (that already exists within OnSide) meets and the report deadlines didn't align. We still believe that it would be a good idea to revisit this if a future report is ever commissioned as it helps bring even further credibility to the report itself and how it represents the stakeholders' experiences.



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## Annex B: Value Map

Appended separately.

## Annex C: Outcomes Consultation Questions (Qualitative)

The following questions were used as a guideline for the interviews with young people. At all times the interviewer was led by the young person's level of comfort and adapted the suggested language where necessary. The first question was used to support the interviewee to settle into the conversation.

In addition the interviewer started each conversation by reiterating that the interview was entirely voluntary and that the young person could always choose not to answer a question.

1. What do you do when you come to the Youth Zone? What do you like about coming here?
2. What has changed for you since you started coming here?
3. (Explore further) What is different now because of your time at the Youth Zone?
  - o Do you **do** anything differently now?
  - o Do you **feel** differently now?
4. Can we talk a bit about which changes happened first? (Did A happen before or after B? What happened next?)
5. Have you experienced any changes that were bad for you? (Use further prompts if needed eg. Has anything negative or unexpected happened to you?)

6. I've made some notes of the changes we have talked about so far, but just to make sure I have got them right could you tell me again about your most important changes?
  - o What order would you put them in?
  - o If the interviewee is comfortable - how much more important is A than B?
7. Did anyone else help you make these changes apart from the team at OnSide?
8. Where do you think you would be/what would you be doing now if you didn't come to the Youth Zone? Do you think you could experience some of the changes we've discussed if you were doing something else?
9. Where do you think you'll be a year from now? How will some of the changes we've talked about grow or develop further? Do you think any of the changes will 'stop' or fade away in the future?

## Annex D: Data Collection Survey (Quantitative)

Appended separately.

## Annex E: SROI Basic Propositions & Monetary Valuation

*What is a cynic? A man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.*

**Oscar Wilde**

Most organisations have a pretty good idea of the costs of what they do. Annual accounts, management accounts, budget reports and a whole accountancy profession add up to a great deal of effort to make sure this is the case. Some organisations are quite good at counting what they do with these resources. They can track the number of users or contacts, or customers. Many can provide some evidence that these activities lead to some sort of change. But few can explain clearly why all this matters. What would happen if they did not exist? What is the real value of what they do? Social Return on Investment (SROI) sets out to redress the balance by looking at value not just cost. "SROI aims to increase social equality, environmental sustainability and wellbeing."(Social Value UK).

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a framework for measuring and accounting for change and this much broader concept of value.

Things that have monetary value or that are presented in monetary terms, for the most part, are the only type of value that is measured and accounted for. This includes the profit or loss/costs of delivering products and activities, the salary and tax contributions from a job, or GDP for a nation. These become definitions of success – money talks. As a result, these things with financial value take on a greater significance and many important things get left out and do not get considered equally when we make decisions. Decisions made like this are not as good as they could be as they are based on incomplete information about the combined importance of economic, social and environmental changes.

To put social changes on this more level playing field, we have translated them in to monetary values so they can be accounted for together with anything else with a monetary value, equally.

### *1.1 Confidence in Precision or Principles?*

But just because we have translated changes in people's lives in to monetary values, does not make these numbers absolute, objective or more scientific than qualitative stories about change. And indeed the numbers in this report are far from precise. Like many figures in financial accounts and economics that we use for decisions, the figures in this report are good enough indications of value to use in making decisions – but not absolute, objective or precise.

We must be careful not to conclude from this report that we can reduce something like a person's dignity to a number; but at the same time, a person's dignity should count for something and needs to be counted. So please understand how the numbers in this report represent real people who have told us about the changes in their lives and how important the changes are to them. This importance is represented in this report partly by a translation in to numbers about value.

Oxfam's report on the [Inequality Virus](#) shows how important it is right now to be addressing inequalities and measuring our impact – the first step it recommends is to value what matters (Oxfam International, 2021).

SROI is a principles based framework for accounting for social value. It aims to reduce inequalities by including the value of changes in people's lives in to our decision-making management information by presenting them in numbers to go alongside our other numbers that we use when making decisions (Social Value UK, 2018). This then is more of a principle to produce these numbers that represent the lived experience of people in our accounts and management information, than an imperative to get the numbers precisely right.

The principles are based around [accountability and improvement](#) for stakeholders (Social Value International, 2017). That it so say the things we measure must be:

- o the changes in the lived experience of those we have impact on, described by them; and valued by them from their perspective (what is it worth to them); in order to

- o include what's important to them in the numbers we use to make decisions; and, therefore improve activities to create more of (or maximise) those things that are important to them.

Confidence and assurance in the numbers in this report should come from these principles: that the numbers represent beneficiaries' stories. Confidence in using these numbers should not come from the precise figures (Social Value UK Assurance Process).

### *1.2 A Social Return on an Investment*

It is possible to say if we have the monetary valuation of changes in people's lives, that for every £ invested in an activity, there is a social return of £x or the total social value created is £y. But what does this mean if we do that? Does a figure for the total social value tell us about the lived experience of those we impact on? Does it actually drive improvements in service provision?

It can be useful if we follow the principles above about accountability and improvement.

Firstly, it can provide a single metric or index as baseline for the value we are creating. If we aim to improve, then measuring this shows us how we are improving and maximising value over time against this relative baseline.

Secondly, if we are using everything in this report for its primary purpose of increasing accountability and maximising value, then how can it be wrong to use this powerful investment analogy of a return (in monetary terms) to promote and sustain the activities and organisations that maximise value – or do 'more good'? But, beware of this second use of attractive figures without the first primary purpose for these numbers. To repeat, the primary purpose of these numbers, it is not about external audiences and promotion, but internal accountability and improvement.