



YOU LONDON ANNUAL REPORT 2023

11 December 2023

INTRODUCTION

1. [YOU London](#) is a partnership of twelve Youth Organisations in Uniform (YOU) working together to maximise opportunities for young people in London. The main partners are the Army Cadet Force, Boys' Brigade, Combined Cadet Force, Fire Cadets, Girls' Brigade, Girlguiding, Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade, RAF Air Cadets, Sea Cadet Corps, Scouts, St. John Ambulance Cadets and Volunteer Police Cadets. At borough level, groups include the Little Flame cadets in Haringey, the British Transport Police cadets in Islington, and the Imps Motorcycle Display Team in Newham.



2. The strategic objectives are¹:
 - a. Achieving greater co-operation and collaboration between the YOU London organisations at regional and borough level.
 - b. Stakeholder engagement to raise awareness of the positive opportunities YOU London organisations provide for young people in London.
 - c. Supporting YOU London organisations to recruit and retain young people in London.
 - d. Supporting YOU London organisations to recruit and retain adult volunteers, without which the organisations cannot function, in London.
 - e. Seeking further collaboration opportunities to increase and enhance positive outcomes for young people in London.

VALUE ADDED

3. YOU London, which is a co-ordinating partnership and not another layer of organisation or bureaucracy, has as its mission: "One Voice, One Vision: the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Through collaboration, and the sharing of ideas, information and resources, adult instructors and facilities, YOU aims to help each organisation increase its individual impact.

¹ YOU London Strategy 2023-2025 dated 30 November 2022.

ENCOURAGING GREATER CO-OPERATION AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE TWELVE ORGANISATIONS AT REGIONAL AND BOROUGH LEVEL

4. Quarterly Development Workers meetings were held where each organisation could share ideas, good practice, and plan regional events. Guest speakers included representatives from:
 - a. The Sea Cadets – the My LegaSea project.
 - b. The Youth United Foundation – an update on national activity and projects.
 - c. The NCS – tailored residential opportunities for members of uniformed youth groups.
5. A database of contacts for each organisation by borough has been uploaded to a Google spreadsheet and shared with the Development Workers. To facilitate wider communication and collaboration, these details have also been made available to Representative Deputy Lieutenants, borough councils, and other supportive organisations.
6. The YOU Croydon giraffe provided a striking example of local collaboration. To celebrate being the London Borough of Culture for 2023, [Croydon Stands Tall art trail](#) had 60 fibreglass giraffes, decorated by local businesses and community organisations, placed throughout the borough from August to October. PC Rebecca Pitt (Croydon VPC) raised funds from the YOU Croydon organisations and the Council to purchase a giraffe. Patches were designed by young people at a Croydon Challenge event in June and then painstakingly recreated on the giraffe by PC Pitt. The Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for Greater London covered the costs of the paint, varnish and logo stickers.



The YOU Croydon giraffe was on display in the reception area of the main library in Croydon for two months. It was then used as part of the YOU London float at the Lord Mayor's Show.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT - RAISING AWARENESS OF THE OPPORTUNITIES THE TWELVE ORGANISATIONS PROVIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

7. Three publications were produced in 2023.
 - a. [May 2023 YOU London newsletter](#).
 - b. [December 2023 YOU London newsletter](#).
 - c. An [Arts and Culture Bulletin](#) which signposts access to free and heavily discounted tickets to Arts and Cultural venues in London for groups and young people.



8. The YOU London Co-ordinator represented the YOU London partner organisations on regional committees to raise awareness of the organisations and their recruitment and retention needs. Organisations included:
- The Lord-Lieutenant's Occupation Council.** Through this Council, YOU London has specifically raised awareness of the continual need for adult volunteers.
 - The Lord-Lieutenant's Cultural Heritage Council.** Through this Council, YOU London has produced the [Arts and Culture Bulletin](#).
 - The London Strategic Volunteering Group.** Through this group, which is creating opportunities for Londoners to volunteer, and businesses to support, the YOU London Co-ordinator has raised awareness of the YOU partner organisations and their continual need for adult volunteers and other support.
 - The Partnership for Young London (PYL).** PYL is undertaking a data gathering exercise to collate the views of Londoners aged 16-25 in order to develop a youth manifesto ahead of the 2024 London Mayoral elections. The YOU London Co-ordinator has distributed and promoted this survey and shared with the PYL the 2021 University of Northampton Social Impact report², the 2021 Sea Cadets My LegaSea report³, and the 2023 Boys' Brigade Youth Culture and Trends Insight report⁴.
9. The YOU London Co-ordinator has engaged regularly with the Greater London Lieutenancy, the Greater London Authority and the City of London Corporation to promote the YOU organisations, who they are, what they do and what they need.

SUPPORTING THE ORGANISATIONS TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN YOUNG PEOPLE

- Recruitment was supported mainly by the promotion of events via social media., An example was the Army Cadet Force open evening on 28 November, when all units across the capital were open to the public.
- Retention was supported by the events listed in the events section below, which were designed to inspire, interest and engage young people.
- Recognition was supported by the Deputy Lieutenant Certificate Scheme, which since 2018 has included all the YOU London organisations. In 2023, Representative Deputy Lieutenants recognised 170 young people. The breakdown per organisation was Army Cadet Force (33),

² 'What is the social impact and return on investment resulting from expenditure on the cadet forces in the UK?' University of Northampton, May 2021.

³ [Sea Cadets' My LegaSea report](#), January 2021.

⁴ <https://boys-brigade.org.uk/youth-culture-and-trends/>, Youthscape Centre for Research, 2023.

Boys' Brigade (1), Combined Cadet Force (6), Fire Cadets (4), RAF Air Cadets (35), Sea Cadet Corps (2), Scouts (12), St. John Ambulance Cadets (24) and Volunteer Police Cadets (53).



SUPPORTING THE ORGANISATIONS TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN ADULT VOLUNTEERS, ESSENTIAL FOR THEM TO FUNCTION AND FOR ANY EXPANSION

- 13. The importance of adult volunteers has been stressed in all stakeholder engagement for, without willing and dedicated adult volunteers, activities for young people cannot happen. A project in 2024 will involve YOU working with the GLA and the Borough Volunteer Centres to connect YOU London organisations to their local borough volunteer centre.
- 14. YOU London sought to assist the retention of adult volunteers by encouraging and supporting awards ceremonies to recognise and congratulate adult volunteers, by amplifying their messages on social media, and providing opportunities such as free tickets to events such as the Major General’s Review of Trooping the Colour and the Household Division’s Scarlet and Gold Christmas concert.



SEEKING FURTHER COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE AND ENHANCE POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN LONDON

- 15. The Development Workers meeting in December was held at [Pax Lodge](#), one of five World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts accommodation centres worldwide. When not in use by Girl Guides / Girl Scouts, other ‘mission similar’ youth organisations are able to book this hostel accommodation in north Camden and in easy reach of central London.

16. Nationally, the YOU London Co-ordinator has engaged with and facilitated opportunities for YOU West Midlands, Youth United Hertfordshire, Young Dragons Wales and most recently provided advice to stakeholders in Kent looking to establish YOU Kent.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL EVENTS

17. **Coronation Youth Enclosure - Saturday 6 May.** Over 280 young people from the Army Cadet Force, Boys' Brigade, Fire Cadets, Girls' Brigade, RAF Air Cadets, Sea Cadets and Volunteer Police Cadets watched the Coronation procession on The Mall from a designated enclosure at Admiralty Arch. They then led the public procession up The Mall and had a privileged position in front of Buckingham Palace for the Royal balcony appearance.



18. **Sea Cadet Coronation Review - Monday 8 May.** This event reinforced the concept of YOU when London Area Sea Cadets invited partner organisations to provide marching contingents. The Army Cadet Force, Fire Cadets, RAF Air Cadets, Scouts, St John Ambulance Cadets and Volunteer Police Cadets took part. The organisations which do not normally have access to large scale events appreciated the opportunity to participate and the good coverage on BBC London news.



19. **YOU London quiz final - Saturday 20 May.** The Boys' Brigade wrote and hosted this quiz to provide some fun between the organisations. Heats were held within each organisation, with their top two teams participating in a grand final held at the offices of the Greater London Reserve Forces' & Cadets' Association. The winners were Walton on the Naze Sea Cadets.



20. **Croydon Challenge - Sunday 4 June.** Ninety young people from six organisations – the Army Cadet Force, Fire Cadets, Girlguiding, Scouts, Sea Cadets, Volunteer Police Cadets - took part in this annual challenge hosted by Royal Russell School CCF. The participants were split into mixed syndicates to complete a number of stands run by each participating organisation. The Mayor of Croydon, Cllr Tony Pearson, and local MP, Sarah Jones, visited this example of YOU 'best practice' at borough level.



21. **Trooping the Colour Youth Enclosures - The Colonel's Review Saturday 10 June and The King's Birthday Parade Saturday 17 June.**

The dedicated youth enclosures, which stretched along the edge of St James's Park from the corner of The Mall to Horse Guards Parade, contained 370 young people on 10 June, and 500 on 17 June. Attendance was widened to YOU networks outside London and included 'YOU West Midlands,' 'Herts Youth United' and 'Young Dragons Wales'.





22. **YOU London Leadership Development Weekend - 30 September and 1 October.**



The annual weekend took place at the City of London School. Guest speakers included Ann Cable MBE DL, Chief Commissioner, St John Ambulance; Sir Kenneth Olisa OBE, Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London and Akeela Ahmed MBE, Chair cross-government Working Group on Anti-Muslim Hatred.

Activity stands were run by the City of London School CCF, Army Youth Outreach Team, LFB Fire Cadets, MPS Volunteer Police Cadets, RAF Air Cadets, Royal Navy Attract Team, Rheinmetall BAE Systems Land (RBSL), and St John Ambulance.

Representative Deputy Lieutenants were invited to visit the weekend to witness YOU London in action and the following attended: Brent, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hillingdon, Haringey, Islington, and Kensington and Chelsea.



23. **The Lord Mayor's Show - Saturday 11 November.** The Lord Mayor's Show float, the best yet in terms of organisational mix, included young people from the Army Cadet Force, Boys' Brigade, Combined Cadet Force, Fire Cadets, Girls' Brigade, RAF Air Cadets, Scouts, Sea Cadets, St John Ambulance Cadets and Volunteer Police Cadets. Despite disappointing coverage by the BBC commentary, the young people thoroughly enjoyed interacting with the watching crowds and the event generated good publicity on social media.



SUMMARY

24. It has been another busy year for YOU London, bringing organisations together to share best practise and plan and deliver events. The Coronation weekend provided an opportunity to bring young people into the centre of the capital and enable them to feel part of the nation's celebrations. This sense of occasion and pride continued for those in the youth enclosures who attended Trooping the Colour and the second rehearsal the week before.
25. While the number of young people has remained stable overall, adult volunteer recruitment and retention remain the main issues post Covid. Some, however, such as the RAF Air Cadets, have seen increases in both volunteers and young people and all have young people starting to rise again through the ranks. The organisations are all back to pre-Covid levels of activity.
26. The desire of external organisations such as the Greater London Lieutenancy and Greater London Authority to raise awareness of the need for more adult volunteers coupled with an increase in investment by DCMS via the Youth United Foundation, bodes well for the future.

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Chair YOU London