

Action For Change – FAQs

What is Action For Change?

Action for Change is a 6 month project from the Young Harrow Foundation and Harrow Council, in collaboration with the Police, Harrow CCG, Safer Harrow and The Center For Youth Impact.

Action for Change will bring together communities, charities and the public sector to create a central vision and action plan for improving services for young people. This plan will be designed by local experts, informed by the needs of young people, and delivered in a way we can measure and track to prove our impact.

Action for Change will focus on the 5 Needs Areas identified in the This Is Harrow 2018 Report - Mental Health, Youth Violence, Employability, Inequalities and Physical Activity.

Who decides what goes in the plan?

Whoever participates in the workshops and engages in the process – **and that's why it so important for you to get involved.** We are inviting experts from statutory and non-statutory organisations and service providers, teachers, healthcare professionals, law enforcement, youth workers, community organisers and of course, young people themselves.

Why are you launching Action For Change now?

The 2018 This Is Harrow report, and the process that led to its publication, emphasised the clear value of better partnership working between organisations in the local children and young people's sector and showed us the potential of more collaborative approaches. Since the report launched, we've been finding new ways of working together and improving outcomes for young people through better multi-sector working.

We have trialled more place-based, bottom up community development and service design processes (see our [Grange Farm](#) and [Northwick Park](#) pilot projects). We have combined the delivery expertise of the VCSE sector with the strategic oversight of the Council to £100,000s in new funding for youth and gang violence projects. We continue to share data, insight, and experience to inform how we design and deliver better services for young people.

We now have a unique opportunity to change the way we work in Harrow to deliver services to young people. Harrow has many fantastic statutory and voluntary sector services aimed at young people, but these are often piecemeal, disjointed or lacking in a shared direction and theory of change. Our vision is to create a shared framework for impact that all organisations working with children and young people can contribute towards.

We are delivering services to young people and we know what they need - why will this project take 6 months?

We believe **Action For Change** is an opportunity for us to step back from our day to day roles, and think more collaboratively about the bigger picture in Harrow. This asks us to think differently about what services are needed and the best way to deliver them.

To do things differently, we have to start asking different questions – and be prepared for tough answers. We want **Action For Change** to produce answers that aren't just 'more of the same services'. To get to these conversations will take time. We have engaged the Center For Youth Impact to help us facilitate these conversations and create shared goals for us to work towards.

Theories of Change – what are these? It sounds like jargon!

A Theory of Change is often described as an expression of ‘how we believe change happens’. We’ve been talking about this project using the term, because we hope to develop a unique ‘Theory of Change’ for each of the 5 focus areas. A theory of change aims to look beyond the day to day paradigm of “what are we delivering, and how are we delivering it” and look deep at our underlying assumptions of what change is needed in our borough.

By taking a Theory of Change approach, we will be able to think more deeply about the underlying **causes and drivers** of need. This will help us define clearly where we can have the most impact by working together. By focussing our combined impact on key areas, we can maximise our impact and better monitor and track the work we are all doing together on a shared framework. This helps us design and deliver better services and attract new funding and resources into the borough.

The Center For Youth Impact are experts at facilitating the Co-Creation of Theories Of Change, and will be leading workshops in each of the three phases.

What is different about this process from others we’ve participated in?

This process isn’t a consultation, or a ‘listening’ exercise. It isn’t a way of gathering opinion to inform a planning process that will take place behind closed doors. This project aims to create immediate social action – hence the name – **Action for Change!** By building a shared plan for the borough, we will empower organisations of all kinds to understand their role and niche, and work better with each other to break down barriers to service delivery and improve the lives of young people.

We know this process of coming together, discussing, and sharing resources gets concrete, practical and impactful results from our ongoing pilot projects. There is a real interest from all parts of the sector to start doing things differently, and we have to capitalise on that momentum and use it to create something new.

How are young people involved?

We want our plan to be based on the lived experience of young people. This might mean that as service providers we have to hear some hard, and potentially uncomfortable, truths about our services. The YHF Change Champions are already working to gather a richer picture of the causes of need and barriers to accessing services that young people experience across the Needs Areas, and to start drawing out the factors which have an impact across all 5.

The workshops are designed for professionals / adults – however, young people will be involved in preparing, facilitating and participating in the workshops in various ways, and the YHF Change Champions will act as a vital check and balance on the plan as it develops.

How are the community and voluntary sector involved?

Charities, community groups, youth clubs and local services run on a voluntary basis are a vital parts of the process. We are inviting our membership to participate in all stages of the project.

How are local government and statutory bodies involved?

Harrow Council, Police, Harrow CCG and the Safer Harrow Partnership have all committed to engaging in the process and contributing across all 5 areas of need. We have commissioned a Strategic Group of public sector stakeholders to work on joining the dots between the 5 needs areas. Staff and managers from the public sector will be encouraged to participate and to use their networks to promote the overall process.