

...their place in church.

Headline findings of the St Albans Youth Ministry
Research Project

&

Suggestions for a renewed approach to youth work.



Faith in young people

THE
YOUTHSCAPE
CENTRE FOR
RESEARCH

Challenges and opportunities
for youth ministry in the
Diocese of St Albans



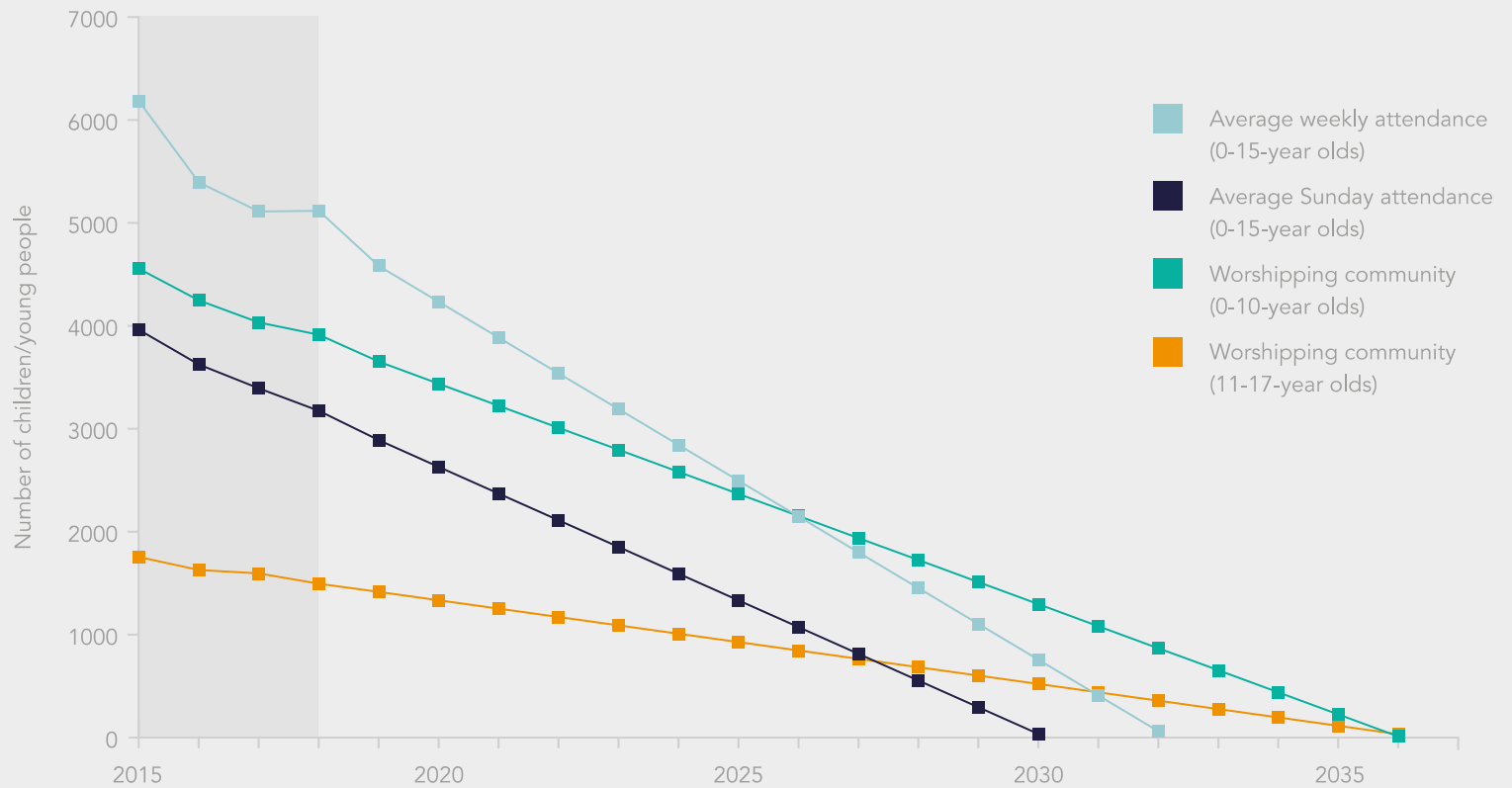
Young People?

“I think there’s two things that the young people are desperately hungry for; they’re hungry for spirituality and they’re hungry for relationships, and I think within the church we can give them both of those things. It’s just a question of how we do it.”

Youth Ministry?


“I’ve seen massive cultural shifts in my lifetime, and I feel unequipped to start building some of these bridges, because I feel culturally generations are so, so far apart.”



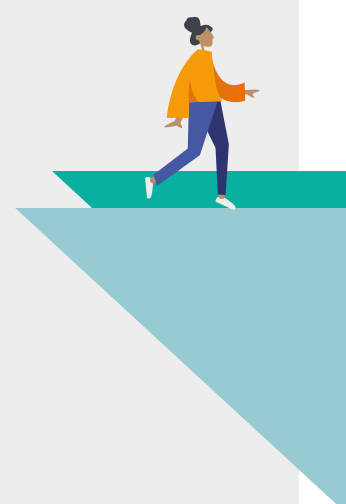


Projection of average change between 2015-2018





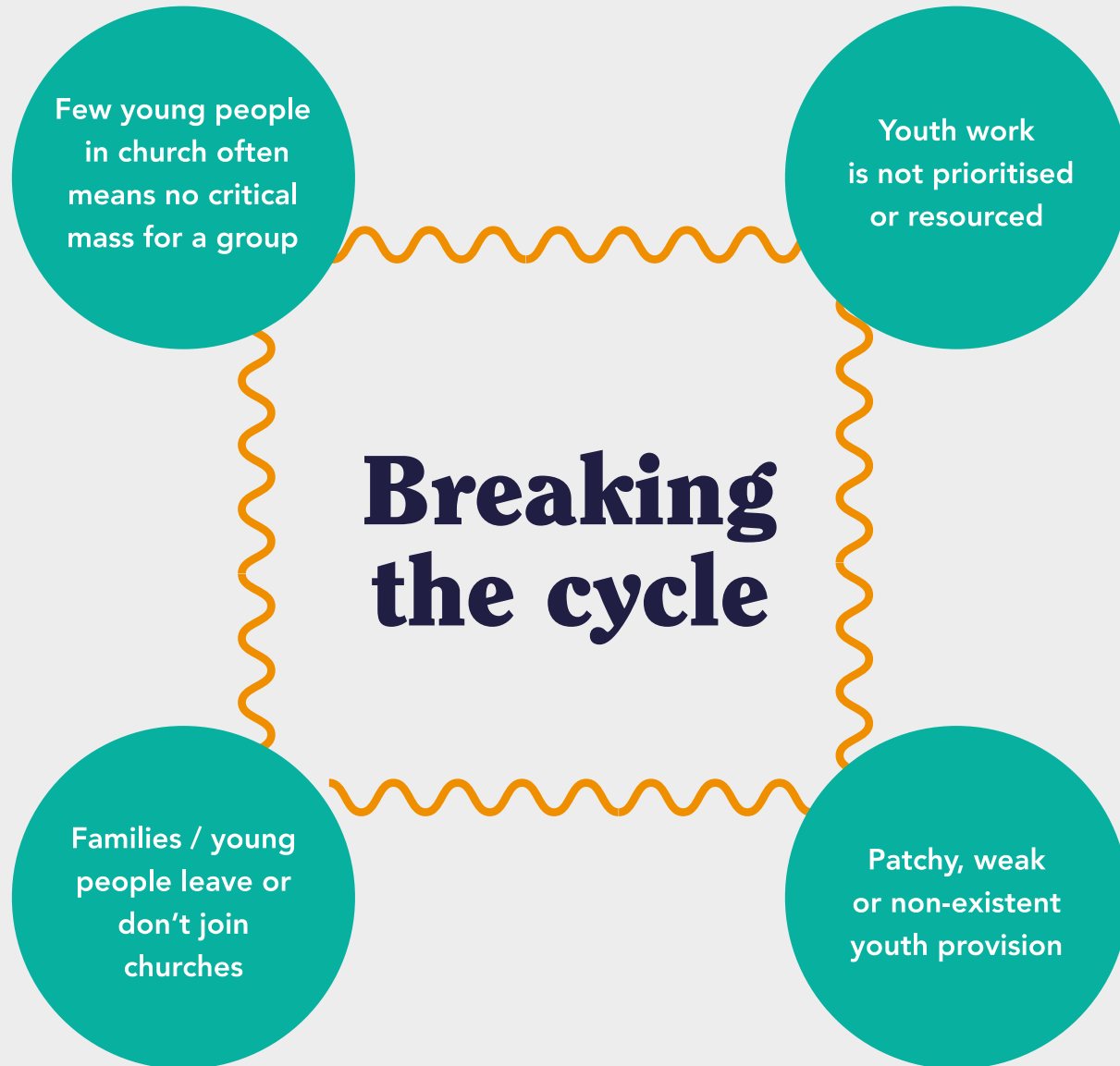
Our survey shows that churches/benefices are twice as likely to be providing activities for younger children than they are for older teenagers, with activity levels dropping the older they get.



Young children (0-6)	Older Children (7-10)	Young Teenagers (11-14)	Older Teenagers (15-17)
74%	84%	46%	31%



Percentage of churches/benefices providing at least one activity for different age groups






What does this mean?

1. There is an urgent need to focus on teenagers, as well as children
2. Context and culture has changed – and so must our approach
3. Reversing the cycle means prioritising young people, and investing in support for churches





Presence - Places - Pathways



“It’s all well and good setting something up, like a youth group, or whatever it is, but unless you think how that’s going to disciple them, how it’s going bring them on that path, if you just think of one event, or one thing, then it’s going to die flat, but if you think big picture, ‘How are we going to take them on this process of faith?’”

Where to begin?

Responding to the Faith in Young People report



Ask young people to contribute

We want to hear what young people think about their place in church, how they understand the decline in young people in church and what they would do to change things.

Download the attached sheet, with suggested questions for a conversation, then gather, call or reach out to young people to hear their thoughts, record the insights they give and send them into us.

Pray

These research findings come to us at a challenging time. Our support of young people during and after lockdown restrictions may be as challenging as it has ever been. Let's pray for young people, remembering the significant disruptions they have faced. A prayer for our young people and the Faith in Young People report.

Share

Why not send the report to your whole congregation and organise a time to discuss and respond together?

Set some time aside at a PCC meeting to review your youth provision.

Get in touch with the other churches close to you or in your Deanery. Partnerships will be crucial to renew our support of young people.

Suggestions to get started...

- Facilitate youth feedback
- Become a Youth Champion
- Record a 'youthwork story'

Partnerships and a new movement

Suggesting a new approach to youth provision.



**TARGETING
THE 1-5**



**BUILDING
ON OUR
FOUNDATIONS**

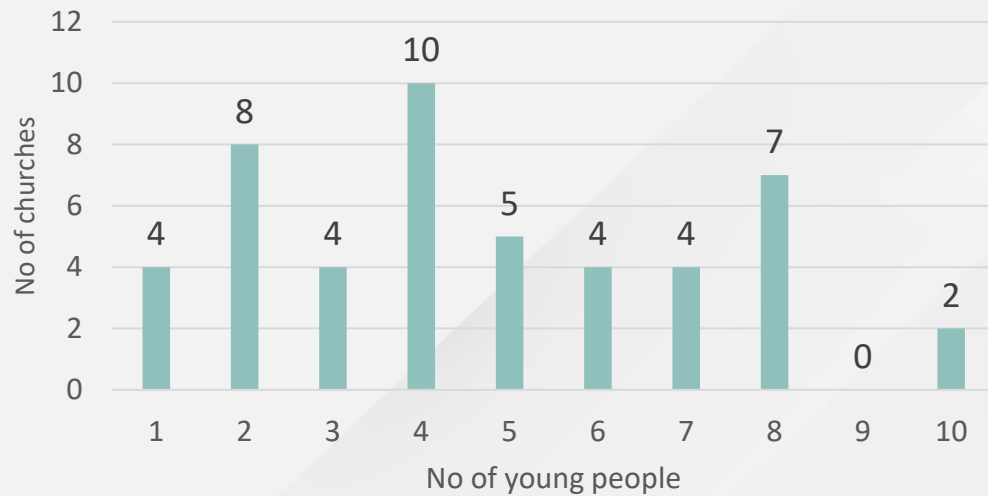


**SUPPORT FOR
THE WORK OF
VOLUNTARY
LEADERS**



**SHIFTING
CULTURE**

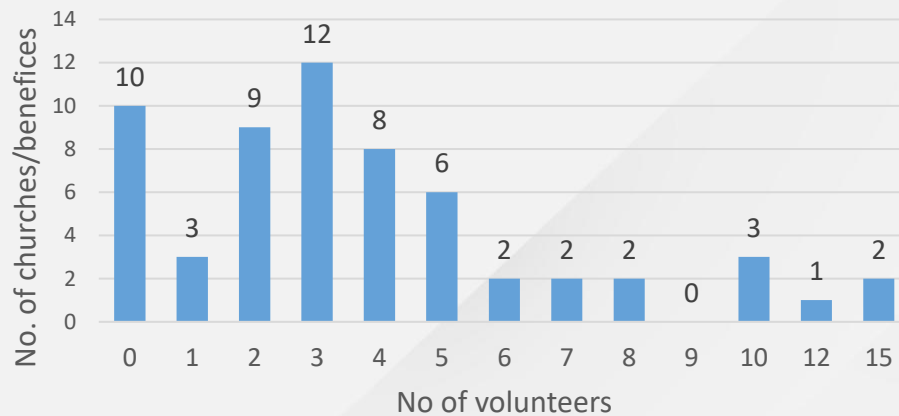
1-10 Young People



"28% of clergy perceived their churches to be fairly or very confident with engaging with young people in the community."



Distribution of volunteers across churches/benefices

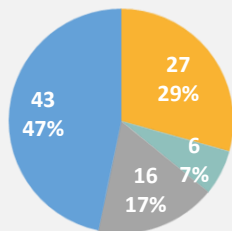


“Our biggest challenge is having people with a heart and commitment to work with young people. Those who have this enthusiasm are already busy and cannot give the time required to build anything that lasts.”



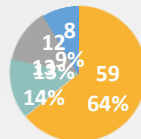
ENGAGEMENT WITH CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITY

■ No Children
 ■ 1-10 Children
 ■ 11-50 Children
 ■ 50+ Children



ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY

■ No Young People
 ■ 1-10 Young People
 ■ 11-50 Young People
 ■ 50+ Young People



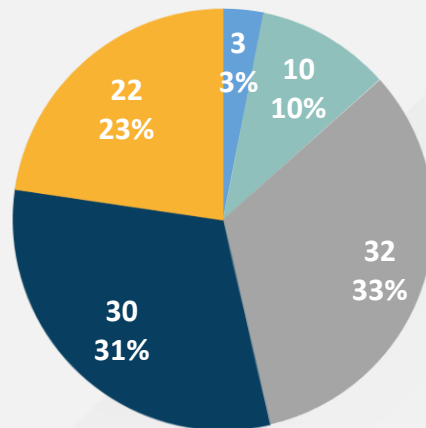
“There is much greater focus on work with children than young people across the Diocese. Without the development of youth provision many of these children are unlikely to stay connected to churches when they reach adolescence.”

**BUILDING
ON OUR
FOUNDATIONS**



FEELING HOPEFUL?

■ Definitely not ■ No ■ Somewhat ■ Yes ■ Yes, definitely



"It's not an area of work that I have engaged in and this church doesn't see it as a priority."

"I think our young people are a small miracle, because I feel like my church is often quite a hostile environment to young people"

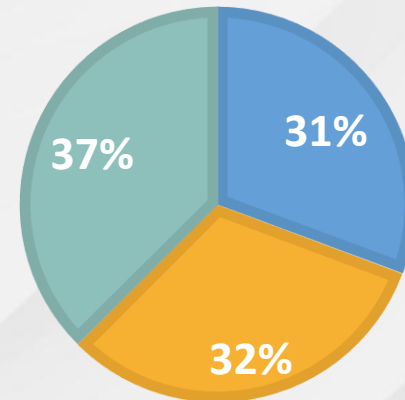
**SHIFTING
CULTURE**



“To strengthen youth ministry across the Diocese, participants emphasised the importance of **partnerships**, whole church ministry, openness to change, a need to look beyond Sunday attendance and renewed confidence in the power of the gospel.”

WHAT PRIORITY IS YOUTH WORK FOR YOU?

■ Low Priority (0-3) ■ Medium Priority (4-6) ■ High Priority (7-10)



DIOCESAN

Connect with digital equipping and events

DEANERY

Gather small group networks in key areas

PARISH

Discipleship in a small group model

“...I think waking us up to the fact that we’re actually in a mission situation like people were back in the First Century, we’re almost starting from scratch. And actually, that’s not a bad thing, it’s just a different thing.”



- *Weekly youth ministry newsletter for resources and events.*
- *Lay Leader of Youth and Children. New commissioned leadership role to recognise and equip those working in children, youth and families ministry.*
- *Essentials. Comprehensive training and 1-off sessions delivered locally to build confidence and skills for youthwork. For new youth leaders and teams.*
- *Reaching New People Grants (2022) - Apply to resource your youth provision.*
- *Youth Ideas Workshop (2022) - Equipping workshops and grants for youth led missional projects.*



Questions to consider:

As we emerge from the pandemic, what opportunities do you see for your church to welcome and support young people?

Could a partnership with other churches support youth ministry in your context?

What might help your congregations to grow their confidence for a whole church approach to youth engagement?