



Impetus



BLUEPRINT FOR THE

Library of Birmingham Youth Hub



About Impetus

Impetus transforms the lives of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds by ensuring they get the right support to succeed in school, in work and in life.

We find, fund and build the most promising charities working with these young people, providing core funding and working shoulder-to-shoulder with their leaders to help them become stronger organisations.

In partnership with other funders we help our charities expand and we work to influence policy and decision makers so that all young people get the support they need.

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[Impetus.org.uk](https://impetus.org.uk) | [Resurgo.org.uk](https://resurgo.org.uk)

About Resurgo

Resurgo means to 'rise up again'. We believe that everyone has a part to play in the transformation of society. If we each play our part, society will flourish.

We use our expertise in coaching and impact management to equip and empower businesses, charities, churches and individuals to transform society.

Through Resurgo Consulting, we deliver group coaching to teams, helping them to work together more effectively and define and deliver meaningful social change.

Through our employability programmes, Spear and Re-Work, we help church communities deliver life transforming services that equip those facing barriers to work with the skills and mindset to progress into employment.

Pictures are not of the young people quoted

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The process

This blueprint represents the outcome of a co-creation process designed and facilitated by Impetus and Resurgo, funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority. This consisted of a series of workshops held from May to July 2021.

We brought together the strategic partners for the Youth Hub – DWP (regional and central), West Midlands Combined Authority, Birmingham City Council and The Prince's Trust – for four days of workshops.

The key principles behind the workshop approaches were:

- **Co-designed:** Mix of senior leadership, front-line staff, and partners to ensure everyone was aligned towards a common vision and goal
- **Layered approach:** Each session built on the previous one, with stakeholders aligning in between workshops
- **Empathetic challenge:** Facilitators brought challenging questions, but answers came from participants

In terms of the content, the workshops covered all elements of the Youth Hub, from high level mission, through to specifics on programme and performance management. All elements are subject to continual improvement as the Youth Hub moves into implementation.

A further two workshops with young people provided a different perspective to challenge the group's thinking and inject new ideas. The young people were invited by the JobcentrePlus and the Young Combined Authority and their contribution has helped the partners develop this plan.

Between workshops, working groups on target population and programme design were convened by Tara Verrell (Birmingham Council) and Amanda Wood (The Prince's Trust) respectively, to deep dive into the issues.



Introduction

Youth Hubs are a new part of the Government's youth offer, aiming to deliver employment support services to young people in a different way. Co-located away from jobcentres and alongside other services, Youth Hubs present an opportunity for specialist youth and local organisations to join up services to support young people into employment.

The Library of Birmingham Youth Hub is a demonstrator site, aiming to show the wider network what good looks like when working with partners to get young people into work. To support this objective, a series of Theory of Change workshops were held in Summer 2021. Facilitated by Impetus and Resurgo, the objectives were to:

- Improve the quality of young people's outcomes in the Birmingham Youth Hub, by determining what good looks like and how to get there
- Improve the quality of young people's outcomes across the Youth Hub network, by building a blueprint for thriving Youth Hubs that make use of local assets e.g. local employers, specialist support services, CAs and LAs
- Trial a co-creation approach that could be used by DWP across the Youth Hub network as they continue to roll out.

This document summarises the results of these workshops and the co-creation process. The decisions made by the Library of Birmingham Youth Hub are captured and take up the bulk of this document but broader key lessons are also captured. Definitions used in this document include:

Youth Hub – this means the Youth Hub as a partnership rather than the location.

Provision – this is any form of delivery to support young people e.g. work coach, charity programme, work experience/ kickstart placement, a workshop or session.



Strategic partners – these are the organisations running the Youth Hub, who contribute the bulk of the manpower etc physically in the Youth Hub. Strategic partners may offer some provision, but also refer young people on to a wider range of provision. They will generally have staff present in the building.

Referral partners – these are organisations that the Youth Hub can refer young people to for provision, or who refer young people to the Youth Hub. The strategic partners may also be referral partners, when young people are referred to them. "Partners" generally means referral partners.



Key lessons from the co-creation process

1 LEADERSHIP

While partnership is a vital principle of Youth Hubs, clear leadership is required to bring partners together, drive implementation forward, make difficult decisions and ultimately hold accountability.

2 PARTNERSHIP

It is critical that core delivery partners are in the room when a Youth Hub theory of change and ways of working is being co-created, so stakeholders are fully aligned.

3 MIX OF SENIORITY

Having a mix of voices from senior directors through to work coaches ensured that the theory of change was grounded in both high level policy and reality on the ground. This is vital to ensure the Youth Hub's ways of working and plans work for everyone.

4 YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

The youth voice workshop was a critical step in the process, ensuring that the Youth Hub is designed with young people front of mind; this should continue when the Youth Hub is live.

5 COACHING

For the Youth Hub to succeed, young people will need to be engaged as adults, in an honest, strengths-based way to drive behaviour change.

6 CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

It became clear when talking to young people how fundamental these are to attracting and engaging young people, ensuring that it is not a 'job centre in a library'.

7 PERFORMANCE CULTURE

Youth Hubs will inevitably play an important role in the ecosystem by acting as a 'quality manager', understanding how partners are performing and having honest, respectful accountability conversations to drive improvements.

8 HUB STRUCTURE

It is difficult to make programme decisions without clarity on the resource available to the Youth Hub: how many coaches? From which partners? How much space?

9 FUNDING

Some critical elements of the Youth Hub will not be possible without funding: performance management, environment, learning and development for coaches.

Executive summary

If the Youth Hub (or indeed any organisation) is to be an impactful, high-performing organisation, this is something that must be worked on deliberately. Impact does not happen simply by hard work or good intentions. It requires thought.

Ultimately, that's what the theory of change process is about – it creates time and space for the team to think about and answer the essential and existential questions: What are we actually trying to do here? How are we going to do it? How will we know if we're succeeding?

Clarifying answers to these questions will form the foundations of a high-performing Youth Hub and the answers will be the Youth Hub's DNA.

- Discusses each of the five elements of theory of change in abstract
- Summarises the decisions made by the Library of Birmingham Youth Hub

Theory of change

1 MISSION: What is your social value?

A mission is a foundational statement, aligning all staff on what they are trying to achieve. A good mission answers three questions: who are you aiming to serve (target population)? What change do you want to bring about (outcomes)? How will you do this (programme)?

Youth Hub decision

It was agreed that the Birmingham Youth Hub mission should be:
The Birmingham Youth Hub is an active partnership. We find and engage unemployed young people in Birmingham and then connect them with personalised quality opportunities that enable them to overcome barriers and enter good, sustained employment or education.

Theory of change

2 TARGET POPULATION: Who do you exist to serve?

The target population is the people that an organisation is focused on serving. Who do you really want to help? Who will you help if necessary, but not explicitly aim to help? And who will you turn away?

Youth Hub decision

- 16 to 24-year-olds are the priority for the Youth Hub.
- 25 to 30-year-olds will be supported, but they will be a limited minority.
- Under 16s are excluded as they require different targeting and outcomes.
- Unemployed with 'amber' barriers - appetite for support and willing to engage, but more barriers than can be easily overcome at JCP.

- Discusses each of the five elements of theory of change in abstract
- Summarises the decisions made by the Library of Birmingham Youth Hub

Theory of change

3 OUTCOMES: What are the meaningful changes that you deliver?

Outcomes are the changes in the life of a young person driven by an organisation. They should be significant, enduring, measurable and linked to intentional efforts. Ultimately, outcomes are the basis for accountability.

Youth Hub decision

Four important decisions were agreed: Ultimately **success is reducing unemployment** so the aim is for young people to secure employment. This must be sustained employment – entry into a job is not sufficient, work should be sustained for ~six months. And it should be good employment, meeting some minimum criteria that define a sufficiently high-quality job. Education is also an outcome – completion of a relevant course is a step towards employment.

Theory of change

4 PROGRAMME DESIGN: What programme elements are critical to get those young people to outcomes?

The whole purpose of Youth Hubs is to connect young people to the range of provision that is available. The programme design reflects this and will be common across most Youth Hubs.

Youth Hub decision

The five stages of the programme are:

1. Find and engage target young people with a unique, best in class culture and welcoming environment
2. Assess needs with a trusting, strengths-based approach
3. Design pathway & connect to provision – personalised route to employment, with active support along the way
4. Provision delivered – by partners most likely to deliver outcomes and
5. Tracking EET entry & sustainment to inform programme and partnerships.

Theory of change

5 IMPACT MANAGEMENT: What is your measurement and accountability system?

It is only possible to determine whether the Youth Hub is successful if performance is measured. A system must be developed to track the needs and characteristics of young people who the Youth Hub is working with, and their outcomes, so that the Youth Hub can hold partners accountable.

Youth Hub decision

Designing and managing this system and drawing lessons from the data will require a data analyst. The Youth Hub will review the data after six months to determine whether to narrow or broaden the target population, in light of the economic situation and demand. Crucially, over time the Youth Hub gets a better understanding of which provision leads to the best outcomes and uses more of it, rather than relying on popularity, reputation, or programme completion measures.

Our mission

What is “mission”?

Mission is about what you’re trying to achieve overall. Every decision the Youth Hub makes should ultimately be to help deliver the mission – if it’s not helping you achieve your mission, why are you doing it? Bringing your mission into discussions is very grounding when you’re considering how to spend time or money – and it’s also motivating. The mission for the Library of Birmingham Youth Hub is explained here.

The Birmingham Youth Hub is an **active partnership** **1**. We find and **engage** **2** unemployed young people in Birmingham and then **connect** **3** them with personalised **quality opportunities** **4** that enable them to overcome **barriers** **5** and enter **good, sustained employment or education** **6**.

1

The Department for Work and Pensions, Birmingham Council, West Midlands’ Combined Authority and The Prince’s Trust are all actively working to make the Youth Hub a success.

2

Engaging young people is where the Youth Hub is totally unique, using the location to provide first class hospitality to the young people it serves. From music and food to staff dress code, everything about the way we do things is about being welcoming.

3

“Connecting” is one of the central roles of the Youth Hub. There is lots of provision in Birmingham, and while the Youth Hub will offer some provision of its own e.g. through work coaches, connecting young people to local opportunities is a major part of what the Youth Hub does.

4

Managing the quality of the many opportunities available to young people, to ensure they are supporting them towards the end outcome of good sustained employment or education, is the pivotal element of what the Youth Hub does.

5

The Youth Hub is best placed to work with young people who are motivated but maybe have some skills gaps to overcome. Different partners will be better at addressing different barriers.

6

This outcome is the goal for all young people. While some opportunities might only help young people travel part of the way to this destination, the Youth Hub always keeps this end point in sight, and looks for opportunities to help young people get there.

“I feel like I don’t have enough experience. I’ve been applying and I always get rejected.”



Our target population

What is “target population”?

Target population is about who you want to help. Every decision the Youth Hub makes should ultimately be to help these young people – if it’s not helping these young people, why are you doing it? This is not to say these are the only young people you help – there are others who you will help because you can, as part of your service population. But it’s the target population who are always in focus. The target population for the Library of Birmingham Youth Hub is explained on the next page.

Young people told us about some of the challenges they are facing: inability to get the work experience jobs require, loss of passion following redundancy, employers requiring skills that aren’t needed for the role.



Our target population checklist

 **16-24 YEAR OLDS**

 **14-15 AND 25-30 YEAR OLDS**

This is the age that the DWP Youth Offer is aimed at and although 16-17 year olds are rarely on Universal Credit, they should legally be in education or training. Opportunities like Kickstart are aimed at these ages, as is most of the provision offered by referral partners. The Youth Hub will support some over 24s, because some of the provision offered by referral partners does, but this is not the main aim. Under 16s have different needs and different outcomes.

 **UNEMPLOYED**

 **UNDEREMPLOYED**

Given the post-pandemic context, we are expecting there to be lots of unemployed young people for the Youth Hub to support – young people who are underemployed will not be a focus. The Youth Hub also aims to support young people who come to the Youth Hub, perhaps recommended by their friends, who are out of work and looking for work.

 **BIRMINGHAM**

 **SOLIHULL**

The Library of Birmingham Youth Hub is the main Youth Hub for Birmingham, with satellite Youth Hubs elsewhere in the city. Collectively, these serve the young people of Birmingham – not neighbouring boroughs. The Youth Hub will use the flexibility of the satellite sites to serve young people in convenient locations, and have a particular focus on those young people for whom the Library of Birmingham is a convenient location.

 **SKILLS BARRIERS**

 **WORK READY OR COMPLEX BARRIERS**

Certain barriers are too complex for the Youth Hub to deal with, and young people facing these barriers should be referred to a youth employability coach. This includes things like housing issues, significant substance abuse, or other major barriers that mean young people are a long way from being work ready. At the opposite extreme, work ready young people in need of light touch help with CV/interview practice can already be helped by JobcentrePlus. The Youth Hub is best placed to support young people between these two groups, those with skills barriers – such as some basic skills, occupational qualification, level 2, lack of work experience, significant confidence issues. Many of these young people will have been unemployed for 3-12 months.

Our outcomes

What are “outcomes”?

Outcomes are about what you want to achieve with the young people you support. Every decision the Youth Hub makes should ultimately be to help achieve these outcomes – if it’s not helping achieve these outcomes, why are you doing it? There may well be steps along the way – you don’t have to get young people there all in one go. These are short-term outcomes. But it is vital to remember the steps are just that – steps. They are not the long-term outcome. The long-term outcome for the Library of Birmingham Youth Hub is explained below.



GOOD

Good will mean different things to different young people, and it’s crucial to have the conversation with young people at the start of the process about what good looks like for them. It will likely include:

- Minimum of 16 hours paid work, enough to allow young people to be independent (this will depend on personal circumstances)
- Access to training, or progression opportunities

A zero hours contract might be OK, so long as it meets these criteria.

SUSTAINED



“Sustained” reflects the fact that simple job entry is not enough, especially given Birmingham’s short-term labour market – young people must not get trapped in temporary work. Sustainment reflects evidence of secure attachment into the labour market, for example six months continuous employment. By tracking outcomes for two years, the Youth Hub can test whether six months is a high enough bar.

EMPLOYMENT



It is not enough for young people to be “work ready” – ultimately success is about reducing unemployment in Birmingham, and so the Youth Hub aims to support young people into employment. This may not be a single job, or the same job for an especially long time – each young person’s journey is different, as long as the outcome is good and sustained.

OR EDUCATION

Education is also an acceptable outcome, especially for younger ages and those with qualification barriers. But it is still just a step towards employment, and young people will need to complete a qualification successfully for this to be counted as an outcome.



Young people told us they weren't sure where to go for support – so they would welcome the Youth Hub connecting them to quality provision.



Our programme design – structure

What is “programme design”?

Programme design is about what you do to support young people. Your programme design helps you achieve your mission, by supporting your target population to achieve your outcomes. If an element of your programme isn't doing that, why is it part of your programme? While mission, target population and outcomes are mostly fixed points of reference, your programme design should be refined regularly, especially as circumstances change or data sheds new light on what's working – and what isn't. The programme design for the Library of Birmingham Youth Hub is explained below.

Young people had lots of ideas about what they wanted their work coaches to be like:

With shared experience to me.

Listening, supporting, and holding to account: “being on my case”.

People with real expertise or industry experience: “would be put off by an advisor without expertise”.

Grounding in the practical parts of job search e.g. CV writing, mock interviews.

See the same coach every time and develop a relationship.

START



FIND AND ENGAGE

Young people are referred from referral partners (including strategic partners) or walk in.



ASSESS NEEDS

The Youth Hub conducts a needs assessment to identify best provision for the young person. This is revisited regularly.



DESIGN PATHWAY AND CONNECT TO PROVISION

A path to employment is defined and young people are referred to appropriate provision,



e.g. volunteering, courses, mentoring.

PROVISION DELIVERED

Providers (including strategic partners) deliver. A feedback loop into Youth Hub helps track quality of provision.



TRACKING EET ENTRY AND SUSTAINMENT

Young person leaves programme into employment, Youth Hub tracks outcomes to evaluate the performance of the provision.



FEEDBACK LOOPS: By tracking short and long-term outcomes, over time the Youth Hub learns which provision has the best impact and uses more of it. This leads to better outcomes than using completion measures or familiar programmes.

**Young people had lots of ideas
for an attractive Youth Hub:**

**“Somewhere you want
to spend time”**

“Free pizza!”

**“Someone at the door who
knows your name”**

“Fun, bubbly, colourful”

“Free Wi-Fi”

“Like Google – serious but fun”

Our programme design – in practice

Find and engage	Assess needs	Design pathway and connect provision	Provision delivered	Tracking EET entry and sustainment
<p>Outreach: events with partners, ambassadors.</p>	<p>Strengths-based: focus on what young people can bring to labour market.</p>	<p>Active support: weekly check-ins; 45 minute appointments; 50 young people per coach at a time (+ checking in with 40-60 in provision / programmes).</p>	<p>Quality manager: Hub team will record strengths & weaknesses of partners, and select using young people feedback and data.</p>	<p>Track outcomes: track young people journey to employment in shared system, understand success rate of partners vs. benchmarks.</p>
<p>Appealing environment: open space, coaches in smart casual, young people can pick music on playlist, pizza, interactive media.</p>	<p>Group sessions: low stakes way of assessing strengths and areas for development, not interview.</p>	<p>Personalised: available interventions should be tailored to needs of young people at any point.</p>	<p>Young people feedback: mechanism for young people to feedback on provision quality.</p>	<p>Long-term: track young people for a year, engaging with them at 3, 6, 9 and 12 months.</p>
<p>Marketing: social media, gaming platforms, share success stories.</p>	<p>Single assessment: no repetition between partners, owned by young people who share assessment with partners.</p>	<p>Group sessions: young people working together if beneficial.</p>	<p>Partner relationships: Honest, trusting conversations enabling improvement.</p>	<p>Understand young people: data split by characteristics of young people.</p>
<p>Hosting mindset: meet and greet facility to welcome young people to the Youth Hub.</p>	<p>Agreed criteria: partners all using same criteria.</p>	<p>Case conferencing: partners should work together to design pathways.</p>	<p>Employer relationships: connections with employer orgs (e.g. Movement to Work), and interview & recruitment days with employers.</p>	<p>Feedback loop: identify trends to enable programme improvement.</p>
<p>Culture: Different to JCP, a place where young people want to spend time – welcoming, nurturing and modern, coaches role model positive relationships.</p>	<p>Coach relationships: Trusting, adult-to-adult relationships with coaches.</p>	<p>Long-term: usually 6 months of support, with consistent coach.</p>	<p>Mentorship: available on sectors young people are interested in.</p>	

Our programme delivery and impact management

What are “programme delivery and impact management”?

Programme delivery is how you deliver your programme, impact management is about ensuring that the support you give young people actually benefits them – managing quality. With mission, target population and outcomes are mostly fixed points of reference, impact management informs the refinements you need to make to your programme delivery. If an element of your programme isn't actually having an impact, why are you doing it? And how can you know to stop doing something that's a waste of time, without knowing that it has no impact? Over time, impact management enables you to move towards more effective provision, improving the system and delivering better outcomes. The programme delivery and impact management for the Library of Birmingham Youth Hub are explained below.

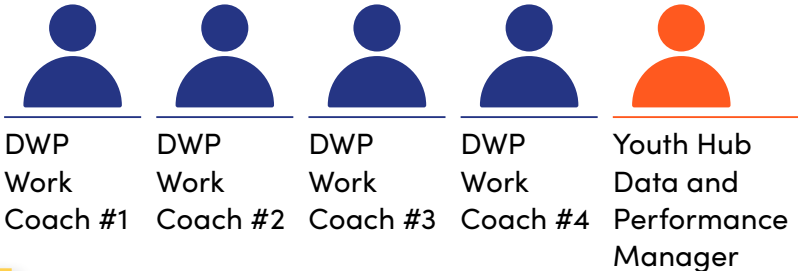


LIBRARY OF BIRMINGHAM YOUTH HUB

Governed by strategic partners who must

- Be committed to mission statement
- Take responsibility for hub management and governance
- Own overall relationship with referral partners
- Have at least some physical presence in the Youth Hub

Strategic partners

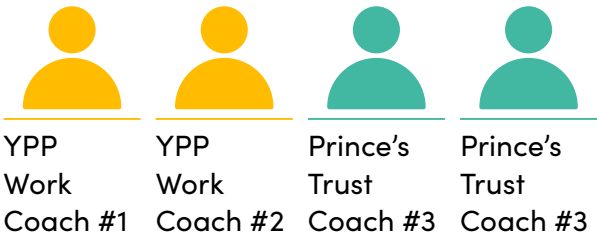


Role of the Youth Hub Data & Performance Manager

- Partner management: ensure referral partners delivery lead is clear on expected short-term outcomes, and role in delivering them long-term outcomes
- Develop & manage impact tools and systems that enable (long-term) outcome measurement (inc needs and characteristics of young people; outcomes; partner performance, young people’s feedback on partners)
- Analyse breakdowns by young people characteristics to spot trends and drive improvements
- Compare outcomes to benchmark, to evaluate success
- Other staff act on insights generated to improve outcomes

YOUNG PEOPLE IDENTIFIED BY

- DWP caseloads
- Walk-ins
- South and City College
- BMet College
- Clarion Housing Group



(not all work coaches are present at all times – there is a collective effort to cover the opening hours).

YOUNG PEOPLE REFERRED TO

- BEP Education
- Birmingham City Uni
- Change, Grow, Live
- Children’s Trust
- New Comm. Network
- Commonwealth Games
- Gateways
- JETS partners
- Kickstart providers
- Local charities
- Movement to Work
- Restart partners
- RSLs
- Sports for Life
- University Hospital B’ham
- Young Combined Authority
- Youth Centres
- Youth Leaders

Our next steps



There are still some key challenges to resolve to ensure success. The Youth Hub needs:

1 SPACE



The Library of Birmingham to agree the space to be used. The team then needs to create the welcoming environment that is integral to the programme's success.

3 MONEY



Funding, for the systems needed to track outcomes and assess quality of providers. There is also a resourcing need for someone to own the data and analysis to drive the Youth Hub overall towards success, and this could be bought in if there isn't resource ringfenced from a partner. Flexible support funding could fill this gap.

2 PEOPLE



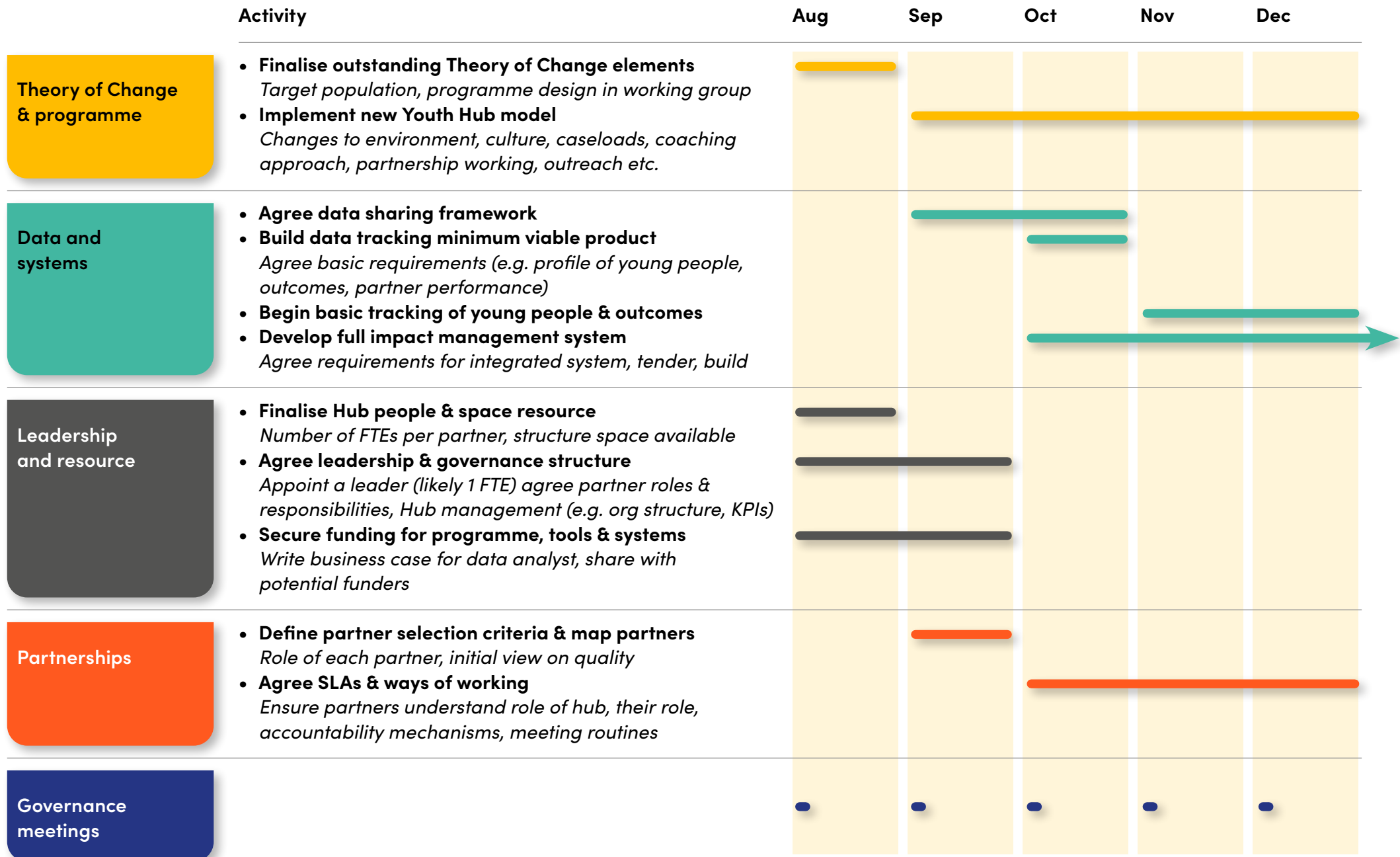
Partners to be clear about their resource commitment to the Youth Hub, so that frontline staff can be trained to deliver the programme. Partners also need to maintain that commitment for that training investment to pay off and so that ways of working can settle down.

4 LEADERSHIP






An FTE (but possibly split over two people) to direct the partnership. A subgroup is working on a proposal for what this could look like, to present to senior leaders at the organisations.

The theory of change workshops have been a great journey, and there is a real sense from all participants about what the road to success looks like. Now, the hard work begins! A draft implementation plan is on the next page:





Impetus

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