

Termly Report: December–January

We are still in Term 1 so this is a continuation of the last report issued in November. We have moved quickly since the L3 Youth Work Apprenticeship completed in December.

Sessions and Engagement

December included a special Christmas session for our Junior Youth Club, which was very well received. We welcomed a rap artist from Brighton who delivered a bespoke workshop/performance for the young people. Engagement was high throughout the session and feedback from both members and parents was extremely positive. It felt like a meaningful and memorable way to close the year.

In January, we successfully opened a third weekly session. Attendance has grown steadily, with 8 young people initially, rising to 10 this week. This already places the session on par with, and potentially set to overtake, our teen session, which has maintained a steady attendance of 6–8 young people per week. While smaller in number, the impact of the teen session is arguably significant; parents have shared that the alternative for many attendees would otherwise be sedentary time spent isolated in bedrooms, with limited social interaction. The benefits of this session therefore extend well beyond attendance figures alone.

Staffing and Supervision

The rota system for staff continues to work very well. Feedback from the team is consistently positive, with a clear preference emerging for a setup of four core staff with a fifth floating member for our Junior Club. This structure allows flexibility, strong supervision, and effective behaviour management, and appears to be the most successful configuration for our sessions.

All team members have either completed or booked in their supervision meetings. Staff morale is good and there are no current staffing concerns or issues to report.

We are also pleased to report that a 14-year-old volunteer has joined our primary session, having come from the teen club. A specific volunteer policy has been written for this age group and countersigned by parents to ensure safeguarding and clarity of expectations.

Junior Club Capacity and Booking System

Our Junior Youth Club is now completely oversubscribed. If left open without restrictions, we would expect 35–40 young people to attend each session, which is not manageable given our space limitations and staff-to-young-person ratios.

To address this, a new booking system has been introduced. A Google Form booking link is sent out on Mondays and automatically closes once 25 places are filled. This number has proven to be the most manageable for the space and staffing levels; beyond this, sessions become chaotic and we see an increase in behavioural challenges.

This week, the session reached capacity on the same day the link was sent out. As a result, some parents have expressed concerns about fairness, particularly those who are unable to

access communications during the working day. We fully recognise this concern and are actively exploring fairer alternatives, such as:

- A lottery-style booking system
- A rotational attendance system

We are open to ideas and welcome input from JPYC on how best to manage this ongoing issue.

ID Cards for Members

We have begun exploring the introduction of member ID cards, in line with practice at other youth clubs. Potential benefits include:

- Clear identification of registered members
- Supporting consistent attendance monitoring
- Reinforcing a sense of belonging and accountability

Some of our members have recently been linked with low-level community nuisance and have subsequently stopped attending sessions. While ID cards are not a solution in themselves, they may help strengthen member identity, responsibility, and engagement with the club, and support clearer boundaries around membership.

One challenge remains around how ID cards would be managed specifically for the junior club, given the ongoing issues with oversubscription and fluctuating attendance.

Programme Changes and Dynamics

At the junior club, we have temporarily scrapped ball games in the sports hall and instead introduced traditional games. This has resulted in a noticeably calmer dynamic, which staff have found positive and easier to manage.

However, some members have dropped off as a result, with parents reporting that their children primarily attended for ball games and are disappointed by the change. This adjustment is currently necessary while office work is taking place, as we are unable to use office space to split the group.

We did trial booking the village hall as an alternative, but a consistent issue has been encouraging young people to leave the main group and transition into a separate space. For now, all activities are therefore taking place in the same area.

Focus Sessions and Upcoming Dates

Our next focus session will take place on **Thursday 12 February**, in support of **Safer Internet Day**, as outlined in a previous email. Thanks are extended to Sean for his valuable input into the planning of this session.

Partnerships and Collaborative Work

Prior to the Lead Youth Worker handing in notice, a new collaborative focus group was established, involving:

- Gary, the Family Worker at the church
- Beth at SDS
- John, the Warden
- Steyning librarians
- A representative from Family Support Work

This group agreed to meet regularly and planned several initiatives, some of which are now on hold due to staffing changes. Planned work included:

- SEN taster sessions at The Steyning Centre and on SDS land
- Use of the library's Disability Register, which represents a significant breakthrough in accessing SEN families locally
- The library loaning their large Lego supply for SEN sessions, meaning no financial outlay

Additional plans included:

- Dungeons & Dragons sessions every other Saturday, in Steyning, led by Vicky (Lead Youth Worker) and Gary, with guidance from John, who is involved in a similar group in Storrington. There is a clear need for this provision, and it was planned as a donation-only activity.
- Youth involvement in supporting The Steyning Festival in May 2026
- New links with SDS following a crime assembly led by Sally Scott and a meeting with Andrea Burfiend, Head of Year

All of the above has unfortunately been paused following the Lead Youth Worker's decision to leave.

Consultation, Planning and Reporting

A parent consultation evening was planned for Easter and is still considered essential, particularly for the Junior Youth Club. Parents are highly engaged, regularly promote the club by word of mouth, and are well placed to provide insight into:

- What they would like to see at sessions
- How they feel their children are benefiting

Vicky has also created new KPIs and a suggested reporting structure, which will support clearer monitoring and evaluation going forward.

Operational Issues

A current challenge is the tuck shop. Our Costco membership is online-only, and many of our most popular items are no longer reliably available. As a result, options are limited, and we have had to source items from Amazon, which is not financially sustainable and currently operates at a loss.

A longer-term solution is needed, such as:

- Accessing a Booker's membership
- Re-establishing in-person Costco purchasing

Looking Ahead

Finally, a decision is needed regarding an Easter holiday activity week, whether this should be planned or paused given current capacity and staffing considerations.

Best wishes,

Vicky