

Youth Connect Service Offer



Welcome to Youth Connect

We're part of a team that works closely together to support young people and families. Our aim is to ensure young people feel understood and supported, as well as provide the right help, at the right time, in a way that feels safe and positive. We bring lots of experience and care to what we do, and we're here to listen, work with you, and help young people thrive.



Aimee Sharpe

I am a degree-qualified JNC Youth and Community Worker, focusing on amplifying youth voice and supporting young people to take an active part in their communities. I'm passionate about helping young people express themselves and get involved.



Heather Burton

I graduated in youth work and community development in 2014. Before my studies, I was involved in various youth and community projects. Since then, I've mainly worked in supported housing and with care-experienced young people, which I'm passionate about. I'm creative and active, using these skills to build relationships and support young people.

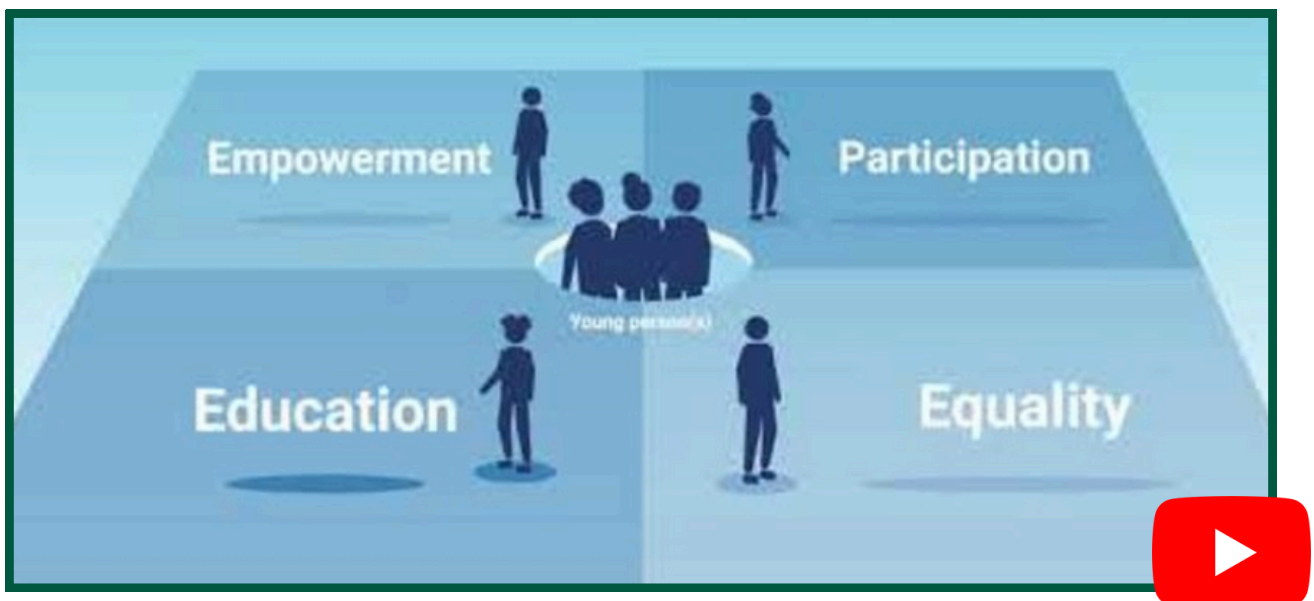


Rachel Atchinson

I have extensive experience working with children and young people, including roles in primary and secondary schools, Adoption Support, and Nottinghamshire Youth Service. Since December 2023, I've been a Youth Worker for AEM. I hold an NVQ3 in Youth Work and other relevant certifications. My strengths are passion, creativity, patience, calmness, and therapeutic skills.

What is Youth Work?

Youth work supports young people's personal, social, and educational development by helping them build life skills, overcome challenges and grow in confidence and independence. It is unique because it relies on voluntary engagement and creates trusting relationships based on young people's willingness to participate. Youth workers are professional practitioners guided by four cornerstones—Informal Education, Empowerment, Equality, and Participation. Click on YouTube icon to find out more.



Equality

Youth work is for all young people. It respects difference and build connections between different groups and individuals. It recognises and promotes human rights, social justice and anti-oppressive practices, supporting and challenging young people to reflect on their understanding of themselves and their behaviour towards others.

Empowerment

Youth work helps young people to develop the skills and confidence to make decisions and act on issues that affect their own lives, the lives of others, their communities and society. This enables young people to take control, have a voice and get involved as advocates.

Education

Youth work offers informal learning opportunities that can complement formal learning in schools and colleges. It gives young people the opportunity to learn – about themselves, about others, about issues they care about or that concern them and about social and how to engage in their communities.

Participation

Youth work supports young people and works with them to become partners and leaders in their own learning, to help them gain influence over issues they are concerned about and to engage them with democratic processes.

Youth Voice and Participation

We're committed to ensuring that young people have a real say in shaping adoption services. As part of our Voice and Influence Participation Strategy, we're strengthening opportunities for engagement through the Voice of Adoption framework, youth events, and the Youth Connect offer. This means more chances for young people to share their views, take part in consultations, and co-produce services regionally and nationally.



Working Together to Support your Young People

We know young people are unique and we want to make sure the support we offer works for them. We'll arrange a video call with parents to talk through what's available and discuss the best way to support them. During this call, we'll also explore how we can encourage them to take part in our youth activities and services. Our approach is always tailored to individual needs. For example, we understand that many 14-year-olds find peer relationships and emotional wellbeing challenging. So, we focus on helping young people build positive friendships and feel supported emotionally.

Youth Connect Club

Our Youth Connect Club is a short-term group focusing on key youth issues such as healthy relationships, boundaries and consent, social media and skills in developing and maintaining relationships. The sessions will consist of up to 10 young people and will take place in youth centres in different parts of the region. We participate in fun activities including the use of our VR headsets to support discussion about key issues.



Young People's Events

We run fun and supportive events for adopted young people aged 10–13 and 14–18 years old. We also offer an event SEND specific. These events are a great chance for young people to meet others with similar experiences while engaging in youth-work activities, including VR headsets, to open up conversations about important issues, support young people's personal development, and encourage them to share their views in a relaxed environment. Our youth workers are there to make sure everyone feels safe, supported, and included.



Focused Youth Work

We'll spend time getting to know young people through a small number of one-to-one sessions, with the aim of supporting them to take part in and co-produce our tailored youth groups. These groups are designed around young people's needs and include options such as:

- **Base Connect** for those with limited education hours
- **Connect** for building friendships
- **Skills Connect** for life skills
- **Gen-Connect** for gender-diverse young people and allies
- **Youth Connect** Club focusing on themes like self-esteem and healthy relationships.

The groups run in locations in Kirkby in Ashfield, Eastwood, Bilsthorpe and Ripley, and are regularly shaped by young people's feedback. Parents and social workers will be kept informed throughout and youth workers can also help young people access other local services after group participation.



Safe space in School

We will work closely with schools as part of a whole school approach to create a safe, inclusive space for vulnerable young people. This will include establishing a youth forum where adopted young people and other pupils with shared experiences can connect, build positive relationships, and have their voices heard.

Initially, a youth worker will help set up and support the group, then gradually step back so the school can sustain the work. Alongside this, an education worker will support the school in embedding a trauma-informed approach, and teachers will have access to specialist advice, including input from an Occupational Therapist around sensory needs.



What's Available?

If young people would like to join any of the groups or activities you've read about, it's easy to get started. Just use the link provided or scan the QR code to see what's available and book a place.

Register here!



Parents – What are your **views**?

We want to hear your views and lived experience of parenting young people. So that we can hear your voices, we are running a Parents of Teenagers Co-production Group, led by peers and staff from Adoption East Midlands.



This is a welcoming space for parents and AEM staff to come together and talk about the challenges and experiences of parenting teenagers. We want to hear your lived experiences and use your insights to shape and improve our youth services so they truly meet our young people's needs. If you'd like to be part of this group, please click the link below or scan the QR code to get involved.

Book Now!

Get in **Touch**

If you'd like to learn more about the support and opportunities available for adopted young people, we'd love to hear from you. For more information or to get involved in our peer-led groups, please contact us:



0115 804 4500



youth.connect@adoptioneastmidlands.nottscc.gov.uk



www.adoptioneastmidlands.org.uk/aem/adopters/youth/

