



EVERYYOUTH

The £100 Barrier

Understanding the Role of Participation Costs in Sustained EET Outcomes

A multi-year analysis of programme-level EET outcomes and targeted financial support across the EveryYouth Network



EVERYYOUTH

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In partnership with Catalyst Lex

Who We Are

EveryYouth is the national charity for young people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. Through a UK-wide Network of 21 Delivery Partners, we can reach more than 40,000 young people each year to access the opportunities, support and connections they need to build stable futures.

We combine:

- Flexible funding to remove immediate barriers through the Boost programme
- Employment and progression support, including initiatives such as Future Builders
- Holistic support addressing housing, wellbeing and financial stability
- Partnerships and collaboration across the voluntary, public and private sectors
- Research and insight drawn from learning across our Network

Young people experiencing homelessness often face multiple, overlapping barriers to employment, education and training. Because EveryYouth works across diverse communities and services throughout the UK, we are able to identify common challenges, understand what works in practice, and generate evidence that informs policy, funding and programme design.

This report forms part of EveryYouth's wider programme of insight and learning, bringing together evidence from across our Network to better understand what supports young people's participation, progression and long-term outcomes.

Why This Matters

Across the EveryYouth Network, education, employment and training (EET) outcomes are central to long-term independence. However, participation in work or training is often constrained by small but critical financial barriers.

Across the UK, concerns about youth participation have intensified. The recent [Milburn Review](#) estimates that almost one million young people are not in education, employment or training and argues that barriers to participation extend beyond skills alone to include health, housing instability, transport, financial pressures and fragmented support systems.

Young people experiencing homelessness often face several of these barriers simultaneously. This report draws on four years of data from the EveryYouth Network to explore what happens when practical participation barriers are addressed through targeted, flexible support. In particular, it examines the role of small-value financial interventions in supporting access to, and sustainment of, education, employment and training outcomes.

While this analysis cannot directly attribute EET outcomes to Boost funding, it provides insight into the practical barriers young people face and the role flexible financial support may play in enabling participation.

Key Findings at a Glance

- 1,633 young people sustained EET outcomes for 3+ months between 2021–2024
- 1,883 young people received Boost support
- Average Boost spend was approximately £97 per young person
- Participation barriers frequently extended beyond employability, including transport, technology, housing instability and wellbeing
- Delivery Partners consistently highlighted the importance of stability, progression journeys and relationship-based support
- Small participation costs may play an important role in enabling access to employment, education and training opportunities

Scale and Reach (2021–2024)

From the 1st January 2021 to the 31st of December 2024, EveryYouth supported:

- 3,106 young people
- 1,588 young people to achieve goals (agreed between the young person and their support worker)
- 1,633 young people to sustain EET for 3+ months
- 472 young people to enter employment
- 421 young people to enter training
- 681 young people to progress into further education
- 696 young people to achieve qualifications

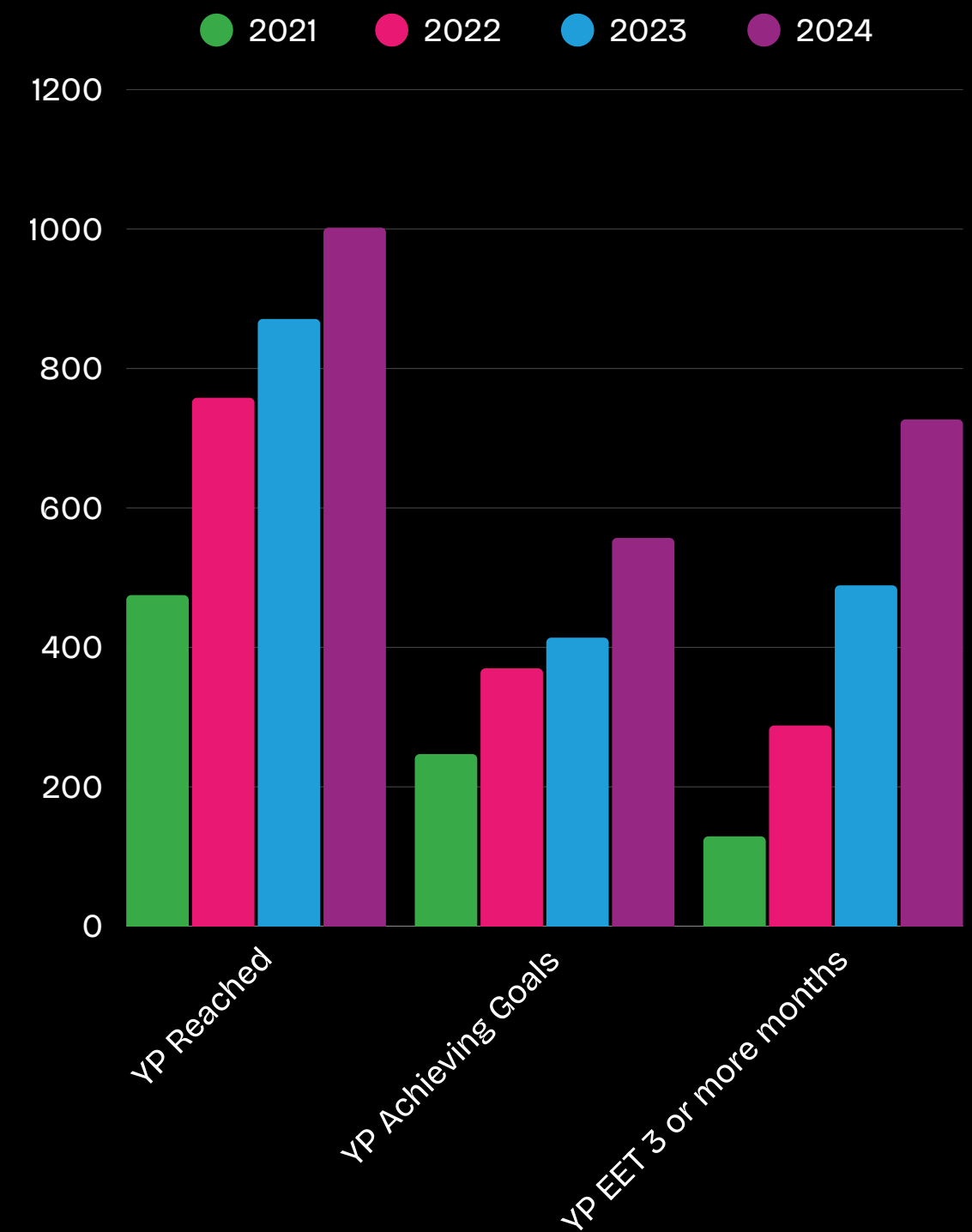
Sustainment (3+ months) is a key indicator of stability rather than short-term engagement. The volume of sustained placements across four years suggests that structured support within homelessness services can translate into meaningful labour market attachment, when given wraparound support.

Scale and Reach (2021–2024)

These findings are drawn from 11 Delivery Partners operating across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, supporting young people in urban, rural and coastal communities.

This distinction is increasingly important given growing national concern about sustained labour market participation, particularly among young people facing multiple disadvantages.

Evidence suggests that helping young people remain in employment or training may be as important as supporting initial entry.



The Mix of Employment and Training Outcomes

For young people experiencing homelessness, progression is rarely a straight line.

Across four years:

- 235 traineeships
- 30 apprenticeships
- 156 volunteering placements
- 247 part-time roles
- 225 full-time roles

Young people often move between:

- Part-time work
- Training
- Education
- Volunteering
- Benefit-constrained employment

This distribution highlights that participation is not confined to full-time employment.

Part-time work, volunteering and training form a substantial share of outcomes across the Network.

Financial Boost Support (2021–2024)

Boosts are small, flexible grants provided through EveryYouth Delivery Partners to remove immediate barriers to education, employment or training (e.g. travel, technology, workwear or course costs).

Over four years:

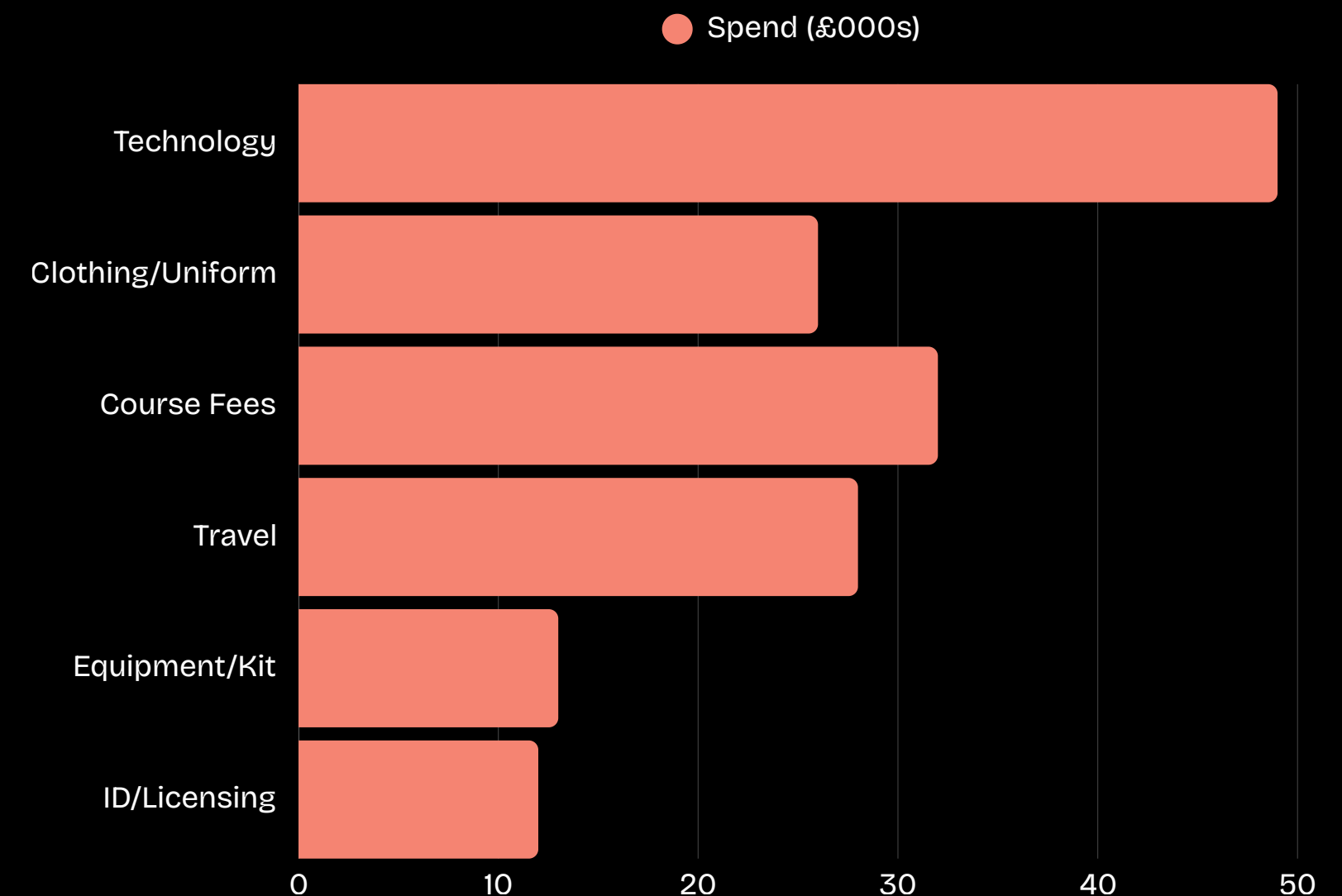
- 1,883 young people received Boost support
- Total Boost spend: ~£183,000
- Average spend per young person: ~£97

Breakdown of Boosts from 2021-2024:

- Technology: £49k
- Clothing/uniform: £26k
- Course fees: £32k
- Travel: £28k
- Equipment/kit: £13k
- ID/licensing: ~£12.8k combined

Financial Boost Support (2021–2024)

The majority of Boost funding addresses practical participation barriers - technology, travel, clothing, course fees and work equipment. The average Boost value remains under £100 per young person (c. £97 on average), suggesting that relatively small financial interventions can remove immediate participation obstacles. While the dataset does not allow causal attribution, the findings suggest that relatively small financial interventions may play an important role in removing immediate participation barriers. This aligns with emerging national evidence that practical barriers such as transport, connectivity, workwear and access costs can significantly influence participation in education, employment and training.



Emerging Themes from Delivery Partners

Alongside programme data, reflections gathered through Delivery Partner forums and Network discussions highlighted several recurring themes affecting participation in education, employment and training.

Stability Enables Participation

Housing insecurity, immigration transitions and financial pressures were frequently identified as barriers to engaging with work and training opportunities. Partners consistently described the need for stable foundations before young people could focus on employment progression.

Participation Barriers Extend Beyond Skills

Delivery Partners reported that confidence, mental health, isolation, digital exclusion and practical costs often affected participation as much as employability itself. Young people frequently required support to overcome multiple barriers simultaneously.

Emerging Themes from Delivery Partners

Progression Is Rarely Linear

Young people often moved between education, volunteering, training and employment before achieving sustained outcomes. Partners highlighted the importance of recognising progression journeys rather than focusing solely on immediate job entry.

Support That Cannot Easily Be Measured Still Matters

Partners emphasised the significant amount of relationship-based support required to help young people sustain opportunities, including interview preparation, confidence building, practical problem-solving and ongoing encouragement during periods of instability.

What This Means for Policy

1. Fund Participation Costs as Core Infrastructure

Recent national reviews have highlighted the need to move beyond a narrow focus on employability and consider the wider conditions that enable participation. Across the EveryYouth Network, small practical costs repeatedly shaped whether young people could start or sustain work or training, often covering travel, workwear, ID, licensing and connectivity - typically under £100. Employment design should consistently treat “ability to participate” as a core element of support, ensuring participation-cost funding is built in as standard and easily accessible within Youth Guarantee and devolved employment delivery.

2. Measure Success by Sustainment, Not Starts

Across four years, 1,633 placements were sustained for three months or more. For young people experiencing homelessness, stability is a stronger indicator of independence than initial job entry. Commissioning frameworks should prioritise sustainment (3+ months and beyond) as a primary outcome metric, rather than focusing primarily on initial job starts.

3. Align Employment Support with Housing Stability

Youth homelessness is not only a housing issue but also a labour market participation issue. Emerging evidence suggests that employment outcomes are shaped by interactions between housing stability, health, financial security and access to support. The EveryYouth Network operates at this intersection, combining employment support with housing-related and holistic interventions.

What This Means for Policy

As devolution expands and local areas design Youth Guarantee delivery, employment support and commissioning frameworks should explicitly account for housing instability and the wider conditions that enable participation.

While further research is needed to understand the relationship between participation-cost funding and sustained outcomes, evidence from the EveryYouth Network indicates that relatively small, flexible interventions can help address practical barriers to engagement in education, employment and training.

Although these findings originate from homelessness services, many of the challenges identified by Delivery Partners - including housing insecurity, poor mental health, financial pressures and access barriers - reflect concerns increasingly raised across national debates on youth participation. As some of the young people furthest from opportunity, those experiencing homelessness can provide valuable insight into the factors that support or hinder sustained engagement in education, employment and training.

The lessons emerging from homelessness services may therefore have wider relevance for policymakers, commissioners and practitioners seeking to improve participation outcomes for young people more broadly.

Kenny's Story

“My name's Kenny and I'm 20 years old. I struggled with addiction growing up which led me to being placed in temporary accommodation with a limited support network. My local council then referred me to my local EveryYouth Delivery Partner, the Amber Foundation. I spent time at Amber's Downsview supported accommodation in Kent.

My time at Amber really helped me battle my addiction and the staff have been really helpful and guided me to become a better version of myself. The routine, safety, support, and programme all helped me grow as a person. I'm now well-mannered, well-spoken, self-motivated and most importantly have a job and a structure to my life. I embraced all the activities at Downsview, which helped me to build confidence and enjoy new opportunities.

Thanks to the help of EveryYouth Employed, I secured full time employment as a security officer and am living independently in a house share. Completing my SIA course and securing a job as a security officer have been my biggest achievements since arriving at Downsview.

I'm optimistic about the future, committed to growing in my new job and have goals to save for my first holiday abroad. Without the support of Amber and EveryYouth, I'd likely still be homeless, battling mental health issues, and caught in addiction. The support has helped me turn my life around and become someone I'm proud of.” - EveryYouth Employed Participant

About The Data

This report draws on four years of aggregated programme-level reporting (2021–2024) submitted by funded Delivery Partners across the EveryYouth Network.

The analysis examines:

- EET outcomes
- sustained EET outcomes (3+ months)
- participation-cost support delivered through Boost funding

Important limitations

- Reporting is aggregated rather than individual-level
- Not all Delivery Partners reported EET outcomes in every year
- The analysis cannot directly link individual Boost awards to subsequent EET outcomes

Data Development & Future Insight

This analysis is based on aggregated programme reporting submitted by EveryYouth-funded Delivery Partners, capturing education, employment and training (EET) outcomes alongside the use of targeted Boost funding. Because the analysis is based on aggregated programme reporting, it cannot directly link individual Boost awards to subsequent EET outcomes. However, EveryYouth is currently developing its shared data infrastructure to enable pseudonymised individual-level reporting across the Network.

This will allow future analysis to track participation journeys over time and better understand the relationship between targeted financial support, sustained EET outcomes and wider measures of progression. As this evidence base develops, the EveryYouth Network will be increasingly well positioned to contribute longitudinal insight into employment pathways for young people experiencing homelessness.

Future analysis will enable deeper exploration of:

- **how frequently Boost recipients sustain EET outcomes**
- **which types of participation costs most strongly support progression**
- **when small financial interventions are most effective within a young person's journey**
- **how participation pathways differ across groups of young people and local contexts**

Data Development & Future Insight

The findings also raise wider questions for policymakers and commissioners. If relatively small participation-cost interventions are associated with improved engagement in education, employment and training, further research is needed to understand when these interventions are most effective, for whom, and how they can be integrated within wider employment support systems.

Longitudinal evidence on employment pathways for young people experiencing homelessness remains limited. By building a robust shared data infrastructure across multiple homelessness organisations, the EveryYouth Network is creating the foundations for a stronger understanding of what supports sustained participation and progression over time.

As this evidence base develops, the EveryYouth Network will be increasingly well positioned to move from sector insight towards longitudinal analysis of employment pathways, helping generate evidence that supports policymakers, commissioners and practitioners to design more effective interventions for young people facing barriers to education, employment and training.

With Thanks To

This report draws on data and learning shared by Delivery Partners across the EveryYouth Network. We are grateful to the organisations that contributed evidence and insight to this report:

- 1625 Independent People
- Aberdeen Foyer
- Amber Foundation
- Benjamin Foundation
- Centrepoint
- Llamau
- MACS
- Rock Trust
- Roundabout
- St Basils
- Step by Step

Together, these organisations support young people across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, providing valuable insight into the barriers young people face and the support that helps them sustain positive outcomes.