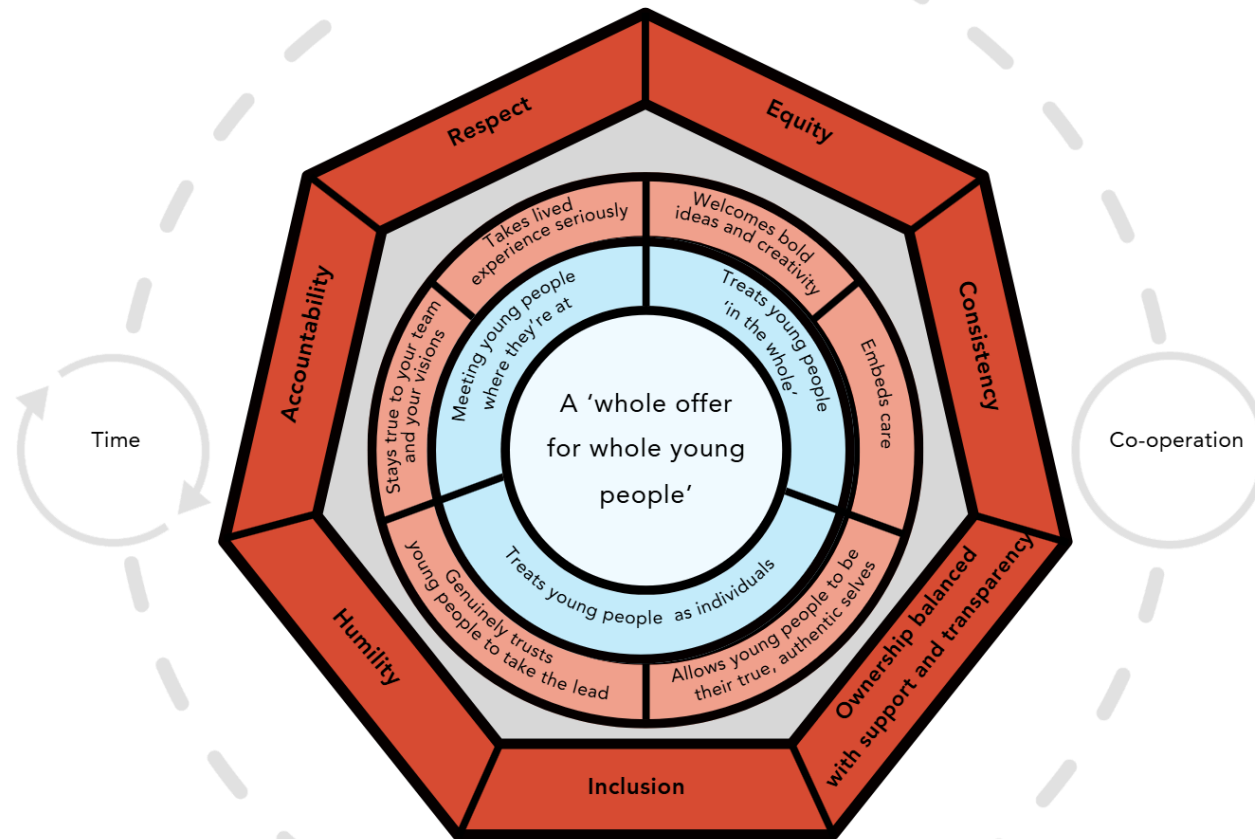


# A framework for supporting ambitious youth-led social action

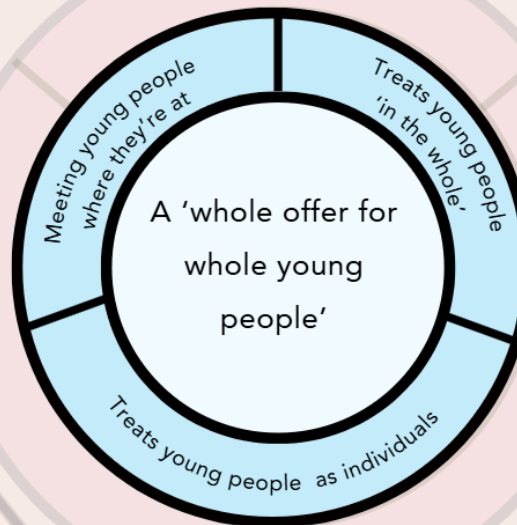


The [Peer Action Collective \(PAC\)](#) is delivered by young people at its core, supported by adults from Delivery Partners to research and take action on the drivers of violence affecting young people. These supporting adults have informed this framework with the support of the Co-op, one of PAC's funding partners, sharing their experiences and perspectives of what it takes to support ambitious, and co-operative youth-led social action. We aim for these guiding principles to support other organisations wanting to work with young people to take the lead and drive real change forward.

# The core values

Our principles center on creating a **'whole offer for whole young people'**.  
By this, we mean:

**Meeting young people where they're at** - giving them the support and tools to shape inclusive, impactful work, and to see how their skills and experiences can help them achieve their ambitions.



**Seeing young people 'in the whole'** - taking the time to understand and sensitively respond to young people's circumstances, without letting these define or limit their potential and what they can contribute.

**Treating young people as individuals** - not all young people have the same goals. Take the time to find out what they want to achieve inside and outside of their role and provide the resources necessary to help them do this.

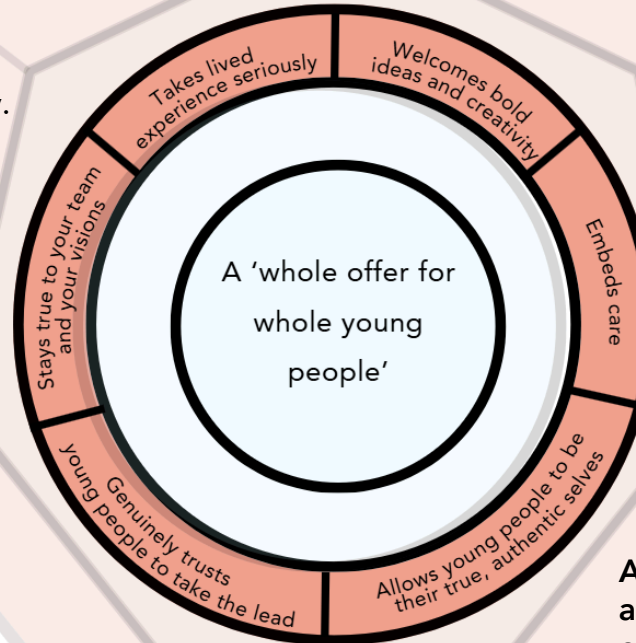
# A strong culture to embed these core values

This offer should be part of a strong culture, with values embedded into everyday practice. This culture:

**Takes lived experience seriously** - valuing the unique perspectives of young people with firsthand experiences, treating them with respect, sensitivity, and credibility.

**Stays true to your team and your visions** - our ultimate accountability is to the young people, and the positive change we create together fuels ongoing progress and inspires others to join in.

**Genuinely trusts young people to take the lead** - presenting opportunities for them to take ownership, responsibility and have autonomy over any tasks, ideas or actions that surface.



**Welcomes bold ideas and creativity** - Encouraging ambition, staying open to new ways of working, making time to test, reflect and learn – and bringing fun and energy to spark creativity.

**Embeds care** - nurturing connections within and beyond the team takes time and attention to grow and strengthen.

**Allows young people to be their true, authentic selves** - young people need to feel comfortable and supported through team environment and culture. This will help them to share their challenges and perspectives openly.

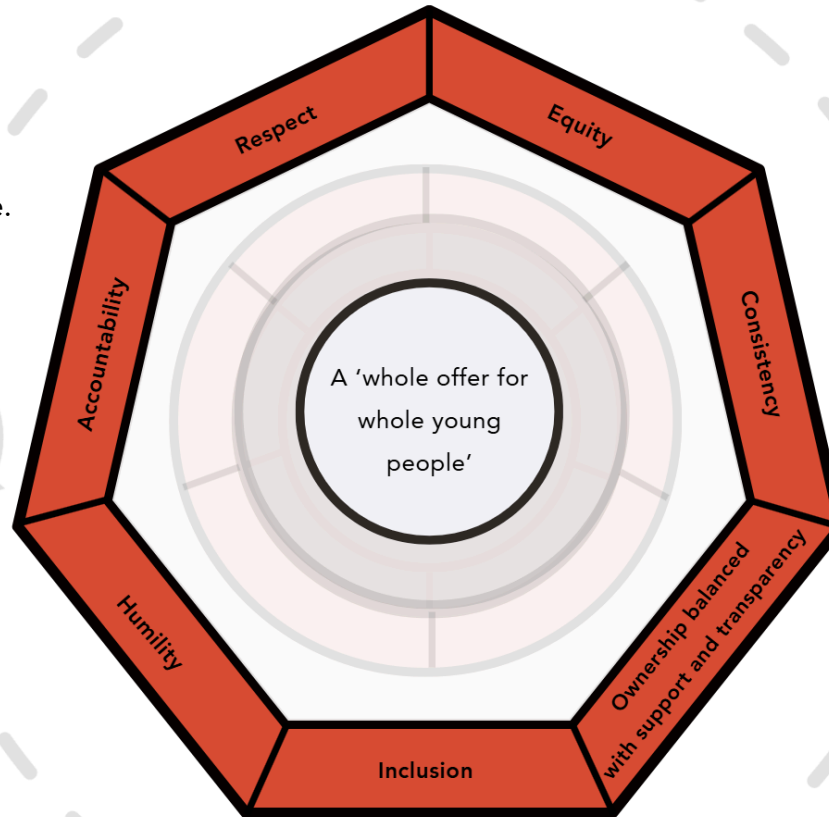
# Ongoing work to embed this strong culture

To help maintain this culture, organisations and practitioners seeking to elevate youth leadership should look to apply the following principles in their everyday practice:

**Respect** - listen to and value young people's ideas and experiences without judgement. Consider their needs and feelings when working with them or making decisions that affect them – and create space for open, two-way challenge.

**Accountability** - developing an infrastructure that enables young people's voices to not only be heard, but acted upon, helps to ensure their work creates tangible change. Access to the right levers, audiences, and opportunities supports this.

**Humility** - young people are skilled and often have bigger, bolder ideas – stay open to learning from them. Know your strengths and limits, and challenge your assumptions about what young people can bring to a project.



**Equity** - not all young people have the same start in life. Get to know their individual circumstances and provide them with the tools, resources and opportunities they need to achieve what they want to.

**Consistency** - building relationships with young people takes time. Consistent staff, clear boundaries, and reliable presence help build trust and create a sense of stability. While we can't plan for everything, we can plan for good endings – and take time to celebrate wins.

**Ownership balanced with support and transparency** - be honest about what you can and can't do to help manage expectations. Don't shy away from challenges; let young people see them without being harmed by them.

**Inclusion** - create spaces that are safe, welcoming and non-judgemental. Make opportunities accessible to all, giving young people the chance to "give everything a go" so they can find their passions, their strengths, and ultimately, their identities and values in this kind of work.

# Co-operation and time are key

Our PAC funding partner, the Co-op, has supported the production of this framework. Co-operation strengthens our culture by fostering inclusive, fair collaboration within our team and beyond. It can take time to build trust and relationships, and this is something that needs to be worked at to become stronger over time. By sharing learning openly and working together rather than competing, we build a stronger, more effective movement for young people.



# Questions you may find helpful to ask in team spaces to support culture building

As reflected in the framework, building a strong, fair and inclusive culture is essential for supporting ambitious youth-led action. Building this shared culture with buy-in from all partners can take time and requires a lot of reflection and constant work that can be as challenging as it is rewarding. To support this ongoing work and reflection, you might find it helpful to reflect as a team on the following questions, revisiting some as needed when circumstances change:

## Feedback welcome

We want this framework to be as helpful as possible in creating cultures and practices that support ambitious and co-operative youth-led social action.

Your feedback is essential in helping us with this. Please [click this link](#) or scan the QR code to complete a quick feedback form. It should take no longer the 5 minutes to fill in.



<b>Power, Leadership &amp; Accountability</b>
Are young people leading the work, with support that matches their capacity and responsibilities?
Are we being transparent about what we can and can't do?
Do young people feel ownership without being overwhelmed?
<b>Equity &amp; Access</b>
Have we made opportunities flexible and accessible to all, including those with different needs or circumstances?
Do we understand and respond to individual experiences rather than offering a one-size-fits-all approach?
<b>Relationships &amp; Trust</b>
Are we creating space for everyone to explore their strengths and passions?
Do young people feel safe, respected and able to be themselves in our spaces?
<b>Culture, Learning &amp; Reflection</b>
Do we make regular time to reflect, test, and learn together?
Are we bringing fun, energy and creativity into how we work?
<b>Collaboration &amp; Co-operation</b>
Are we open about what's working and what isn't, so others can learn from our experience?
Are we working co-operatively across teams, rather than gatekeeping or competing?
<b>Voice &amp; Influence</b>
Are we ambitious enough about what we can achieve together?
Do we have structures in place to ensure young people can safely and powerfully speak their truths to power?
Are we visibly showing the impact of young people's contributions?