

A photograph of four young people (two men and two women) standing in a field of ferns. A large, vibrant rainbow arches over them, spanning the width of the image. The background is a soft-focus landscape with trees and a bright sky.

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2024/25

[www.meltonlearninghub.org/engage](http://www.meltonlearninghub.org/engage)





# WELCOME TO ENGAGE

At ENGAGE, we provide tailored 1-to-1 and group work support for vulnerable young people aged 11–16, referred to us by behaviour and inclusion partnerships, social care, schools, families, and other agencies.

The young people we support are often at risk of, or have experienced, permanent exclusion from school. Many face challenges such as involvement in crime or anti-social behaviour, a lack of neurodiverse support, poor mental or physical health, and limited life opportunities due to poverty, trauma, or ineffective parenting.

Our approach recognises that change happens not only with the young person, but also within the home. We actively involve families in the support process, helping to create the consistency and encouragement young people need to thrive.

Our group work is delivered on our dedicated outdoor learning site, where we take a forest school approach. These sessions provide young people with valuable time away from the pressures of school, allowing them to build confidence, improve communication, work positively with others, and develop healthier attitudes and behaviours.

At the heart of our work is a commitment to helping young people feel heard, valued, and supported to overcome the barriers they face. We guide them towards positive pathways and real opportunities that can lead to brighter futures.





# VISION

ENGAGE envisions a society in which the most vulnerable young people will have the power to lift themselves out of unsafe circumstances and to create positive, healthy life choices for themselves, their families and their communities, now and for the future.

# MISSION

ENGAGE's mission is to empower young people (11-18 years) and their families with practical advice, support and resources that build family strength, resilience and independence.

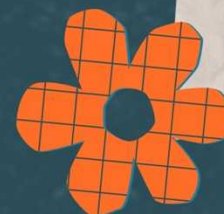






# WELCOME: SARAH COX

## MELTON LEARNING HUB MANAGER



We are incredibly grateful to the National Lottery Community Fund for their continued funding of the Engage project which has become a valued and integrated part of not only the Melton Mowbray youth service provision but also in Coalville. The success of the project is measured in part by the demand we face for the services provided by our Youth and Family Support Workers. We know this is a time of complexity and struggle for many families and the level of referrals only increases.

We value the support given by the Community Fund but this year has been the start of the evolution of Engage to a match funding position to ensure its sustainability. We understand that the public sector is stretched financially but there cannot be a reliance solely on the Community Fund long-term. With this in mind we have reached out to all our partners to look at how the service we offer can meet their needs.

The Melton Learning Hub is committed to Engage and has shown its support with the purchase and development of a Forest School primarily for use by Engage. The site is approximately an acre of woodland and sport surface. This will give engage a location other than the Venue where young people can develop and engage with our workers safely but in a vibrant outdoor space. The site is perfect for small group work which providers are happy to match fund sessions. The report later goes into more detail about the site and all we hope to offer.

This year we have also welcomed Ruth Barnard to the team. Ruth had taught for over 15 years with the Melton Learning Hub and has extensive experience of working with young people and supporting families from this role. She is now based in Melton Mowbray and is supported in her development by Joe Roughton our Senior Youth and Family Support Worker.

Ruth actively supports Kate in the Girls group delivery from The Venue which has become increasingly popular.

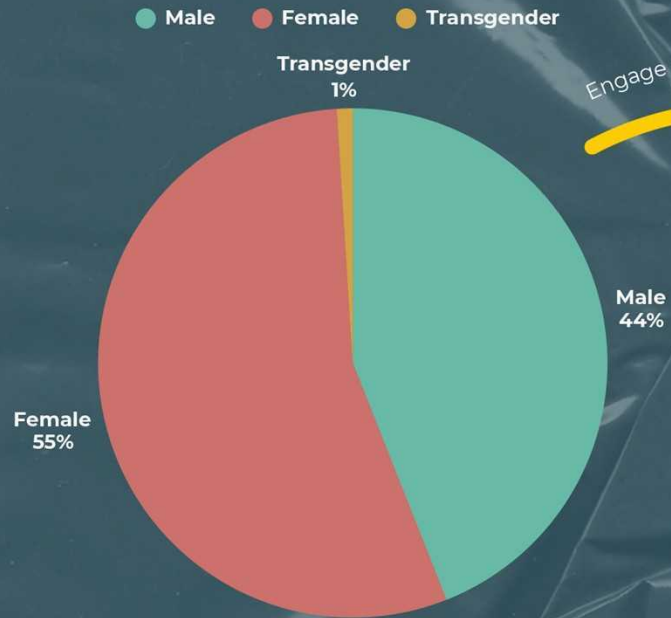
We are confident of the future of Engage and that we can meet the demands of our community and demonstrate to the Community Fund that we can move to a match funded position over the next few years.

Onwards and upwards.





# ENGAGE DATA OVERVIEW 2024/25



Engage services young people access

In 2024/25, Engage has worked with over 150 young people across its service

15%

from



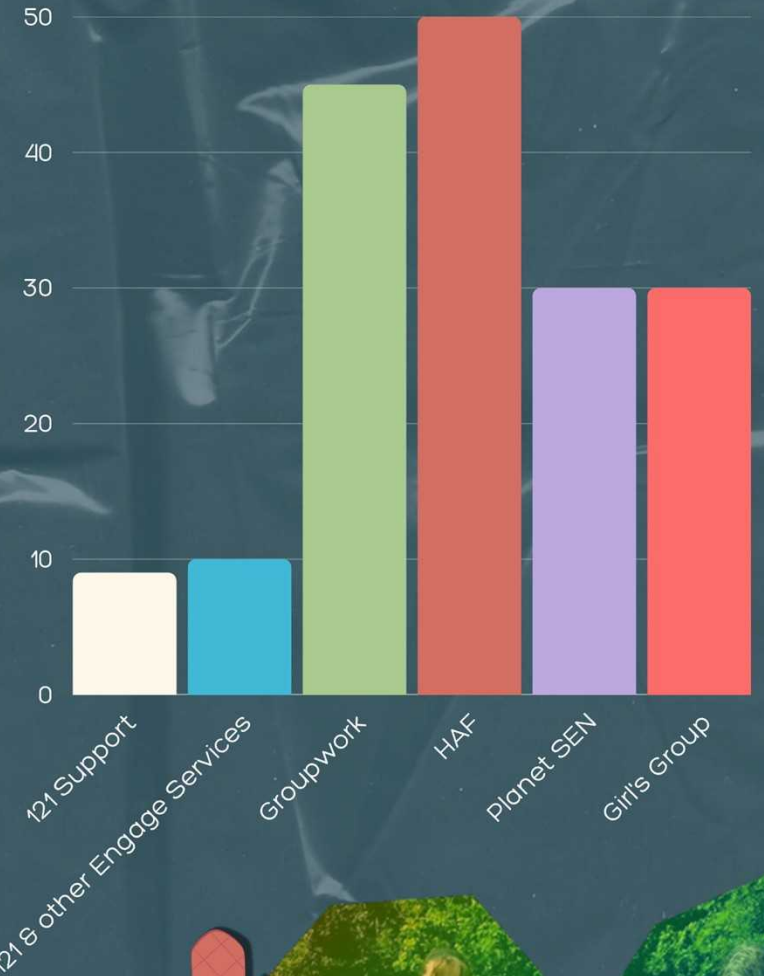
COALVILLE

85%

from



MELTON





# SADIE

Sadie was referred to the Engage programme in Year 9 after an allegation of non-consensual sexual activity. The impact of this traumatic event was significant, contributing to Sadie's struggles with peer relationships and involvement in physical altercations outside of school.

Sadie is now 16 and one of five children living at home with both parents. M has ADHD and youngest sibling aged 2 is also showing signs ADHD.

During Years 9 and 10, Sadie worked with a youth worker from the Engage team. Support focused on developing emotional awareness and anger management strategies, education around healthy relationships and consent and building trust through regular 1:1 support.

Sadie responded well to creative, youth-led approaches, and benefited from the consistency offered by the Engage team.

At the beginning of Year 11, Sadie transitioned to a new youth worker within the Engage team. This was a smooth and positive change, as Sadie had previously been taught by the new worker in an alternative education setting during Year 10. Familiarity helped establish immediate rapport and continuity in support.

The handover of the case was supported by home visits where the new Engage worker was able to meet the whole family and build positive relationship with parents. Mum and Sadie were keen for help from Engage towards future planning for Ms education and developing independence.

As Sadie approached the end of her secondary education, she became more focused on her long-term goals. She expressed a clear interest in completing her GCSEs, finding part time employment and enrolling in college.

- Engage worker supported Sadie in creating a CV, tailor made to entry level roles.
- Supported her in visiting local establishments to hand in her CV in person, building her confidence with talking to people and asking about job opportunities and also provided her with guidance on how to search and apply for on line jobs.
- Accompanied Sadie to a college open day to meet with tutors and explore her course options.

This visit gave Sadie the confidence and helped reduce her anxiety to attend her college induction day on her own — a significant step toward independence.

By the end of Year 11 Sadie has made great progress in both her personal development and future planning

- She has improved self confidence in social and professional settings
- Reduction in conflict with peers
- Enhanced life skills including job seeking strategies
- Demonstrating independence such as attending college induction day using public transport
- Clear direction toward future with a growing interest in children's health and social care

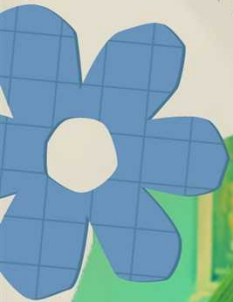




# 121 Support



18 young people were supported through 121 interventions.



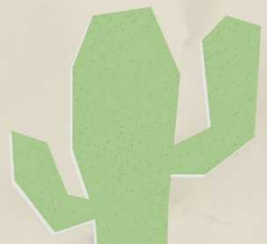
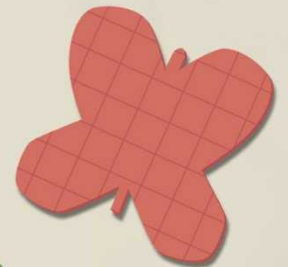
Young people's educational status at point of referral.

Alternative Provision  
31.6%

NEET  
10.5%

Home School  
5.3%

Mainstream  
52.6%





# ENGAGE VOICE

"I can be myself around you. I don't have to pretend. I love going out, it is my favourite part of my week."

"You've given me ways to control my anger and my temper."

"My sessions with Engage have built my trust in people and my mum says she's noticed I seem more chatty and happier when I come back. Engage has helped my confidence in the fact I've made a new friend that I probably wouldn't have made without having the confidence to say the first hello. My sessions with Engage have really helped me."

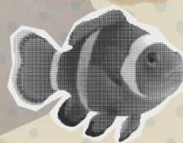
"In our sessions, you've helped me overcome my fear of going to college to look around because I was nervous."

"I have enjoyed going out with you because you talk to me about my problems and support me."

"The Engage project has been very good and helped support my daughter. It has been nice for her to have someone to support her and help her grow in confidence which she has struggled with in the past and to even talk to anyone. I find it has been good for her having someone she talk to and trust. I'm hoping with her staying with Engage will continue."

"I like me sessions with Engage because they listen to everything I have to say. Engage have advised me about sexual health and relationships. Engage has talked to me about making responsible choices and the consequences of risky behaviour. We also spend a lot of time laughing together."

“Having the girl’s group has really helped my two girls! With me being a recovering addict, it’s nice for them to be able to have the extra support. My daughters confidence has grown and she’s made new friends.”





# GROUP WORK

## North West Leicestershire

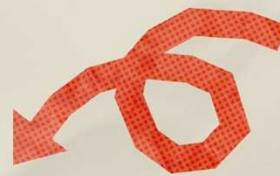
This was our first year Engage provided Coalville with the same services as we offer in the Melton Borough. We were able to do this as we had a new member of staff join the team.

The Coalville schools welcomed these additional services with immense gratitude. Both Newbridge School and Castle Rock school identified many young people who they knew would benefit hugely by the 1-1 service Engage offers.

However, we could not work with all those young people, so we used our traffic light referral system which allowed us to work with those most vulnerable and at the highest risk of permanent exclusion. Many of the young people had already had over sixty exclusions this academic year.

The Engage worker assigned to the Coalville schools has managed to build positive working relationships with many of the school's pastoral team and head of years. This partnership work has enabled Engage to fully support the young people in all aspects of their lives. This includes working closely with the families and building that trust so that they are more willing to engage and work with Engage. Many of the families had been let down by statutory services so to build their trust was a slow process but was achieved with patience and perseverance.

The Year 7 group work has played a detrimental role in those young people settling into high school, many of them have had unsettled times and found the transition problematic. In the next academic year due to the collaborative work with the schools we were able to identify together two young people from the group work who would benefit from 1-1 sessions due to their complex home lives and high risk of permanent exclusion. This highlights the importance of partnership work as it enables Engage to reach out and support those most in need.





# GIRL'S GROUP

The girl's group has grown immensely since it began in 2022.

It was originally set up to provide a nurturing environment for three girls who were not in any kind of educational setting. The girls were isolated and never had the opportunities to make friends. All three were either waiting for an appropriate educational setting or could not attend mainstream school due to severe anxieties. The aim of the group was to decrease social isolation, improve their mental health, well-being and confidence and increase their ability to participate in community activities. During the first two years to join the group a referral had to be made. In 2024 we found that the referral system was becoming a barrier to girls joining. Once the girls come for a taster session, we just ask that a consent form is completed on their next session. This change of process contributed to a huge increase on the numbers of girls attending. Some evenings we have 25 girls for the session.

The group has been exceptionally welcoming to newcomers, and many positive relationships have developed. Many of the challenges the girls face whether at school or in society are discussed and we help to address and guide the girls through some of the challenges they face. There is always opportunity for the girls to have a chat with one of the Engage Youth Workers either in a group or on a 1-1.

This year the girls were provided with a wonderful opportunity to take part in a Concept Music Project. The girls were able to write their own lyrics, make beats and record their own tracks. This was then show cased to friends and families including the Mayor!

Some of the girls attending the group have never been to the seaside, so for those select few a trip to the seaside was arranged. The girls had an incredible experience.

Later, in the year an artist is going to provide the girls with 8 sessions of creative workshops. These workshops will allow the girls to take part in exciting art forms. This will enable the girls to unleash their creativity and learn new valuable skills.

Now the group is reaching out to a greater number of girls within the Melton borough, we want to ensure they are given many different experiences and opportunities. To enable aspirations for the future.





# MUSIC WEEK WITH THE GIRL'S GROUP

Thank you to the Mayor of  
Melton, Siggy Atherton for  
coming to our music week





# KICK UP THE ARTS WITH THE GIRL'S GROUP





# LAURA

Laura is a 14-year-old girl who was referred to Engage by Newbridge High School in Coalville when she was just 13 years old. Laura was referred due to constant truancy and in the year leading up to the referral had been excluded from school over 60 times.

Laura's attendance and behaviour at school was excellent in year 7 but in year 8 Laura suffered immense trauma which had a catastrophic effect on her schooling.

Laura lived with her mum, dad, older sister, and four younger siblings. Her older sister wasn't her dad's biological daughter. When Laura was in year 7 her older sister disclosed to her councillor that she was being sexually abused by her stepdad.

Laura's dad was removed from the family home and her older sister was placed in the care of her grandfather. The community and the school found out and Laura was constantly bullied and had peers shout out at her that her dad was a paedophile.

Laura spent most of year 8 hiding in the toilets at school, she fell so behind that when she did on the odd occasion go into a lesson, she had no idea what was going on.

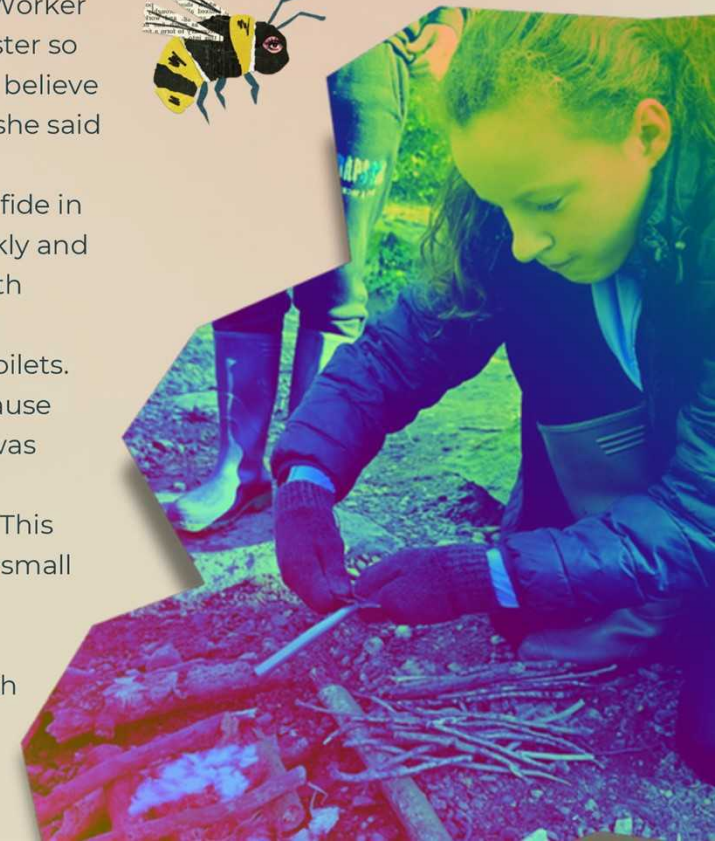
The Engage Worker began working with Laura at the beginning of year 9. Over many weeks the Engage Worker built a trusting relationship with Laura. Laura began to open up about her dad and how she missed her sister so much. Laura had no one to explain the procedure in such cases and she was frightened. She so wanted to believe her dad was innocent but then felt such betrayal to her sister. Dad was never spoken about at home, and she said it was as if he had died.

The Engage Worker worked closely with a pastoral support at school to ensure Laura had someone to confide in during the school day. The Engage worker provided Laura with a variety of activities and experiences weekly and during these sessions Laura would open up and discuss her fears and challenges. They would come up with strategies to help Laura cope when things felt so out of control.

Laura fell further and further behind at school; she couldn't sleep and spent 80% of the school day in the toilets. Eventually the school permanently excluded Laura. This again was another traumatic event for Laura because although she didn't attend her lessons she had built relationships with pastoral support, and she felt she was losing people who supported her.

Initially, the school put on online tutoring however Laura did not have a laptop so used her mobile phone. This was a barrier, and she barely logged on. Eventually Laura was placed in an alternative provision which has small class sizes, she was apprehensive at first and was really concerned she would lose her Engage worker.

The Engage worker arranged with the school to carry on supporting Laura. This pleased Laura and she is managing to settle down in her new environment. Dad was found guilty. The Engage worker will work with Laura for as long as she needs the guidance and support. To enable Laura to raise her aspirations and ambitions and help build her resilience so she can grow in confidence, well-being and self-esteem.







# FAMILY CAMP WITH PLANET SEN YOUTH GROUP



**"Best times!"**



**"Seeing our children so  
happy, makes me happy"**

**"Best camp ever!"**



**"Awesome!"**





# Child of parent/s with a mental illness (COPMI)

The impact of having a parent with a mental illness on young people can be significant, potentially leading to increased risk of developing mental health problems themselves, behavioural difficulties, depression, difficulties at school, and difficulties with friendships.

**Engage has been playing a crucial role in supporting young people and their families who have a parent with a mental illness. Here are some strategies we have implemented.**

**Staff training:** Public Health and De Montfort University have collaborated to create the Think Family Whole Family COPMI training program. This program aims to equip professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively support families where a parent is experiencing mental illness. The training focuses on a "whole family" approach, recognising the impact of parental mental illness on both children and other family members. Our ethos of "Youth-centred, Family-focused" fully aligns with this training and we very much enjoyed new perspectives and updates to current knowledge and information.

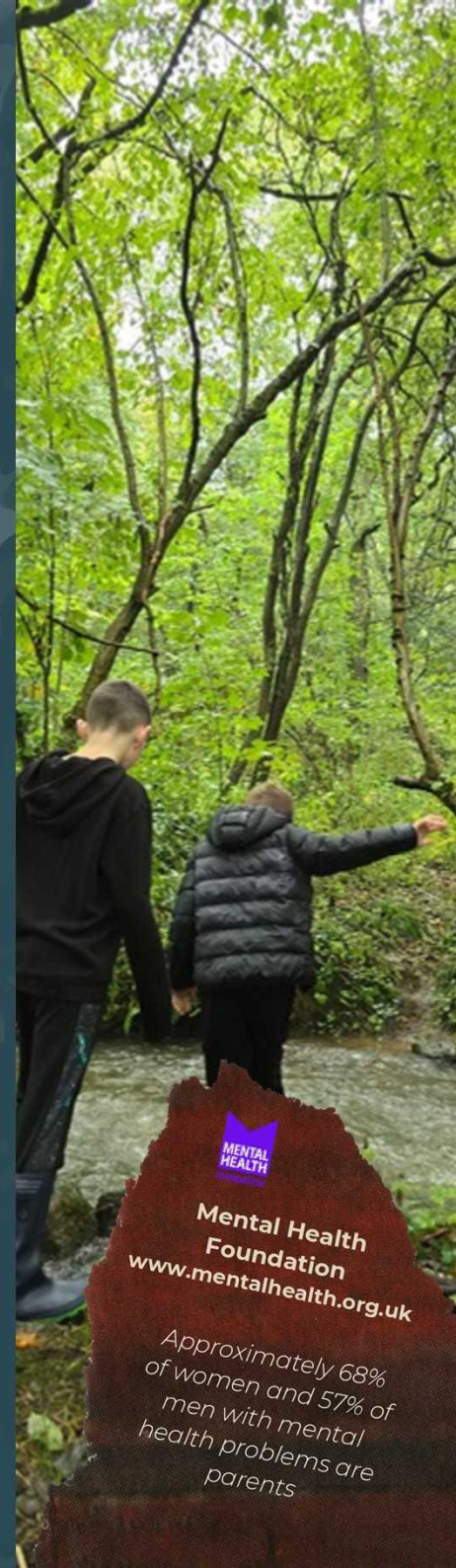
**Providing a safe and supportive environment:** It has been vital that Engage creates a space where young people feel comfortable talking about their experiences and emotions. The majority of our sessions, both one to one and group work, take place outdoors. This has given young people the space, time and freedom to explore in a non judgemental and relaxed way.

**Mental health education:** Supporting our young people to understand what mental illness is and how it can affect people is intertwined in to our sessions. We know this can help to reduce stigma and misconceptions and further enable young people to build compassion and to learn ways to cope with and support at home.

**Providing resources and support:** Our support connects young people to a variety of resources that help them cope with the challenges they are facing. This has included supporting families to access counselling services, support groups, and online resources further enhancing their support.



According to our referrals, 41.2% of young people we work with have parent/s with a mental illness.  
(Note: 16.2% said they do not and 42.6% is unknown).



**Mental Health  
Foundation**  
[www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

Approximately 68%  
of women and 57% of  
men with mental  
health problems are  
parents



# Child of parent/s with a mental illness (COPMI)

Cont...

**Building resilience:** Engage uses a whole family approach to supporting young people develop coping skills, such as stress management techniques, problem-solving skills, and assertiveness skills. This helps them to better manage the challenges they face as an individual as well as a family.

**Collaborate with parents:** Our relationships with parents ensures that they are receiving the right support they need. This could involve providing information about mental illness, connecting them to support groups, or offering parenting support. We also encourage young people to talk to their parents about their concerns and feelings. If they are not comfortable talking to their parents, they can talk to us and we can act as advocates.

**Advocate for young people and parents:** Engage has been advocating for the needs of young people who have a parent with a mental illness. This has involved working with other professionals to improve access to mental health services, and working with schools to provide support for these young people.

More than one in five children and young people in England now have a diagnosable mental health condition (Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, February 2025 report).

*"For nearly 2 years now Engage have been a valued support to my son and I. As a long term sufferer of depression and anxiety, I had always struggled to find the right kind of support for my mental health needs. From the moment I connected with Engage I felt seen, heard and understood. They have helped, supported and guided me through a lot of issues I had in regards to my son, which were having a negative impact on my mental health. They took a lot of the stress and pressures off of me, to which I am truly grateful. I no longer feel alone in my struggles, as I know that whenever I need anything I only have to text / call. Engage are a valued part of my life and a vital support for my mental health."*

Parent of an Engage 121 Support



# AMY

Amy is a 15-year-old girl who was referred to Engage by John Fernley School in Melton Mowbray. Amy was in year 8 when she was referred. Amy had recently moved to Melton; the family were placed in emergency accommodation due to the mother's violent ex-partner who had been stalking the family.

Amy presented at school with aggressive hostile behaviour. She found conforming to rules difficult and was always on the defence. Mum contacted the school, and they suggested they make a referral to Engage.

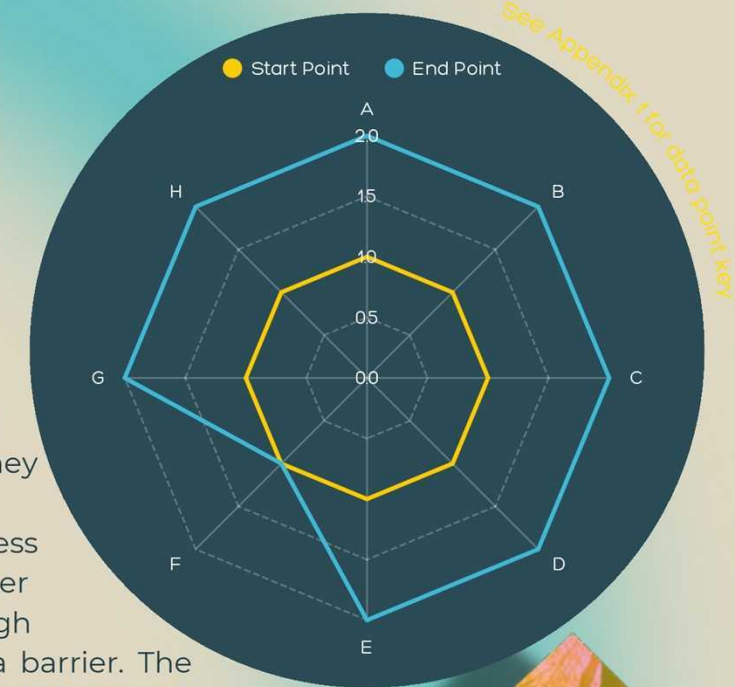
The Engage worker began working with Amy towards the end of year 8. It was a slow process as Amy took a long time to engage with the worker and presented as she did at school. After many weeks she slowly let her guard down but still would never make eye contact. Although Amy would be happy taking part in the activities the worker provided there was still a barrier. The Engage Worker persevered, and Amy began to talk about her stepdad and how he found the family every time they moved. Amy said to the Engage Worker "will you stop working with me soon as that's what all other support people do".

This was a huge turning point in their professional relationship. The worker was able to let Amy know that she could support Amy for as long as she needed her too. The Engage Worker was able to then start working with Amy on her defensive attitude and taught her the importance of body language and how it can be perceived. Over time Amy became more relaxed. It became clear to the Engage Worker that Amy was ADHD, so with the help of school and mum the Engage Worker managed to get Amy an ADHD assessment. It took time but in year 10 she was diagnosed.

This not only helped Amy makes sense of the way she feels it has really helped mum as she now gets why Amy presents the way she does. It is something she can help Amy with, and their relationship has improved.

Amy is in such a better place, she has had trauma therapy to help her cope with the impact her mum's ex-partner had on her and the family.

School life has improved immensely; Amy has a safe place to go at school when she feels she's unable to manage her emotions. Amy is doing well academically and has great aspirations for the future. The Engage Worker will carry on supporting Amy to help her achieve her full potential and help her navigate the world through a neurodiverse brain.





# MELTON & SOUTH CHARNWOOD INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (MSCIP)

Engage proudly launched a collaborative partnership with MSCIP in September 2024, embedding our team directly on-site. This allows us to provide dedicated support to young people engaging in alternative education. Our primary goal is to offer holistic social and emotional assistance to those who find mainstream education challenging. We also proactively implement preventative strategies to reduce anti-social behaviour within both the community and educational environments.

A key aspect of this partnership is to deeply understand the diverse and individual needs of each young person on the programme. These needs are varied, ranging from common challenges like anxiety and low self-esteem, to more complex mental health concerns and specific neurodiversities such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

The programme is delivered in an outdoor, forest school-inspired setting, with a strong emphasis on developing a rich sensory space. Throughout this year, we've made significant progress:

- We've built a home base, complete with a firepit, for cooking and social activities, fostering a sense of community.
- We've transformed the woodland strip, clearing litter, brambles, and weeds to create a welcoming space now home to hammocks and dens, offering quiet areas for reflection and play.
- Working alongside the young people, we've successfully constructed a bug hotel, promoting environmental awareness and teamwork.
- We've facilitated numerous craft activities, with the resulting creations set to be proudly displayed within the forest school, showcasing the young people's creativity and achievements.

We're incredibly excited to relaunch in September with an enriched programme that will seamlessly blend forest school activities, opportunities for social connection, and engaging informal education workshops. These workshops will cover vital life skills, including developing teamwork, understanding and managing anxiety, and building leadership capabilities, among many other valuable topics.

**Over the course of the academic year, we have worked with over 20 young people.**

*"It's been brilliant! Loads of tree climbing, noodles, and just good times. Everyone's chill, and the youth workers are great – they really listen, even when I'm grumpy, and that helps loads."* **Young Participant**







## MELTON & SOUTH CHARNWOOD INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (MSCIP)

*"As the Secondary Inclusion Partnership Manager for Melton Mowbray and South Charnwood we very much appreciate the support Engage offers to our young people.*

*The 1-2-1 sessions continue to be highly effective, with young people displaying increased self-esteem and confidence. This has been evidenced by much improved engagement with education as well as a decrease in issues within the local community.*

*This year, in partnership with Engage, we have developed a Forest School on our site. This year the Forest school has worked with over 20 young people. Our schools have been delighted with the engagement of the young people, many of whom have been supported to return to mainstream school.*

*We are increasing the Forest School hours with Engage next academic year.*

*As a result of the excellent work Engage have carried out, I have recommended them to one of our partnership SEND units who have entered into an agreement with Engage to deliver a Forest School provision with them next term.*

*To conclude, Engage is a highly valued partner of our organisation."*

*Helen Masoum - Secondary Inclusion Partnership Manager for  
Melton Mowbray and South Charnwood*

***"The number of school suspensions and exclusions in England has reached its highest level since 2006, Department for Education figures show.***

***There were 954,952 suspensions in state schools in 2023/24 - a 21% increase on the previous year - while exclusions also rose 16% to 10,885.***

***While secondary school pupils comprised most suspensions, more than 100,000 were primary age - a number that has grown significantly."***

***BBC News, 2025***





# SANDRA & SACHA

Sandra's daughter had been receiving support from Engage for the past two years . This support has been vital to Sacha's mental health and for her to be able to stay in school. Sacha is currently going through her ADHD assessment with CAMHS, this has taken 14 months to get to see a psychologist to have the assessment.

*"While waiting there is very little support for young people as most places want a diagnosis before they will offer support. This is the same with school . So for young people waiting they can be lost as they don't fit in to anyone's criteria.*

*The amazing thing about Engage is that it is not based on a child's diagnosis, it's based on just the child and their individual need. The support Sacha gets from Engage is so important as she feels she is heard and being listened to and her Engage worker helps Sacha talk through a lot of issues she has that maybe she can't with family or school.*


*She feels she isn't judged and it's been amazing for her to have someone to release those feelings too. Engage's support has helped reduce Sacha's outbursts at school.*

*Before Engage worked with Sacha she was high risk of being excluded. Sacha is now attending school more and school has got a bit better for her.*

*Sacha really enjoys working with Engage and would be lost without them as at the moment this is the only support from outside agencies she can get. I can't thank the Engage team enough for all the work they have done with Sacha it has been a amazing. I truly believe there should be more like Engage for young people to help them be supported to stay in school."*

Sandra - Sacha's Mum





***“The school has used ENGAGE for a few years now and they continue to provide great service to our pupils, both in mentoring and weekly activities. We have had 8 boys going out weekly for 2 hour sessions, that enabled them to work through some behavioural issues they were having but also learn about teamwork and making positive connections. We will continue to work with ENGAGE in the future and refer suitable children to gain continued support from the group.”***

Phil Kruse - John Ferneley Academy



# MELTON OUTDOOR LEARNING HUB

This year has been pivotal in establishing relationships with partner agencies so that the team can begin charging for their services. An important part of this process was understanding the demand for the service and how much partners can afford to spend.

1-2-1's are exceptionally expensive and partners just do not have the funds for these sessions. Maintaining the opportunity for 1-2-1 work was felt by the team to be essential for young people in need and therefore we have developed a business model that has charging for small group sessions that gives the team scope to still offer free 1-2-1 sessions.

There was clearly a demand for work with young people who have struggled in school, not just through behaviour but potentially home life issues and undiagnosed SEND needs. These young people are often classified as "hidden children" in no form of education. The desire from partner agencies was not for the team to educate these young people but to develop an understanding of the issues they and their families face that could be shared with partner agencies. This would then allow the statutory agencies to design an education package that was appropriate to them. This work was felt perfect for the team to support and advocate for the young people with key agencies to get the support and understanding they need.

The Hub is committed to supporting the development of the Engage project for the long-term and therefore when we had the opportunity to purchase a piece of land which could be used as a Forest School we jumped at the opportunity. The charity invested £25k in the site and received a grant for £20k from Melton Borough Council to develop the site as a Forest School. In addition to supporting the Engage team in delivering sessions it is hoped the site will also be able to be used by community groups free of charge.

The demand for this service has already allowed us to book the team for three days work from the site. This will meet the requirements of the Community Fund Grant and its requirement to seek match funding but it also gives the team the flexibility to maintain the free 1-2-1's thereby maintaining the essence of the project.



***Samworth Brothers spent the day volunteering their time with Melton Learning Hub staff and young people at our new outdoor learning site.***



# MELTON OUTDOOR LEARNING HUB



Melton Outdoor Learning Hub offers a diverse and engaging environment where young people can access a wide range of nature-based and experiential activities designed to support their personal, social, and emotional development.

Key Features of the Site:

- **Outdoor Classroom:** A central base for the day, providing a space to store personal belongings, change into outdoor footwear, and access site resources.
- **Covered Activity Area:** A versatile sheltered space used for practical hands-on sessions such as woodworking and outdoor cooking.
- **Open-Fire Outdoor Kitchen:** An area dedicated to fire-based cooking activities, promoting teamwork, independence, and life skills.
- **Woodland Area:** A calming space for hammock use and sensory-based relaxation, supporting well-being and emotional regulation.
- **Sports Zone:** A flexible activity space for football, badminton, boccia, and other inclusive sports and games that promote physical health and social interaction.
- **Gardening Zones:** Areas for young people to engage in planting and maintaining wildflowers, herbs, and vegetables, encouraging environmental responsibility and mindfulness.
- **Target Range:** Supervised zones for archery and target shooting, helping to build focus, coordination, and confidence.
- **Pond Dipping Area:** A dedicated nature exploration area supporting curiosity, ecological awareness, and hands-on learning.
- In addition, we have access to a large indoor Club House which provides a warm, safe environment for indoor learning, creative projects, and social time, particularly during adverse weather.

Our aim is to create a welcoming, inclusive space where young people can connect with nature, develop practical skills, and build confidence through positive outdoor experiences.





# MELTON OUTDOOR LEARNING HUB



**Melton Outdoor Learning Hub** is a space where young people facing challenges in life can find peace, purpose, and possibility. Rooted in the belief that nature is a powerful teacher and healer, our approach nurtures the whole person—emotionally, socially, and intellectually. These **core values** guide our work and shape a learning environment where young people are supported to grow into confident, resilient, and compassionate individuals. Each value represents a **commitment**—to our young people, to nature, and to the journey we walk together.

**"EVERYONE HAS  
A PLACE AROUND  
THE FIRE."**

**Belonging:** We create a safe, inclusive space where every young person feels seen, heard, and valued. Here, you are not just accepted — you are celebrated for who you are.

**Connection to Nature:** We believe in the healing, grounding, and inspiring power of the natural world. Through hands-on learning, we rebuild a sense of connection and stewardship with the environment.

**"WHEN WE RECONNECT WITH  
THE EARTH, WE RECONNECT  
WITH OURSELVES."**

**"STORMS HELP  
TREES TAKE  
DEEPER ROOTS."**

**Resilience:** We support young people to overcome life's challenges through persistence, adaptability, and inner strength. Mistakes are seen as learning opportunities, not failures.

**Self-Discovery & Growth:** We foster a space for reflection, learning, and personal development. Young people are encouraged to understand their strengths, passions, and potential.

**"YOU ARE MORE THAN  
YOUR STORY SO FAR."**





# MELTON OUTDOOR LEARNING HUB

**Empowerment:** We nurture autonomy and leadership by trusting young people to make choices, solve problems, and take responsibility for their growth and actions.

**"KINDNESS IS STRENGTH."**

**Compassion & Kindness:** We encourage empathy toward oneself, others, and the natural world. Emotional intelligence and caring relationships are central to how we work.

**Creativity & Curiosity:** We promote playful exploration and open-ended learning. Nature provides endless opportunities to imagine, create, and question the world around us.

**"FREEDOM WITH GUIDANCE BUILDS CONFIDENCE."**

**Freedom & Safety:** We balance healthy boundaries with the freedom to explore, take risks, and make choices in a safe and supportive environment.

**Community:** We foster meaningful connections between peers, mentors, and the local environment. Melton Outdoor Learning Hub is built on trust, collaboration, and mutual respect.

**"YOU HAVE THE POWER TO SHAPE YOUR OWN PATH."**

**"WONDER IS WHERE LEARNING BEGINS."**

**"TOGETHER, WE GROW STRONGER."**





# MELTON OUTDOOR LEARNING HUB

As a professional Youth Development Worker and Forest School Leader committed to inclusive, nature-based learning, I'm pleased to share an update on the ongoing and future development of Melton Outdoor Learning Hub. Our vision is to create a safe, sustainable, and enriching outdoor learning environment where young people — particularly those navigating complex life challenges — can thrive through connection with nature, hands-on learning, and emotional growth.

## CURRENT SITE DEVELOPMENTS

We are actively working through a series of environmental and safety-focused improvements to prepare the site for meaningful, safe engagement:

### Comprehensive Risk Assessment

- A full site and environmental risk assessment is underway to ensure that all young people, staff, and visitors can safely enjoy and explore the space. This includes regular safety checks and planning for emergency procedures.

### Phased Environmental Development Plan

- We are designing the site in clear phases, ensuring that each stage of development respects the natural landscape, limits environmental impact, and allows space for adaptation based on seasonal and ecological changes.

### Habitat Protection & Biodiversity Support

- Our team is actively exploring the site to identify existing wildlife habitats. All activity is conducted with care and respect to avoid disturbing nesting birds, burrowing mammals, and other wildlife. In support of local biodiversity, we are creating and installing:
  - Bird boxes of varied sizes
  - Hedgehog homes
  - Owl and bat boxes
  - Grass snake habitats and basking areas

### Vegetation Management

- We are clearing overgrown areas — particularly nettles and brambles — to improve accessibility and nurture a more diverse wildflower ecosystem. This supports pollinators and enhances the sensory quality of the site for young people.

### Tree Safety & Conservation Plan

- A development plan is in place to care for local trees, including professional tree surgery for any dead, diseased, or hazardous trees. This promotes safety and long-term woodland health.



# MELTON OUTDOOR LEARNING HUB

## ONGOING AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Looking ahead, we aim to evolve the site into a fully integrated outdoor learning space that can grow alongside our young people. Planned developments include:

### Designated Learning Zones

- Creation of safe, welcoming outdoor learning areas including:
  - A central fire circle
  - Shelter structures for all-weather activities
  - Outdoor tool and materials area

### Sustainable Infrastructure

- Introduction of eco-friendly infrastructure such as:
  - Composting areas
  - Rainwater collection systems
  - Wildlife ponds and natural drainage

### Youth-Led Conservation Projects

- Opportunities for young people to lead and co-design projects such as:
  - Tree planting
  - Mini wildflower meadows
  - Pollinator corridors

### Staff and Volunteer Development

- Ongoing training for staff and volunteers in outdoor learning, trauma-informed practice, and ecological education to ensure high-quality, supportive programming.

### Community Involvement and Partnerships

- Building stronger relationships with local environmental groups, schools, and community stakeholders to widen participation and support sustainability of the project.

This development is more than just site improvement—it's about creating a living, breathing environment where young people who often feel disconnected can develop confidence, curiosity, and a deep sense of belonging. We are committed to nurturing both the land and the lives that grow on it.



# MARTIN

This case study outlines the journey of Martin, a young person supported by the Engage programme, focusing on interventions and observed progress.

Initial engagement involved meeting Martin and his parents to introduce the programme and establish weekly sessions. Martin articulated challenges with anxiety, triggered by loud noises and crowds, and expressed a desire to improve socialisation and confidence. Early sessions focused on rapport-building and exploring his anxiety triggers, laying a foundation for our work.

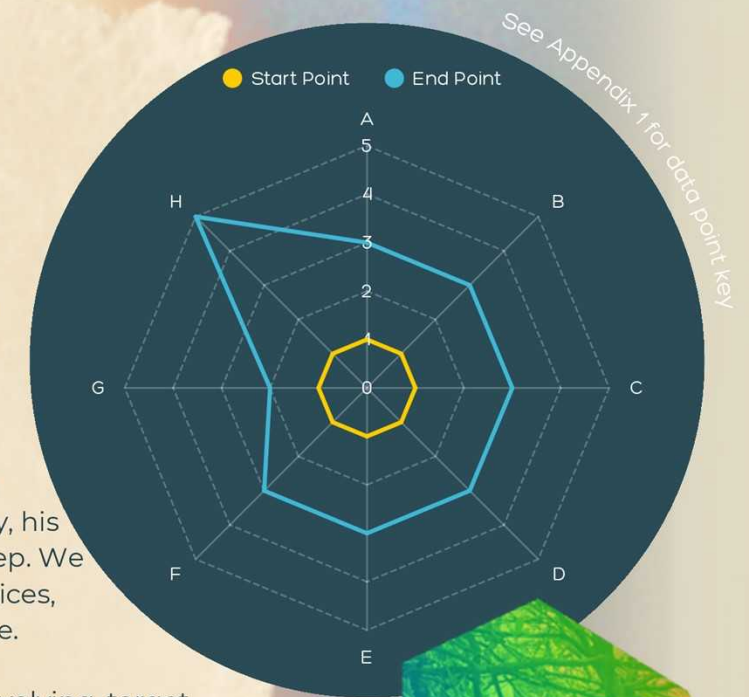
A key focus was Martin's socialisation, as he found it easier to interact with adults than peers, citing trust issues. I introduced Martin to a youth group as a potential space to build peer relationships. Concurrently, his physical health was a concern due to a sedentary lifestyle (12+ hours gaming daily), obesity, and poor sleep. We set goals for gradual physical activity, including walks and stretches, and discussed healthier dietary choices, such as reducing energy drinks. A photography project was initiated to integrate exercise into his routine.

Martin's anxieties significantly impacted his engagement. After a period of withdrawal, a session involving target shooting helped re-engage him. We addressed his self-confidence and fear of judgment, leading him to express goals of attending Melton Learning Hub and improving socialisation. However, his extensive gaming (93-100 hours/week) severely disrupted his sleep and overall routine. We implemented small steps for personal hygiene, emotional regulation, journaling, and family engagement. Parental reports highlighted broader family struggles with anger, prompting discussions on consistent boundaries and the importance of parental control over gaming access.

Throughout the support, Martin demonstrated periods of positive change, including improved sleep and increased family interaction, notably an outing with his mother for lunch and photography. We addressed his academic anxieties, providing support for Maths GCSE preparation and exploring post-16 options. Despite these positive steps, Martin continued to experience significant anxiety when leaving the house, leading to physical symptoms like nausea. I consistently advocated for medical referrals for his anxiety, diet, and eyesight, though these were not consistently pursued by the family.

Towards the end of his support, Martin's engagement became sporadic, often due to late-night gaming and subsequent fatigue. He expressed a desire to "relax" for a year post-GCSEs, resisting discussions about further education or employment. Despite exploring the limitations of this choice, Martin remained resolute. His parents, while acknowledging his progress in some areas, expressed fatigue and difficulty in enforcing boundaries, particularly regarding gaming.

This case concluded with Martin's acceptance of being NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), despite my concerns about his lack of future pathways. While the programme aimed to empower Martin, his resistance to sustained change and the complex family dynamics presented significant challenges.







# **YOUTH-CENTRED, FAMILY-FOCUSED APPROACH**

[WWW.MELTONLEARNINGHUB.ORG/ENGAGE](http://WWW.MELTONLEARNINGHUB.ORG/ENGAGE)

#ENGAGEMELTON



# THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING SUPPORTERS





# APPENDIX 1

## Start and End Point Data Point Key

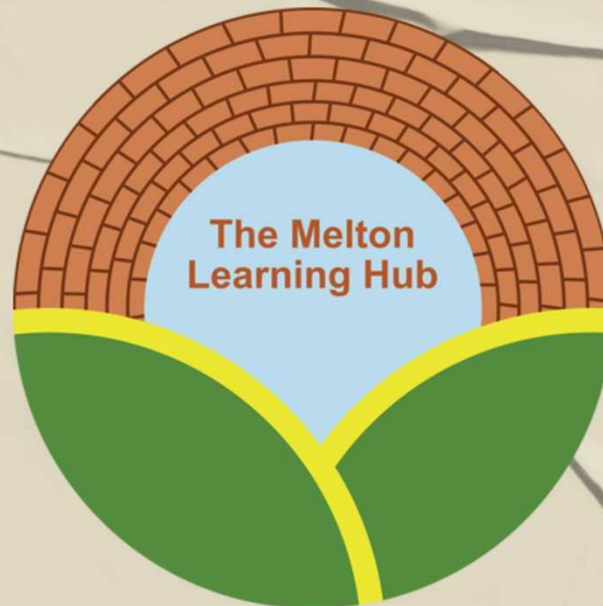
- A** Increased independence, maturity, and control of destiny.
- B** Increased social engagement and sense of belonging.
- C** Raised aspirations and ambition.
- D** Improved mental, physical and emotional well being.
- E** Increased employability through skills development.
- F** Greater recognition of achievements and enjoyment of learning.
- G** Attendance/attainment with educational provision.
- H** Improved safety from CSE/CCE or other criminal, drug or personal safety issues (e.g. Bullying, cyber-bullying, knife crime, ASB, racism, etc).





# ENGAGE

Youth & Family Support Service



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