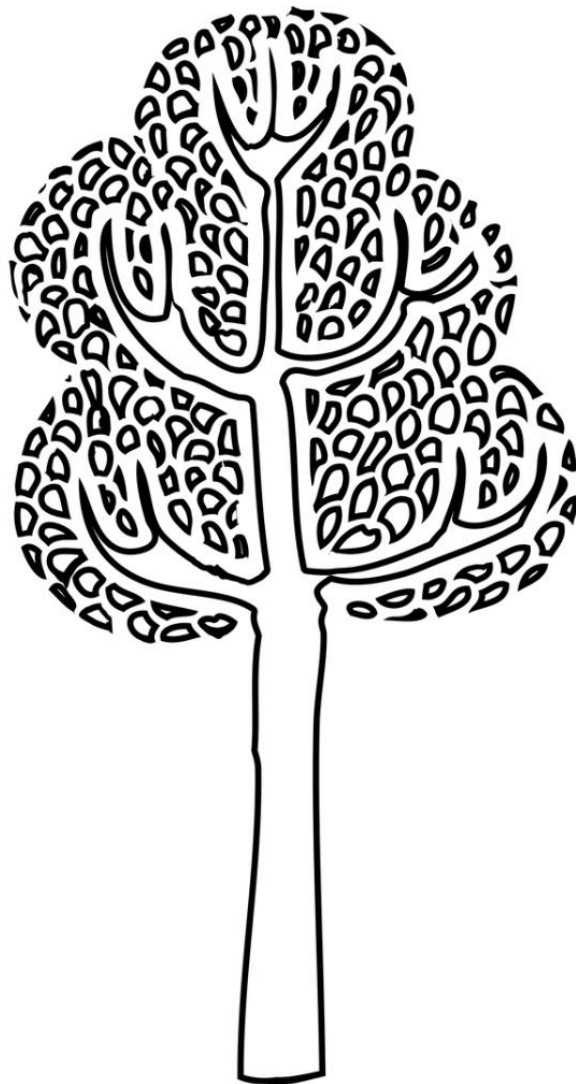


MARCH 2025

Introduction to

THRIVE

YOUTH WORK



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## **1. Thrive Overview**

Thrive is a Christian youth work project that aims to see the lives of young people transformed. We do this by partnering with churches, schools, and communities to offer programmes that support the emotional, social, and spiritual growth of young people between the ages of 11 and 18.

Thrive currently operates in Huntingdon and surrounding areas. The project was founded in 2018 by the Diocese of Ely, with ecumenical support from local churches in Huntingdon, Godmanchester, and Brampton. This was in response to concern that some of the young people growing up in Huntingdon and the surrounding areas were struggling emotionally, behaviourally and relationally, and consequently were at risk of making poor life decisions, failing to engage well with education, and becoming vulnerable to potentially exploitative relationships and poor mental health.

Delivered by trained professional youth workers and volunteers, the Thrive team works in two local secondary schools in Huntingdon (Hinchingbrooke and St. Peter's) providing 1:1 and group mentoring programmes, offering early-intervention and pastoral support for those identified as struggling to cope emotionally, relationally and behaviourally. Thrive also hosts break and lunchtime drop-in sessions in the schools.

In the community, Thrive delivers open access Youth Cafés in Huntingdon and Godmanchester after school in term time, and trips/events for young people to socialise outside of school, engage in fun activities, access pastoral support and connect with local youth workers.

As Thrive is operated by churches, and delivered with a Christian ethos, Thrive partners with churches to offer opportunities for young people to explore Christian faith with us through our half termly Thrive Collectives. These opportunities are open to young people of all faiths and none.

## **2. Mission and Values**

### **a) Mission and Outcomes**

Thrive Youth Work's mission is to:

**“Transform lives of young people by inspiring them to: build positive relationships, make good decisions, develop emotional resilience, and enjoy a strong sense of well-being.”**

Partnering with local schools, communities and churches, Thrive Youth Work offers young people between the ages of 11 and 18 access to youth workers and activities that combine to deliver the following outcomes:

- **Young people who have supportive, positive, and trusted relationships in their lives:** with youth workers, family, teachers, peers and others.
- **Young people who make good decisions:** to stay in school, away from gangs, and set goals and work hard to achieve them.
- **Young people who enjoy a strong sense of well-being:** raised self-esteem, - confidence and - awareness, and emotional resilience.

### **b) Our Values**

- **Connect** with young people where they are through relational youth work
- **Care** for young people in relevant ways, particularly through mental health and wellbeing support
- **Celebrate** young people for who they are
- **Challenge** young people in their thinking and actions
- **Create** safe spaces for young people in school and communities, and authentic opportunities for young people to explore faith.

### **3. Thrive Programmes**

Thrive is delivered by trained professional youth workers with the support of a volunteer team. In March 2025, our team consisted of two youth workers, and 14 programme volunteers. The team offer young people:

- Access to consistent, positive and trusted adult relationships with professional youth workers and trained volunteers
- Help with acknowledging and overcoming challenges
- Support and encouragement in developing the skills they need to create positive relationships and make good decisions
- Nurture of self-esteem, emotional resilience and sense of well-being
- Opportunities to explore the Christian faith if they so choose.

Thrive is delivered through the following three programme strands:

#### **a) Schools Work**

Thrive delivers mentoring programmes, and drop-in spaces in St Peters and Hinchingsbrooke Secondary Schools. All Thrive's work delivered in school settings comes under the school's safeguarding systems and procedures.

**1:1 Mentoring** – Thrive offer early-intervention and pastoral support to help students develop independent skills to cope with issues such as anxiety and low self-esteem. We do this through weekly 1:1 mentoring over a set period (usually 6 weeks). These sessions are led by the needs of the student. Students are referred to Thrive by the school.

**Group Mentoring** - Thrive provides a one-hour weekly support group during term time, facilitated by experienced youth workers for a small group of students in the same year. Each week, the groups will look at relevant topics for the young people we are working with, from four different short courses: Understanding our emotions; Understanding ourselves; Friendships; and Positive Relationships. The sessions are designed to help students engage with these topics through fun, reflective activities, games, and discussions in a safe environment, alongside a hot chocolate.

One of the key benefits of the Group Mentoring is the supportive, friendly setting it offers students giving them the opportunity to engage with each other and experienced youth work practitioners. These sessions take place during the school day and the groups meet for a term at the discretion of the school. Students are referred to Thrive by the school.

**Thrive Space (drop-in sessions)** - Our youth workers are also available during break time and lunchtime in the school library once a week for students to drop in without

referral, take part in games and challenges, and have the opportunity to chat to a Thrive team member and make friends. Many of those who have had mentoring sessions subsequently come along. One of the key benefits of Thrive Space is the supportive, friendly environment it offers students to engage with experienced youth workers, and other students. Students may also be signposted to other Thrive activities outside of school (e.g. Youth Cafes)

## **b) Community Activities**

**Thrive Youth Cafes** - Thrive run three free open access youth cafes during term time in All Saints Church Huntingdon, and at Godmanchester Baptist Church. These are safe spaces for young people to socialise after school during their free time, engage in fun activities, socialise, access pastoral support, and connect with local youth workers. Activities at the youth café include milkshakes, crafts, table tennis, pool, video consoles, and table top games.

Some of those who have had mentoring sessions or been to the in-school break-time sessions subsequently come along to the Youth Café sessions outside of school, whilst others come along independently.

**Summer Programme and holiday activities** – Outside of term time, we deliver a wide range of activities and trips, particularly during the summer holidays. These have previously included: Bowling, Crazy Golf, Remote Control Mario Kart, Sports Day in the Park, McDonalds Drop Ins and more. We find that delivering activities outside of normal routine helps to strengthen relationships with young people. Whilst most of our activities remain free for young people to attend, some may incur a cost; we always offer financial assistance to ensure that any young person that wants to can attend.

## **c) Faith Exploration**

As Thrive is operated by churches, and delivered with a Christian ethos, Thrive partners with churches to offer opportunities for young people to explore Christian faith with us through our half termly Thrive Collectives. All faith activities delivered by Thrive are optional for young people to attend, and are clearly advertised as having a focus on Christian faith. As with all our programmes, these activities are open to young people of all faiths and none, and are often attended by young people with a wide range of views on spirituality and religion.

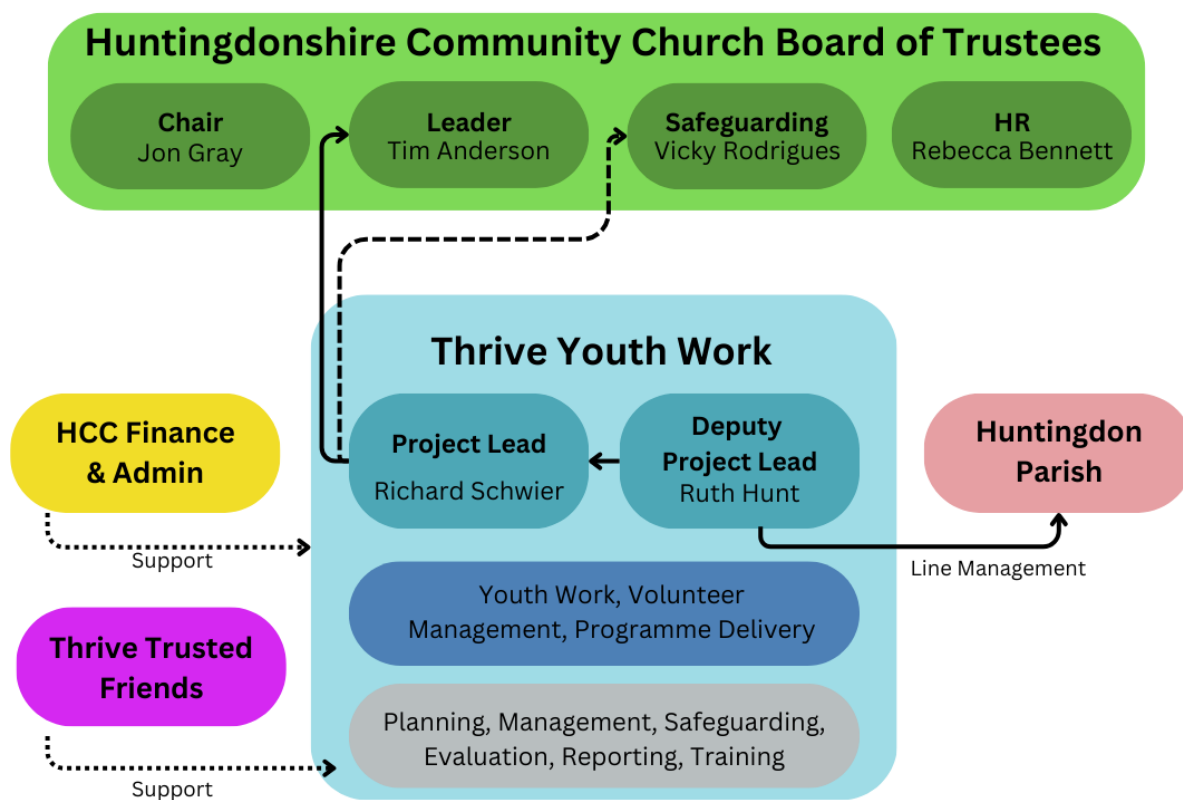
**Thrive Collective** – Thrive Collective is a half termly event where we share a meal and explore Christian faith together. Usually this takes place for an hour after a youth café, and will involve some food (usually pizza), games, and a short, engaging reflection on an aspect of Christian faith, with a story shared by a youth worker.

**Thrive Faith Residential** – In previous years, we have run 3-day camping trips in the summer with a focus on sharing elements of Christian faith. Our last residential, in 2023, was delivered using resources from the Stir Course, which helped to prompt questions about spirituality, prayer, and the meaning of life. Our residential have also included local trips and activities. These are heavily subsidised to allow all young people to attend, regardless of financial situation.

## 4. Organisational Structure

Thrive is a subsidiary organisation of Huntingdonshire Community Church (HCC). HCC is a charity registered in England and Wales with Charity Number 803355. Thrive operates under [HCC's policies and procedures](#). For more information about HCC, please visit [www.hccuk.org](http://www.hccuk.org).

Thrive has two experienced professional senior youth workers who lead, manage and operate the project. The various necessary management tasks and delivery activities are shared between them with clearly defined areas of delegated responsibility. The two senior youth workers work collaboratively on strategy and development, and share responsibilities for marketing and communications, fundraising and partnerships (e.g. with funders, other charities, churches, etc.), operational management and front-line delivery.



Responsibility and support for Thrive lies with the following parties:

- **HCC Board of Trustees** (Jon Gray (Chair), Rebecca Bennett (HR), Tim Anderson (Leader), Vicky Rodrigues (Safeguarding)): Huntingdon Community Church's Board of Trustees have ultimate responsibility for the Thrive Youth Work Project.
- **Thrive Project Lead** (Richard Schwier): The Thrive Project Lead is an employee of Huntingdonshire Community Church, and has overall responsibility for the Thrive



Youth Work project reporting to the Trustees and working in collaboration with the Chair and other Trustees on the Board as required.

- **Thrive Deputy Project Lead** (*Ruth Hunt*): The Parish of Huntingdon employs a Youth Missioner who is seconded to Thrive as their Deputy Project Lead for an amount of time agreed between the Parish and HCC. The Deputy Project Lead reports to the Project Lead for all Thrive related matters, but line management and employment decisions take place through the Parish of Huntingdon.
- **HCC Safeguarding Lead** (*Vicky Rodrigues*): Thrive's team and volunteers operate under HCC's safeguarding policies. This is overseen by the HCC Safeguarding Lead.
- **HCC Finance and Administration Team**: HCC's Finance and Administration team support Thrive with information management for volunteers (including DBS), performance and evaluation data, and financial management, to enable the youth workers to spend as much time as possible on working directly with young people. The Finance and Admin Manager (Trevor Payne) works with the project manager to prepare and produce reports to trustees, regulatory bodies and funders.
- **Thrive's Trusted Friends**: Previously the Thrive Steering Group, Thrive's Trusted Friends provide project guidance from four local churches involved with Thrive (HCC, Huntingdon Parish, St Mary's Godmanchester and Godmanchester Baptist Church). Thrive's Trusted Friends are made up of church leaders and key volunteers, and act as advocates for Thrive in their church settings.

## **5. Safeguarding**

As a subsidiary organisation delivered through Huntingdonshire Community Church (HCC), Thrive operates under [HCC's safeguarding policies](#) and procedures, which are overseen by the HCC Safeguarding Trustee (Vicky Rodrigues).

All safeguarding for in-school activities is under the auspices of the respective school's safeguarding policy and procedures. Thrive Youth Work staff and volunteers have clear procedures and points of contact within the school for reporting student disclosures and concerns about a student.

### **a) Safe Recruitment of Volunteers**

All recruitment of volunteers is undertaken through HCC. When recruiting volunteers, HCC undertake appropriate checks and references to ensure they are suitable for the role. This includes a confidential declaration, an enhanced DBS check and receipt of sufficient references.

Both senior youth workers have level 3 equivalent safeguarding training. All volunteers are required to undertake safeguarding training before being appointed to the role.

Following on from an appointment, Thrive offers training and development opportunities relevant to the role. This has previously included Thrive Mentoring Training, Food Hygiene, First Aid Training, Youth Mental Health First Aid Training, L2 Youth Qualification, and the Youthscape Essentials Course.

## b) Volunteer Recruitment Process



## **6. Key Contacts**

**Thrive Project Lead** – *Richard Schwier*

[richard@thriveyouthwork.com](mailto:richard@thriveyouthwork.com)

**Thrive Deputy Project Lead** – *Ruth Hunt*

[ruth@thriveyouthwork.com](mailto:ruth@thriveyouthwork.com)

07458 305261

**Thrive Safeguarding Lead** – *Vicky Rodrigues*

[Vicky.rodrigues@hccuk.org](mailto:Vicky.rodrigues@hccuk.org)

01480 411665

**Website:** [www.thriveyouthwork.com](http://www.thriveyouthwork.com)

**Instagram:** @thrivehuntingdon

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/thriveyouthwork](http://www.facebook.com/thriveyouthwork)

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