



Comic Relief Manifesto:

A Charter for Cross-Sector Action to Support Young People's Mental Wellbeing

Young People Should Not Navigate Fragmented Support Systems Alone

Context

This Manifesto is produced within [Comic Relief](#), an EU project aiming to improve competences of professionals working with youth experiencing mental health issues through humour-based methodologies and cross-sector synergy.

The project builds resilience among vulnerable young people, equips educators with tools to manage stress and anxiety, and fosters networks linking mental health services with educational support for comprehensive, inclusive care. This Manifesto stems from Comic Relief partners' combined research, semi-structured interviews with young people (16–30) and youth workers across Greece, Italy, Ireland, and France. Participants shared experiences of anxiety, academic pressure, unemployment, isolation, and fragmented services. They highlighted needs for accessible support, continuity of care, creative/peer spaces, and clearer pathways between education, employment, health, and social services. Common barriers included service silos, bureaucracy, poor visibility of support, and rural isolation. Drawing on these findings and academic research, the Manifesto establishes core principles and commitments for cross-sector cooperation.

What Young People Face

Young people across Europe face sustained pressure: academic stress, precarious work, social isolation, uncertainty about the future, and cultural barriers that make it hard to ask for help. Some also carry caring responsibilities for family members with illness, disability, or mental health needs, adding academic stress, isolation, and barriers to help-seeking.

Too often, support systems are fragmented, bureaucratic, clinical, or invisible. Young people must repeat their story at every contact, wait weeks for services, and navigate disconnected systems alone. Research across Greece, Italy, Ireland, and France shows that services work in silos, visibility of support is poor, bureaucracy slows help, and trust in institutions is low. Young people feel left alone.



The Vision

Young people should not have to figure out where to go for help on their own. They need support that is visible, easy to reach, and human support that feels like someone is truly there for them.

Imagine a young person who doesn't have to start from scratch every time they move from one service to another. Imagine them having a trusted adult, someone named, someone consistent, a Key Worker or link person who knows their story and walks with them through schools, health services, NGOs, employment centres, and local authorities. Someone who stays with them, so they never feel lost in between.

Imagine services that actually talk to each other, sharing information clearly and respectfully, so a young person doesn't get forgotten when they transition from one place to another. Imagine schools, health teams, NGOs, job centres, and local councils working together as one team, not as separate silos.

Imagine spaces where young people can just be, not clinical rooms, but creative places for art, music, sport, play, and peer connection. Places where they can express themselves freely, feel part of something, and ask for help without fear, without shame, without judgment.

Imagine support that is designed with them, not for them – where young people shape the services they use from the very start. Where their voices guide what works, what doesn't, and what truly matters to them.

This is what we envision: a local ecosystem where young people are accompanied, listened to, and supported – where continuity, dignity, and creativity are at the heart of everything we do. Where no young person feels alone.

The Commitments

Partners and local actors who endorse this Manifesto commit to at least **three** actions, one of which must be the Key Worker model or shared communication between organisations:

- **Key Worker / Link Person:** Every young person accessing support is offered a named person who follows their case across services
- **Shared Communication:** Services adopt simple, consent-based referral templates and regular coordination meetings
- **Creative Prevention:** Arts, sport, music, and peer-led activities become standard in schools and municipal services
- **Visible Service Maps:** A simple online or printed directory showing where young people can get help



- **Youth Co-Design:** Young people participate in governance, design, and evaluation of services
- **Inclusive Toolkits:** Practical guides for practitioners, families, and peers (referral forms, conversation starters, session guides)
- **Cross-Sector Training:** Training on trauma-informed care, creative facilitation, data safety, and youth participation
- **Transparent Data & Accountability:** Track access, continuity, youth satisfaction, and referral completion; report annually

The Practical Tools

To make commitments real, we provide:

- **Key Worker model:** a named contact for each young person
- **Referral templates:** simple, consent-based forms for handovers
- **Service maps:** online and printed directories of available support
- **Creative prevention workshops:** arts, sport, music sessions co-designed with young people
- **Coordination meetings:** monthly online, quarterly in-person meetings across sectors
- **Ethical Safeguards**
- **Consent & privacy:** Clear consent for information sharing; comply with data protection rules
- **Accessibility:** Multilingual, easy-read, offline materials; transport-sensitive options for rural areas
- **Non-hierarchical partnerships:** Respect grassroots actors; rotate leadership; share budgets transparently
- **Youth voice:** Young people co-design and evaluate services from the start

What Success Looks Like

- Young people report easier access, fewer repeated explanations, and a trusted contact
- Partners use shared tools and report faster, clearer referrals
- Schools and community organisations embed creative prevention and see increased youth engagement
- Annual reports show improved continuity and youth satisfaction



Invitation to Endorse

We invite schools, NGOs, cultural organisations, health and social services, employment centres, local authorities, families, and youth representatives to endorse this Manifesto.

By signing, you commit to at least three concrete actions (one must be Key Worker or shared communications).

Young people should not navigate fragmented systems alone. Let's build visible, human, coordinated support together.