

OUR JOURNEY: THE STORY BEHIND JEP YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



As told by our Founder & CEO, Jamie Pilling...

The journey into JEP Youth Engagement was definitely not born in success - It was born at rock bottom...

In 2016, I unfortunately lost my teaching job following a drink-driving conviction. I remember feeling lost, ashamed, and convinced that I'd thrown away everything I'd worked for. But it was from that lowest point that something real began to take shape. I knew what it felt like to be written off as just another troubled individual struggling with his mental health and getting swallowed up by the system. I also knew how important it is for someone to believe in you when you can't see your own way forward.

Lockdown in 2020 gave me time to reflect and reset. I saw how many young people, especially those struggling in mainstream education or dealing with challenges at home, were slipping through the cracks. That's when I launched JEP Youth Engagement. I wanted to build something different, something that offers genuine support, empowers young people to turn things around, and helps them believe in a future that they can't yet see for themselves, a service that is **DETERMINED** to support young people to fulfil their potential.



MILESTONES & GROWTH

Today, we run Primary, Secondary, and Post-16 Alternative Provision hubs in Salford and Bolton, alongside our Occupational Studies and Sports Hub, as well as growing Counselling and Care & Respite services.

We're now an approved AP provider for Salford, Bolton, Bury, Trafford, Wigan, Manchester & North West Placements - Working directly with Local Authorities, Schools, Social Services, and Families.

Key Milestones:

- 2020: Company Founded & Launches with One-to-One sessions & Mentoring
- 2021: First Centre in Salford Opens
- 2022: Relocation to Salford Innovation Forum
- 2023: Salford Quays Education Hub Opens
- 2024: Bolton Education Hub Opens
- 2025: Over 60 +Staff, Supporting 100+ young people every week!

What Makes JEP Different?

At JEP, we know that trying to work on a one-size-fits-all basis does not work with our young people... Our approach is built on relationships, trust, and flexibility. We offer core subjects, NCFE-accredited qualifications, enrichment activities, therapeutic support, and residential care, combined to form a support network around each young person we support. I know it might sound cliché, but we genuinely do provide “Wrap-Around” care through our services, and we’re proud to do so!

Many of our staff come from mainstream settings but choose to work at JEP because they want to be part of something that puts people first. We help them to address their challenges in a safe environment, which in turn enables them to be fully equipped with everything they need to fulfil their potential in the future.

LESSONS LEARNT:

1. **Own Your Story:** I’ve learnt that being honest about my past is no weakness - It’s a bridge that helps me connect with other young people who might feel broken or stuck.
2. **Stay Grounded:** Growth is exciting, but quality comes first. Every new staff member and every new hub must live and breathe our values - Empowerment, Opportunity & Individuality
3. **Collaboration is Everything:** Local Authorities, Schools and Families are crucial to supporting our young people. Strong communication and collaboration are *non-negotiables*.



Looking Ahead...

We’re far from finished! Our ambition is to:

- **Expand** the scope of all our services, to support even more young people across the Greater Manchester region and beyond!
- **Develop** further vocational pathways leading to more Education, Employment or Training for our Young People
- Keep **Advocating** for Alternative Provision to not be seen as a last resort, but a powerful and highly positive option for any young person who needs support in fulfilling their potential

At its heart, JEP is about one thing - Giving young people the belief and skills to move forwards, no matter who they are or where they’ve come from. I’m proud of what we’ve built, but even more proud of what’s to come!

Jamie Pilling, Founder & CEO, JEP Youth Engagement