

# Mapping and Profiling Youth Provision and Need Across England: A Public Data Approach

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## Background and Motivation

Youth provision, including youth centres, mentoring, and after-school activities, plays a vital role in supporting young people’s development, well-being, and pro-social behaviour. Yet in England there is an absence of a consistent national dataset that records where youth provision is located and how it relates to local need. This gap makes it difficult to build a clear picture of provision across England and to identify which areas are most in need.

This study responds by mapping and profiling youth provision in relation to need at the MSOA level, combining information on provision with measures of deprivation (IDACI) and Anti-social Behaviour (ASB). The analysis aims to provide a clearer national view of how youth provision is distributed, where gaps exist between provision and need, and how different areas can be characterised in terms of their youth provision and levels of need.

## Data and Methods

Data from the Charity Commission and Companies House registers was used to identify organisations likely to provide youth provision. As these registers do not explicitly classify youth organisations, filtering assumptions were applied and organisations were aggregated to MSOAs. A youth provision rate was calculated as the number of youth-providing organisations per 1,000 young people, ensuring fair comparison between areas.

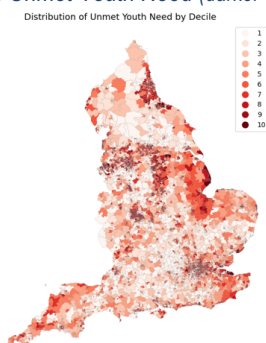
Different filtering approaches produced varying rankings of MSOAs by provision rate. The Borda Count method was then used to generate a single consensus ranking, with provision levels grouped into deciles. Youth need was measured using a composite index of the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) rates. Comparing this with provision produced an unmet youth need score, also grouped into deciles to identify underserved areas.

K-means clustering was applied to group MSOAs by provision, need, and youth population. The optimal solution produced four distinct clusters ( $k=4$ ) of area types across England.

## Key Findings

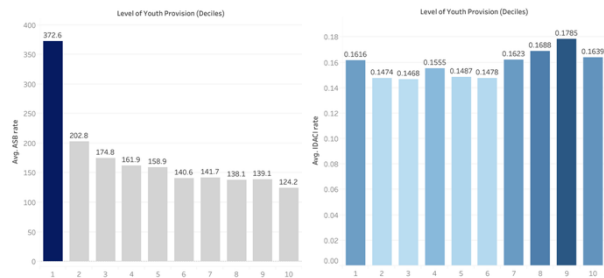
- Organisation that identified that are likely providing youth provision more than 20,000, including registered charity, community interest company (CIC), and other non-profit business.
- 77.5% of MSOAs have at least one youth-related organisation and 2.1% of MSOAs have no provision despite having more than 1000 young people.

Figure 1: Distribution of Unmet Youth Need (darker shades = higher need)



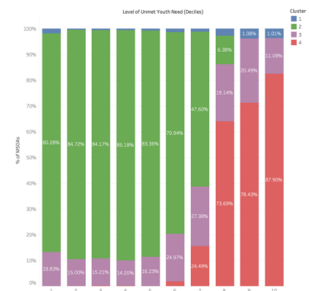
- Urban areas such as Blackpool and Redcar & Cleveland face the greatest unmet need, combining high deprivation and high ASB rate with limited provision.
- Youth provision appears to respond more to areas with higher levels of Anti-social behaviour than to deprivation

Figure 2: Average ASB and IDACI rates by level of youth provision



- Profiling areas using K-means showed that high need areas do not share the same characteristics, one cluster have covered with high provision and one more limited in availability on youth provision
- Highest unmet need is largely concentrated in cluster where have characteristics of deprivation with limited provision with more than 70% proportion of the MSOAs.

Figure 3: Distribution of clusters across levels of unmet youth need



## Value of the research

This study provides a practical framework for mapping youth provision and need at the MSOA level, generating provision rates, unmet need scores, and clusters that capture the different characteristics of local areas. The findings highlight where provision is most limited relative to need and show that gaps are widespread across England, with existing youth provision aligning more closely with social risk (ASB) than with deprivation. The study provides evidence to support policymakers and funders in targeting resources, complemented by an interactive Tableau dashboard that enables users to explore local patterns of youth provision, unmet need, MSOAs profile in detail.

Tableau Dashboard:

