

**Partnership For
Young London**

Supporting Practitioners to work
with young people in London



Recognising the value of services for young people in London

**A discussion document to stimulate creative thinking about
the future of Integrated Services for Young People**

June 2010

Recognising the value of Services for Young People in London

Introduction

This report seeks to focus attention on the contributions that Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS) can make both to the quality and efficiency of services across a council and to improving outcomes for young people. It will explore new ways of working, making better use of resources and the formation of new partnerships. It makes no claim to contain all the answers – the aim is to generate creative conversations within local authorities and with their partners, so that IYSS, being non-statutory, are not seen as easy targets for cuts. IYSS is used in its most inclusive sense, encompassing voluntary and community sector and private organisations, and occurs in this report interchangeably with Services for Young People, for the sake of simplicity and variety.

The genesis for the report was a meeting of a sub-group¹ of the Government Office for London IYSS Advice and Challenge Group, which brings together Heads of IYSS and others (including Partnership for Young London) on a quarterly basis to address issues of current strategic interest. The sub-group was originally convened to discuss what works in improving outcomes for young people. It became clear, however, that other issues were just as important in demonstrating the value of Services for Young People, and there was a collective feeling that someone ought to draw those issues together in a report to highlight what Services for Young People already bring to their boroughs, and the potential for further contribution. Partnership for Young London was the natural candidate for preparing this report.

The report starts from the premise that IYSS are a valuable resource for the young people whom they serve, the wider organisations within which they are based, and the community at large. The emphasis is on Services for Young People, which includes youth work as part of a wider set of services. This report is not designed to be a defence of youth work, although the benefits of youth work approaches and the skills that youth workers have are implicit throughout.-

In the run-up to the election, during which period the bulk of this report was written, the political parties diverged quite dramatically on how Services for Young People should be delivered. Although this report is apolitical, it makes sense to highlight a few key quotes. A Conservative government would give public sector workers the right to form employee-owned co-operatives to take over the services they deliver. This, alongside delivery through the voluntary and community sector, would likely be the preferred method of delivery for services young people, given that Tim Loughton, the shadow children's minister, said that "the quality of youth services through local authorities leaves a lot to be desired".

Labour and Liberal Democrat parties were keen to demonstrate their willingness to take Services for Young People seriously, even as far as giving them statutory status. Speaking at CYP Now's Generation Neet (not in employment, education or training) event, Iain Wright, Minister for 14 to 19 reform, promised to consider the idea of putting youth services on a statutory footing to stop cash-strapped councils from cutting provision, as part of his work for the Prime Minister.

¹ The sub-group consisted of six boroughs (Barnet, Harrow, Havering, Kensington and Chelsea, Merton, Wandsworth), Government Office for London, the Greater London Authority, the London Development Agency, the Serious Youth Violence Board and Partnership for Young London.

"I am very excited about integrated youth services providing that wrap around, one size doesn't fit all holistic approach for young people," he said. "It would be madness for a local authority to think youth services are an easy cut. This is a real area where you need to invest to save. The potential social and economic costs of cutting targeted youth services is so high that this country would be paying the costs for decades to come. I implore local authorities to look at this closely and make sure that youth services are not cut." (CYP Now, 4 March 2010) Although his party were not returned to power in May, the message is worth retaining, not as a government line but as a statement of the value of services for young people.

Revising this report briefly in the aftermath of the general election, there has still been no further indication of the direction of policy surrounding services for young people; given the apparently opposing views on youth of the two parties in the coalition, it is difficult to know what will eventuate. We may be certain that volunteering and young people's contribution to their communities (including through the National Citizen Service) will be central; in the short term, whatever happens, strategies are necessary to ensure continuity and quality for young people accessing services.

Promoting your strengths

Services for Young People have many strengths and success stories; however, they need to be better at promoting the value of existing programmes that work, and at finding ways to develop them across other teams and funding streams.

Positive Activities for Young People programmes and the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds generated an increase in positive activities that is especially welcomed by elected members and can improve residents' perceptions of young people, reducing their fear of crime. These effects contribute to wider council targets (e.g. NI 1, % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area; NI 5, Overall/general satisfaction with local area; NI 17, Perceptions of anti-social behaviour) and, in a post-election environment focusing on localism, but removing the ring-fencing from these funds, we need to recognise their significant contribution. We need to be wiser about how to demonstrate to different audiences what works, combining the power of statistics (reductions in anti-social behaviour, perception of crime, teenage parenthood, etc) with the impact of narrative, in the form of case studies, to show the transformation of young lives through our interventions. The skill lies in selecting the appropriate style for a particular audience, and in having data in the right format readily to hand.

Making the best use of skills – staff and young people

Services for Young People as a valuable resource are often insufficiently recognised for what they can offer more widely. This section aims to highlight some of those benefits, starting with a reaffirmation of the value of non-formal learning and leading to an acknowledgement of the greater variety of more or less hidden skills of the young people and the staff who work with them.

The impact of non-formal learning lies in enabling young people to make a successful transition into adulthood, through personal and social development, understanding themselves and their relationship to others around them. "By fostering a stronger sense of belonging and an enhanced capacity for social engagement and personal interaction, these relationships and interactions contribute towards the development of social capital".² Bridging the perceived

² *The Contribution of non-formal learning to young people's life chances* – NYA, Fabian Society, April 2008

gap between young people and the communities they live in – overcoming residents' negative perceptions of young people and disproportionate fear of youth crime – is a clear benefit derived from youth work. Surely everyone in a borough, locality or ward would approve of the aim of supporting young people successfully into adulthood; it is, however, a continual process, not compatible with the quick fixes that need to be shown in statistical returns to justify funding. And while elected members may be sympathetic to the needs of young people and to the benefits offered by IYSS, this mind-set is not always matched by that of Finance Directors with different agendas. The value of sustaining services needs to be demonstrated in outcomes that range more widely across organisations as well as in the direct, long-term impact on young people.

Services for Young People have been increasingly recognised in recent years as holding expertise on participation activities, and being able to offer support for other departments wanting to consult young people. This has been most visible through the growth of youth democracy and the rise of Young Mayors, enabling young people to see that they can make an impact, and adults and communities to recognise young people's potential for positive contributions, all too often overshadowed by negative publicity.

This may be high profile activity, but we need to be more sophisticated about the breadth and depth of skills that Services for Young People have to offer beyond consultation.

- **Young people's contributions:**

- Young people and specific roles*

Young people have a potentially powerful role to play in the recruitment of staff, and have done this for some years within the field of social care, in particular in the recruitment of social workers and youth workers. There is a clear case to be argued about their contribution to other recruitment within Children's Services, up to and including the Director post. Naturally, they need to be trained to undertake this type of role, but these are valuable skills that stay with them and are appropriate to their future roles.

In Merton, young people have been trained as commissioners, and have contributed to the allocation of significant amounts of funding.

London Borough of Merton Young Commissioners

The London Borough of Merton (LBM), Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS), as part of the Merton Promise ensured that young people were central in the decision making process for Positive Activities Funding (PAF) allocations for 2010 to 2011.

In January we advertised for young people to become involved in our decision making process. This was an adult-initiated event that enabled shared decisions to be made with young people.

This involved young people 13-19 (24) undertaking an Open College Network (OCN), Level 2 qualification in Developing Decision Making Skills before agreeing the PAF funding allocations in together with the adult panel. This process took place over 3 days during February half term. The opportunity to participate was advertised through Merton Voluntary Sector Council (MVSC) newsletter, Merton Youth Parliament, School Councils, Looked After Children's Council, extended schools, youth justice service and previous PAF commissioned services.

The LBM Integrated Youth Support (IYSS) Commissioning manager recruited Youthbank UK trainers who delivered the OCN Level 2 course Developing Decision Making Skills on the first day and assisted with the facilitation of other two day PAF process. On the second day, the young people learned about the Local Authority's priorities and criteria for funding, through a presentation from the information and research team on statistical data on the borough. This illustrated the demographics of our cohort of young people, with reference to youth crime, burglary, drinking, Teenage Pregnancy, NEETs and areas of deprivation. The young people were involved in scoring 30 applications. On the third day they met with the adult panel: Youth Service manager, MVSC Youth Development Worker and IYSS commissioning manager to discuss and debate who should and who should not be awarded funding.

There were 12 places available for young people aged from 13 to 19 (24) years. Out of the recruitment process interest was expressed by 15 young people with 10 places being filled. Eight young people attended all three days from 10.30am to 3.30pm, one 2.5 days and only one withdrew after the morning of the first day. There were 5 young people from Merton Youth Parliament and five young people from the voluntary youth sector. The numbers attending and the retention level exceeded our predicted target of 6 young people. There were 2-3 staff each day with 4 (including one Youthbank facilitator) present for the joint panel decisions on the last day.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course the learners were able to

1. Recognise the way in which decisions were made.
2. Understand the different types of decisions made within groups.
3. Recognise different decision making styles.

What the young people said about the three days: they met new people, gained new skills; it was easy to understand and interesting to hear other people's views.

Outcomes

The Young People taking part in the one-day training course and the two-day decision making process each received an OCN Level 2 certificate in Developing Decision Making Skills, an attendance certificate presented by the Mayor and £100 for their organisation, enabling them to use their newly learnt skills with other young people to make decisions on how it would be spent to benefit the group, club, agency or project they attended.

They allocated funding totalling £100,000 to 22 organisations.

All nine young people who completed now want to participate in other opportunities offered, for example: visiting substance misuse providers during the Easter holidays as part of the tendering process for the Merton substance misuse three year contract; monitoring providers allocated funding; reviewing and evaluating this year's process with a view to planning and initiating next year's processes.

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The notion of young inspectors assessing the quality of services they receive has been in development in London for a number of years, as part of ongoing quality assurance processes, and also in relation to former Ofsted inspections. In a number of boroughs, young inspectors used Ofsted criteria to review premises and systems, and mystery shopping techniques to review practice. In addition to providing quality assurance, such activity can contribute towards award schemes, accreditation and skills development, and also progression towards youth worker status for the young people.

The Government's national Young Inspectors programme, being run by YLDP, is being piloted in Bromley, Sutton and Barking & Dagenham.

Previously, Government Office for London's Young London Matters programme ran a Young Inspectors pilot looking at how six boroughs undertook consultation work with their young people. The pilot's objectives were to raise the profile of young people's issues and their involvement in finding solutions; to explore existing effective practice; and to ensure that the involvement of young people locally is strategically embedded in policy and service planning, thus maintaining sustainability. The boroughs engaged in the programme were Haringey, Greenwich, Kingston upon Thames (Phase 1); Hounslow, Lewisham, Waltham Forest (Phase 2). An example of effective participation identified from the pilots was that Haringey's Youth Council meetings are webcast. This is in line with the council's commitment to improve accessibility, e-democracy and accountability.

<http://www.haringey.haringey.uk.council.net/site/index.php>

The potential impact of young people's contributions to service planning and delivery is significant in shaping services that are more appropriate not only to current cohorts of young people but to preventative services impacting on future generations.

Young people leading training

Young people have also made contributions to training of practitioners. In East London, young people working with LECP and funded by CWDC developed a one-day training course on how to better engage and communicate with young people, to be delivered by young people to a group of practitioners (e.g. youth workers, personal advisers, social workers).

LECP Training B Heard Participation Project

London East Connexions Partnership (LECP) Training received funding from CWDC for a project to develop a young person-led training course. The course, in how to better engage and communicate with young people from different backgrounds, was to be designed and delivered to practitioners working with young people, between September 2009 and March 2010. LECP Training brought together young people from Youth A.I.D Lewisham (including the BOOM video project to film and produce a video of the entire project); Junior Muslim Circle – Whitechapel; Youth League – Dagenham; East London Somali Youth and Welfare Centre – Whitechapel.

All aspects of the project: the development, planning, research, design and delivery of the training was carried out by the young people with support and training from LECP and the partner organisations. The training day was delivered twice, to groups of professionals including youth, play and social workers, personal advisers, the police and education staff, and a written up version of the course has been made available nationally through CWDC's website, along with a film of the project.

The training days were evaluated by a young person who had not been involved in the delivery, and by an external evaluator who also wrote a final report of the whole programme. Participants were impressed by the professionalism of the young trainers, and felt that the sessions had been very positively delivered, rather than being a list of dos and don'ts. They liked the instantaneous reflection, getting immediate feedback from the young trainers, which helped to break down barriers between trainers and trainees, and to humanise the experience. They felt that the young trainers were on a personal journey and they will have increased in confidence and self esteem though standing in front of groups of professionals.

For more information, or to access the training programme, contact Tony Cissé on Tony.Cisse@londoneastconnexions.co.uk

Young people often provide valuable support to their peers, to their mutual benefit. This has been quite visible in work around Youth Opportunity and Capital Fund panels, where panel members have offered advice and training to colleagues and to applicants. Young people are frequently more receptive to messages delivered by their peers, especially in the field of preventative work around substance misuse, sexual health, etc. In Kensington and Chelsea, young volunteers have provided support for young disabled people.

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Youth Support and Development Service - The Buddy Scheme

The idea behind the Buddy Scheme is to train young volunteer members of Royal Borough youth clubs to act as support workers for disabled young people. After training and appropriate checks (CRB checks and references), volunteers accompany disabled young people to a youth centre of their choice. The purpose of the scheme is to improve both access to and experience of, youth support services in the borough.

The scheme began at Lancaster Youth Centre in 2008 and over thirty young people volunteered. They took part in an induction evening and signed a contract outlining what was required of them. Volunteers were then paired with existing disabled members of Lancaster Youth Centre, Golborne Youth Centre and Earl's Court Youth Centre.

In July and August 2008 the buddies, along with disabled young people, attended a residential training programme in order to develop appropriate skills. After the disabled young people returned home, the buddies stayed on to complete further training and accreditation relating to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. The training programme includes understanding the needs of disabled young people, child protection, equal opportunities, basic youth work practice and conflict management and resolution. Buddies are mentored and supervised by youth workers on site.

The scheme has been a great success with many of the most challenging youth members signing up to the scheme. Youth workers have observed that involvement in the scheme has had a significant impact upon their behaviour and attitude. Young disabled people, a number of whom have highly complex needs, have been able to increase access to youth support facilities as well as improving their confidence and communication skills. The pilot was deemed a success and the programme will continue to be funded through YSDS.

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- **Youth practitioners' contributions:**

It is possible that the potential contribution of practitioners working with young people is less recognised and promoted than that of the young people themselves. Youth workers, personal advisers and other practitioners are trained and experienced in working with the full spectrum of young people, especially those who are most disadvantaged or most difficult to work with. We should explore ways in which those skills and experiences could be put to use in working more widely with staff in other disciplines – by no means to dilute those skills and experiences, but rather to enhance their status by demonstrating their application in a wider arena.

In March 2009, Ofsted noted how well youth workers knew their communities, with “a thorough grasp of local cultures, young people’s relationships with authority and the risks they were taking... They brought in-depth local knowledge and often unique insights about the young people’s lives”. In addition, “As local authorities seek to integrate youth support services, it is becoming evident that forward-looking and often more experienced workers are exercising advanced skills in relation to community development, managing inter-agency work to best effect, preparing funding bids and leading teams”.

Harrow: From ‘Hoodies’ to Harrow’s Heroes

Community Stars is an intensive programme that has genuinely turned around the lives of teenagers who were previously in trouble. It has produced staggering results: 78% of participants successfully completed the eight-week programme and of those, 100% said they had increased community engagement and awareness; 88% achieved real improvement in school attendance, attainment and behaviour; 87% reduction in local youth crime, anti-social behaviour and school exclusions.

The impacts have been seen in increased local community understanding and respect for young people (MORI survey); reduced fear of crime within the community (Police survey); enhanced partnership working between the council, police, schools, voluntary, community and private sectors (Children’s Trust needs assessment); improved community cohesion and volunteering across cultures and ages (Tellus survey).

The Community Stars team is an innovative and committed Children’s Services team who working to develop the best results in the area of crime prevention, youth engagement and diversion from crime. The team targets those who find their school, family and community a real challenge. The courses promote active citizenship, successfully motivate young leaders and prove the life changing difference positive activities can make. Referrals come via the ‘Early Intervention Panel’ focusing on those young people already labelled as ‘anti-social’ by Police, Housing, schools, parents and the local media.

Participants have to plan, consult, promote, cost, deliver and evaluate their chosen projects. Essential life skills are developed with help from local partners and businesses. Each project is delivered by a multi-disciplinary team including social workers, youth workers, police officers, advice and guidance workers, youth justice workers, teachers, educationalists, and voluntary and community groups. Outcomes are recorded and measured, and there is a commitment to ongoing personalised evaluation at three, six, nine and 12 month intervals. Each project includes the young people hosting a final presentation of their journey to local councillors, head teachers, community police, council officers, and their families.

This project was entered for the MJ Local Government Achievement Awards 2010 as an example where different services and partners have linked in innovative and constructive ways and created forward thinking services for children, young people and families.

At a time of recession and rising unemployment particularly amongst the 18-24 age group³, young people need to be equipped with the skills and experience to engage in education, employment or training. Good quality work experience placements are at a premium, and councils, often being the largest employer in the borough, offer the potential for large numbers of placements, whether these are straightforward work experience places linked to schools, or young apprenticeships, or Future Jobs places. These young people may be placed in teams (e.g. Parks, Leisure, Finance, Environment) with no experience of supporting young people, and little or no training provided. This is an area in which youth practitioners could provide valuable support to colleagues in better understanding, managing and supporting young people. Partnership for Young London's Training and Workforce Development Group is exploring how to develop a programme of tailored support for organisations in this situation.

Contributing to wider agendas

14 – 19

The 14-19 Reforms present the potential for IYSS to be involved in a wider agenda. There is an expectation that 14-19 Partnerships will engage widely across their boroughs: "To be effective, it is critical that the Partnership and its supporting 14-19 team are well connected to the following agendas and commissioning of services across the local authority ... Integrated youth support services including targeted youth support, IAG and positive activities"⁴. Proactive engagement by the Head of IYSS to link in to the borough's 14-19 Partnership could help to create links with schools commissioners within an agenda that is wider than extended services.

Accreditation

Through having been required to demonstrate performance against a Best Value Performance Indicator for accreditation, Services for Young People have extensive experience of supporting young people to gain accredited learning at various levels and for various skills. This experience could contribute to the 14-19 reform agenda, through offering their expertise to deliver on behalf of schools the elements of Foundation Learning and Diplomas that school staff may be least comfortable with. These could include the personal and social development units of Foundation Learning, and the Framework of Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills within Diplomas. It is likely that schools would appreciate an approach that offered to take on a cohort of their most difficult young people and get them through accredited units (e.g. from AQA, ASDAN, OCN) such as those with which youth workers are already familiar. This would have a three-fold benefit: the young people would develop skills and receive accreditation, working with staff whose approaches meet their needs; Services for Young People receive valuable funding for the service; schools are enabled to achieve their targets.

³ The unemployment rate for 18 to 24 year olds increased by 0.7 percentage points on the quarter to reach 18.0 per cent in November 2009, the highest figure since records for this series began in 1992. The number of 16 to 24-year-olds out of work rose by 18,000 to 941,000 between January and March 2010. There are 215,000 young people who have been without employment for more than a year. (Source: Office for National Statistics Statistical Bulletin, Labour market statistics, November 2009 and May 2010).

⁴ *14-19 partnerships and planning* – DCSF, January 2009.

Accreditation comes with its own set of issues, mostly driven by young people's mobility: consistency of the offer across and between boroughs, so that a unit or programme begun in one borough or organisation can be continued or completed in another; recognition of the value of accredited units, by employers, colleges and by young people themselves; making sure that the specification for commissioned-out services includes the appropriate accreditation requirements. The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) to be introduced later this year should go some way towards addressing this. It is an issue that also needs to be addressed on a pan-London basis, and Partnership for Young London has offered to set up an Accreditation Officers working group, so that we can address the issues above by potentially developing an infrastructure to support accreditation and streamline administration costs, providing benefits to existing offers within Services for Young People, as well as the potential new offers to educational establishments.

Other school agendas

There is plenty of evidence for the contribution that youth work makes to improving young people's engagement with formal learning, which will support the contribution of Services for Young People to educational agendas: "a young person's growing sense of self-belief can have motivational benefits, contributing to an enhanced sense of enthusiasm and inspiration... which may in turn have positive consequences for the development of cognitive abilities and capacities in the classroom"⁵.

Working with young people who are disengaged, or are at risk of becoming so, is one of the strengths of IYSS, in developing programmes of personalised activities, supporting their personal development needs, their acquisition of soft skills, and the provision of appropriate IAG support. Partnerships with schools or colleges can lead to young people being supported to remain in education when they might otherwise drop out or face exclusion. This is important, regardless of whether the planned raising of the age of young people's participation in education and training to 17 from 2013 and to 18 from 2015 is sustained by the coalition, which at the time of writing is unclear. Young people's continued engagement will maximise their chances of employability at a time of rising unemployment which is particularly affecting young people.

Schools will, in any case, be keen to ensure that they maximise the numbers of young people engaging with them, and the increase in emphasis from the new government on dramatically greater autonomy and responsibility for schools makes it all the more important that relationships are formed to enable them to deliver on their expanded remits. This engagement is likely to be less simple with academies, but may nonetheless repay the attempt.

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

School Engagement Programme 2009/10

The School Engagement Programme is intended to be the main alternative provision for Key Stage 4 learners. It is a national programme and some excerpts from the QCA guidance are attached. We have received funding to operate the SEP for 2009/10. From 2010 onwards, the SEP will become part of the Foundation Learning provision and will not receive discrete funding. The programme for 2009/10 is outlined in the attached table. Key aspects for this year include:

- There will be a total of 12 funded places at any one time on the programme.

⁵ *The Contribution of non-formal learning to young people's life chances* – NYA, Fabian Society, April 2008

- All applicants will undertake a risk assessment and initial/diagnostic assessment before beginning the programme.
- Each school sending students into the programme must commit to full and active participation in the 14-19 Inclusion and Targeted Provision Group overseeing SEP.
- Each school sending students into the SEP will complete a Pre-CAF process to aid Connexions CAF process.
- All school referrals will need to be approved by the Head of Pupil Support.
- No school will be able to self-refer into the SEP

Morning sessions will be the “Positive Attitudes to Success” programme, on three days per week. The participation of 12 learners in KS4 in the SEP will be funded (from a range of sources including LSC SEP funding, LDA funding and DSG funding). The programme will lead to accreditation by DoE Award Scheme or other recognised qualifications. Afternoons will consist of vocational programmes, which will all be accredited with approved qualifications. The remaining two days are the responsibility of the school. Other provision could be available but would need to be funded. Such provision could include extended work experience. Students in Yr 10 could access the RBKC Collaborative Vocational Programme.

QCA School Engagement Programme Guidance (excerpts):

The target group

Sections 9.27 and 9.28 of the 14-19 White Paper state: *“The Entry to Employment route provides a motivating and engaging alternative route for those 16-19 year-olds whose attainment in education is relatively low and who are at serious risk of disaffection. But there is no comparable programme designed for 14-16 year olds. We need a strong work-focused route designed specifically to motivate those 14-16 year-old young people who are at the most risk and who we know would be motivated by a different learning environment. These young people may include those with poor records of attendance and behaviour, who are most in need of an improved offer of this sort, but are least likely to be attractive to employers.”*

The students will be at **key stage 4** and may be on the roll of a mainstream school, an academy or a pupil referral unit. The programme should be offered to those who are likely to benefit from its particular employment-focused structure and should not be used for students who would be better served by other initiatives and developments.

Some **key features** of students on the programme might include:

- Low skills levels and evidence of limited educational progress, possibly starting in primary school – but not necessarily lacking in ability
- Having a preferred learning style different from the mainstream
- Emotional and behavioural problems
- A wide range of disabilities, such as ADHD or Aspergers syndrome
- Psychological problems
- Family instability
- Substance abuse/victim of violence/known to the police
- Lack of confidence/frustration at not being able to achieve
- Inadequate social skills
- A deprived social background
- Having low aspirations

Key principles

- The Key Stage 4 Engagement Programme is a holistic programme incorporating the whole educational programme for these students.
- It will meet the needs, aspirations and interests of individuals through a personalised offering and offer them a positive learning opportunity.
- It will meet the needs of a wide range of learners within the 14-16 cohort at risk of disaffection and disengagement.
- Prior to entry there will be a timely rigorous diagnostic assessment of the needs of each young person and their suitability for the programme as a whole, including work-based options. There will be ongoing, regular assessment of their needs.
- High quality, regular support, advice and guidance are key features of the programme.
- Proper referral, preparation and induction will be key to the success of the programme for individuals.
- The programme will be content driven, not qualification/assessment driven. However, learners will have access to assessment for learning and qualifications with real currency, which they will be encouraged to take.
- There will be a strong work-focused element. It is expected that most participants will spend at least two days a week out of school on work-related activity. Wherever possible this should be in the work place.
- The content will include a mix of functional English, mathematics, ICT; personal and social development, including personal, thinking and learning skills, work-related learning and enterprise education, the balance varying with each individual.
- The curriculum will be supported, where possible, by engagement with out-of-school provision in the local community to result in a flexible, customised offering.
- Clear progression routes must be identified for each young person and transitional support provided as they progress out of the programme.
- Equal opportunities must be adhered to and the programme should be available to all appropriate students, regardless of factors such as gender, ethnicity or learning ability. It is important to avoid stereotyping, particularly in respect of gender.

Health

Given the experience of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) in innovative commissioning practice, there is much to learn from them. The London Borough of Camden is trialling a three-year programme of outcomes-based commissioning for health, including children and young people's health, begun in 2009. The presentation that can be found at the following link takes the reader through the implications of devising outcomes-based commissioning and procurement processes, tender documents and guidance; developing and embedding appropriate outcome measurement, capture and reporting mechanisms, developing culture change. http://www.commissioningsupport.org.uk/resource_bank/child_health/toolkits_and_good_practice.aspx?page=3

The learning can be multi-directional, however, in that Services for Young People have much to contribute towards Health Services' understanding of how their strategies impact on young people, and how their services can be better shaped to meet young people's needs. This has been highlighted recently by the You're Welcome approach, which aims to

ensure that health services are young people friendly, to improve their health outcomes. You're Welcome contributes towards the following National Indicators: NI 115, Substance misuse by young people; NI 112, Under 18 conception rate; NI 117, Percentage of young people NEET; NI 19, Rate of proven reoffending by young offenders.

[http://www.younglondonmatters.org/hottopics/you_re_welcome/
#Examples_of_Good_Practice](http://www.younglondonmatters.org/hottopics/you_re_welcome/#Examples_of_Good_Practice)

In an innovative example of policy development in the North West of England, regional bodies including Government Office North West, NHS North West and the regional Youth Work Unit, along with the Department of Health and local youth services collaborated on a conference on young people and alcohol (see case study). This not only helped young people to learn more about the potential impact of alcohol on their lives, but provided constructive suggestions for youth, health and police services to address the issue more widely and holistically, with a focus on prevention. This model could be usefully applied in London, to shape more effective services.

What's your problem? Young people and alcohol conference

The North West Regional Youth Work Unit was commissioned by Government Office North West, Department of Health and NHSNW to organise a conference for children and young people from across the North West to share their views on alcohol harm with key regional agencies. The event was to be offered to young people from across the North West and was designed to elicit the views, concerns and ideas they have.

Objectives:

- To provide a structured opportunity for children and young people to consider the impact of alcohol on their lives.
- To provide space for children and young people to tell key regional agencies what they think about alcohol in terms of how it affects them and what could be done to minimise harm.
- To provide an opportunity for key regional agencies to then consider how they could most effectively maintain a dialogue with group/s of children and young people over the coming 12-18 months, supporting the work of a regional Alcohol and Young People Task and Finish Group.
- For the NW Regional Youth Work Unit to submit a conference report to GONW, DH NW, NHS NW.

The initial plan was to engage 50-60 young people but there was a high level of interest and over 70 young people from 11 organisations booked on to the day. Young people were supported by youth workers and workers from other young people's services. These workers played an important role, both by supporting young people in the work they undertook on the day and also by sharing their perspective on the issues.

The predominant message from the young people's workshops was that alcohol education needed to be improved and that this would reduce the numbers of young people drinking and all of the risks they identified. It was felt there was simply not enough education around alcohol and in many cases it was delivered in "moralising" way and the young people felt judged when receiving it. They wanted workers to present the information in a balanced, non judgemental way, covering all aspects of the risks involved. There was some debate about which was the right profession to deliver this, swinging between youth workers and

teachers, which was finalised by one girl's statement "anyone can do it as long as they have the right attitude and they don't judge you and you can talk to them".

Most young people were aware of current publicity campaigns around both alcohol and sexual health but nearly all cited they had no impact. They felt messages about the risks were best delivered by peers, in the word of one participant "If it not my mates saying it, I don't listen". This concept translated also into the sorts of education they wanted to receive, with many saying hearing from other young people who had had alcohol problems or peer delivery schemes would provide the most impact.

In general young people were aware of many of the current initiatives and approaches to reducing the risks created by alcohol use. The one exception for this was the risk of missing/falling behind at school, and whilst three groups highlighted this issue none knew of anything that was currently being done about it.

The groups felt a greater range of activities for young people would divert them from drinking; however crucially improved transport is needed so that people can access these facilities.

In the case of violence and crimes linked to alcohol, some young people felt it was important that they should be recognised as victims rather than just perpetrators. A small number cited that when they reported violence or crimes to the police related to drink they were not taken seriously. Many felt the main focus of the Police in dealing with these issues was simply to "move them on".

In general the groups felt that where young people did have significant issues relating to alcohol, they need to be able to access support locally, confidentially and away from adult services. Some felt that the school nurse role (or services within schools) could be broadened and more accessible, however it was when accessing services in schools that they often perceived their confidentiality would not be respected. Specific examples listed in the outcomes of workshops section.

Many young people were also concerned that the perception that groups of young people congregate in public areas to contribute to negative stereotypes of young people within communities. They felt that it should be recognised the positive things that young people do should be promoted to counter balance this.

On a broader range of young people's health issues, in Kensington and Chelsea there are plans for Healthy Youth Centres, to allow the borough to address health inequalities more effectively.

Healthy Youth Centres Proposal

We propose to use the settings approach to health promotion to create at least four Health Promoting Youth Centres in K&C. These settings are located within the most deprived areas of the borough which allows for efficient targeting of health inequalities. Following the template developed in other settings, the initiative will be driven by a local steering group (e.g. youth centre staff, other staff from health care, social care and third sectors, parents and young people and a part-time HPYC Lead) and underpinned by a

self-assessment within each youth centre. This will provide the evidence for specific interventions.

The proposal has four elements:

- I. A **K&C Health Promoting Youth Centre Coordinator** will be employed to run this project. Drawing upon evidence of best practice, their duties will include:
 - Establishment of steering groups in four youth centres in K&C
 - Development of (youth club?) self-assessments and ensure they are completed
 - Establish Youth Health Trainers/Peer Health Education Initiative in Youth Centres
 - Liaise with health and social care partners to improve access to services
 - Support the implementation of projects in each Youth Centre that address the needs identified in the self-assessment and other sources
 - Provide training for HPYC leads and other youth centre staff
 - Collect process and outcome evaluation measures and work closely with any external evaluators that are commissioned.

Employment

Employment is both a short- and long-term issue for boroughs and for national government, with dramatic impacts on other areas of life, such as health and crime. Much of the work of IYSS is focused on reducing numbers of young people not in education, employment and training (NEET), and the effect of success in this area could and should be wide-reaching. NI 117, reducing the number of 16-18 year olds NEET, is a priority for 20 London boroughs, and the most frequently identified priority out of those specifically related to young people.

Research shows⁶ that wages and unemployment have significant effects on the extent of crime committed by men without further education but not by those who are more educated. Young people with criminal records experience much greater difficulty in finding work; the jobs they are able to take on tend to be low-paid, with little training, all of which makes a return to criminal activity much more likely, with long lasting impacts on the young people and their communities. *The cost of exclusion: counting the cost of youth disadvantage in the UK*, a report commissioned by the Prince's Trust, estimates that the costs of crime committed in 2004 by young people in London aged 10-24 was £128million; the figure nationally was just in excess of £1 billion. The contribution that IYSS make to this agenda is considerable; the savings that are made, however, do not accrue to IYSS budgets. *Worklessness costs audit*, a report for London Councils⁷, identifies that a significant part of the savings that are made in tackling unemployment are made in Housing and Council Tax Benefit.

In the current economic climate it is harder still for young people to find well-paid employment, or employment with training, and the skills of IAG personal advisers (PAs) become ever more important in finding appropriate pathways for young people. It is becoming clear that Diplomas are not clearly understood by young people or their families, and that not all PAs are familiar with them either, which needs to be urgently addressed.

⁶ *Crime Rates and Local Labor Market Opportunities in the United States: 1979-1999* The Review of Economics and Statistics, Vol. 84, No 1 – E.D. Gould, B.A. Weinberg and D.B. Mustard (2002)

⁷ *Worklessness costs audit*, March 2010 – Inclusion Research and Consultancy

Personalisation

Personalisation of services was introduced for young people in Aiming Higher for Disabled Children⁸, for the provision of self-directed support through individual budgets for disabled children and young people. Personalisation has already begun to revolutionise the delivery of services for adults through the use of individual budgets. The aim is to provide more flexible, targeted services that meet needs identified by young people and their families, which may well not reflect the standard packages previously provided, and which involve young people in active participation in the planning and review of the services.

It is likely that personalisation will be rolled out more widely across targeted services, and there are implications for IYSS in its broadest sense, especially for commissioners, for VCS organisations which will most frequently be called upon to deliver tailored services as part of a package, and for lead professionals, who will be required to co-ordinate the whole. As ever, there are workforce implications, in that IYSS staff need to be ready to be lead professionals; commissioners need to ensure that funding is available flexibly, in sufficient amounts, and to be aware of the range of services available, particularly from small, local organisations; VCS groups need to be aware of the commissioning arrangements.

Culture and sport

There is no doubt that many young people are attracted by cultural and sporting activities, which are particularly widely available in London, and which provide many obvious benefits: physical and mental health benefits; educational experiences and skills development; volunteering; developing friendships, teamwork and a sense of belonging; cultural awareness; in fact, culture and sport contribute directly to achievement of all five Every Child Matters outcomes. For these very developmental reasons, culture and sport also contribute extensively to diversionary activities and reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour statistics. Moreover, the Audit Commission's Place Survey (2009) noted that "London residents who are satisfied with local libraries, theatres, concert halls, museums and galleries, parks and open spaces are more likely to agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well (NI 1)".

Services for Young People have traditionally been good at engaging young people with arts, music and sport activities, which feature highly in the provision of both universal and targeted positive activities. The approaching 2012 Olympics and the Cultural Olympiad provide a focus for these activities, with targets for increasing numbers of young people involved – "tens of thousands more young people [across England] participating in cultural activities as a result of the 2012 Games" (DCMS, June 2008). At a time of cuts in public spending, however, these non-statutory services, like Services for Young People, are at risk. As part of the drive to demonstrate the value of and to protect what works, Services for Young People need to highlight the contributions of cultural and sporting partnerships to local communities, and to offer their skills and experiences to helping other sectors engage.

How the Arts and Culture are an integrated part of delivering Positive Activities and Every Child Matters Outcomes in Richmond

Positive Activities Matter: an introduction

Positive Activities for Young People have been a core part of Arts delivery in Richmond since their inception. As part of an integrated service, we develop progressive projects,

⁸ *Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families* - HM Treasury, DCSF, May 2007

building long-term relationships with vulnerable young people to achieve their cultural entitlement, *Five Hours Culture*, and meet the priorities of *Every Child Matters*.

Our PAYP methodology is to deliver artist-led projects, working to create a tangible end result through which young people's achievements can be celebrated. Young people often work to a creative brief, culminating in work that is exhibited and shared, rather than being engaged in diversionary visits to a theme park or similar. The distinction is that such projects necessitate a far greater degree of commitment than a one-off activity – for young people, staff and organisations. Increasingly, our projects are focussed on entitlement to unique opportunities in the borough and beyond, making the most of our resources as a museum and heritage/arts centre. These projects challenge common assumptions about how young people respond to historical or museum-based positive activities and the relevance of such themes for them. In 2007, *Culture Vultures*, worked with young people looked after within sibling and friend groups. They explored historic and contemporary leisure activities across Richmond and their final photographic works were exhibited at Orleans House Gallery alongside works from the Borough Art Collection. This project built strong trust-relationships with children looked after and their families, many who remain in contact with us and continue to access ongoing PAYP provision. Through *Every Drawing Matters* (2004-5) young people created artwork exploring the objectives of *Every Child Matters*, learning about how policy might affect them. This led to *What We Say Matters* (2005-6) where young people created an animated film outlining their priorities for delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan.

Through our current project *London World City* (2010-11), young people are developing work in response to the *Burton Collection* and the work of international contemporary artists on the theme of Journeys. Their work will be exhibited at Orleans House Gallery as part of the *Cultural Olympiad*, providing young people with substantial opportunities for their contributions to be recognised on a national level. Whilst each year often brings a new 'theme', these projects are devised as progressive programme of activities that allow young people to engage with the gallery over a sustained period. For some, this may bring a high level of ongoing commitment through holiday and weekend periods. For others, it can provide a reliable place to return to as they navigate challenges they face in the wider world.

Structure Matters: advocating to colleagues beyond Cultural Services

The creation of the Children's Trust in Richmond (2005) led to new title reflecting the contribution and value of culture in 2009 "Children's Services and Culture". This level of integration and our new Cultural Partnership Plan aligned to the Children and Young People's Plan has allowed a more robust approach to supporting young people at the gallery. Our track record of young people's projects have "*proved our unique contribution*" to PAYP across the borough, and this has led to a 'commissioning approach' to the continuation of funding for activities. Never the less, there is a perception that our work is expensive. The costs of extended PAYP projects that Orleans House Gallery deliver are significantly higher than diversionary-focused PAYP delivered as one-off activities. Our 2008-9 PAYP project *Get Set Go!* was supported through a range of funders, including PAYP, the Youth Opportunities Fund and schools' SEN provision. This proved an extremely powerful formula in building trust with very vulnerable young people. Rather than in-school and out-of-school provision being compartmentalised, we are part of an integrated support package with other people in their lives.

People Matter: Children's Services and Cultural Services working practically together

Culture in Richmond is seen as part of the integrated workforce. As Head of Arts, I sit on the management team for the directorate along with colleagues across every division. At front line level we have worked hard to establish relationships with those working with vulnerable children. This has developed a spirit of collaboration with sophisticated referral processes and relationships forged directly with young people and their parents/carers. Our 2005 cultural pathfinder project *Culture 4 Keeps*, was built on the principle that the cultural experiences you have as a child have a significant impact on your ability to engage in culture in later life. Since that time, *Culture 4 Keeps* has become embedded in the relationship between Children's Services and Culture. Continuity of staff is key in providing a safe, flexible, family atmosphere for young people to engage with. As one young person put it: "it's a sanctuary really". All our staff input in a young person's engagement, supporting their development way beyond call of duty. Equally, young people develop strong relationships with our pool of artists who return at intervals through progressive projects, allowing young people to engage in new positive exchanges with adults.

Every Child Matters: integrating priorities for young people

Many of our young people are very self aware that being at the gallery is "keeping them off the streets" and away from crime, drugs and alcohol. What is different about our programme is how well integrated it is with all of the key objectives of *Every Child Matters*. and the genuine progression opportunities it can provide. Qualifications are important to young people, as is experience of the world of work. Often, engaging in positive activities at the gallery leads to both of these as a young person's commitment develops. Arts Awards have proved a popular qualification, providing structure to developing creative and cultural leadership skills. Work-based learning is supported by programmes such as 'V Inspired' and links with Positive Activities for younger people, providing peer-mentoring with support from gallery staff. We place a great deal of trust in young people and in return, they show a high level of responsibility and maturity.

Young people contribute to a raft of developments at the gallery and beyond. Across PAYP there is a push towards distinct 'youth led' activities. But, as an organisation we believe we can provide a more integrated way of enabling young people to make a positive contribution and influence our work, providing experiences of positive relationships with those of all ages, which they can apply to relationships in the wider world.

Culture Counts: developing ideas and creativity

Young people's entitlement to culture can be so much more than 'consumption'. Young people want to actively participate in cultural activities, and the benefits for them can be transformative.

- Increased self-confidence and self-esteem to make positive life choices.
- Improved social skills and relationships: forming relationships they would not have done in school, positively engaging with adults, being a contributing part of an organisation.
- Community cohesion: making active choices, developing a positive stake in society.
- Anti-bullying: opportunities to mix with young people they wouldn't mix with in school.
- Improved relationships with parents/siblings/other professionals: in some circumstances could even help reduce family breakdown/number of young people being taken into care.
- Increased aspiration and desire to achieve: sense of achievement of being the best at something maybe first time, widening horizons, positively experiencing new situations.

- Being stretched through pain and boredom barriers, and aiming for final acknowledgement.
- Working with artists as equals, not as ‘teachers’: encouraging, alternative role models.
- Recognition and accreditation of their work: getting Arts Award, public celebrations/exhibitions.
- Attendance: ‘success’ and trying out more mature/responsible behaviours transfers to other situations.

This is what motivates us at Orleans House Gallery to do what we do – helping young people enjoy culture and receive their entitlement. It is helpful that this also helps to tackle big issues such as crime and anti-social behaviour in our borough. But the effect the arts can have on an individual level is at the core of our work. Culture enriches lives, takes young people away from the everyday and their everyday problems. We want them to learn the value of culture to ensure that their next generation has access to culture in the way they would not have without positive activities. That’s why culture matters. To find out how you can develop projects with your local museum, gallery or arts organisation contact your borough’s Arts Officer or speak to someone at the national association for gallery education www.engage.org.uk or for museums contact one of the London museum development officers for your area http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/renaissance/regions/london/who/hub_team

Rachel Tranter, Head of Arts, Orleans House Gallery and Arts Service, and Nathalie Palin, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

In 2008, London Councils introduced its Cultural Improvement Programme, the second stage of which is entitled Delivering value through London’s cultural services. This aims to enable cultural services to “deliver value by striking a balance between process and efficiency and delivering effective services that are aligned closely to wider outcomes and local area priorities”. One of the new work strands introduced in 2009 is Working with Children’s Services, which will improve the quality and equality of cultural provision across London for children and young people through the development of an infrastructure which facilitates joined up working between Children’s Services and Cultural Services; identification and collection of the data needed at a local level to evidence impact, identify efficiencies and lever future investment; capacity building of professionals to understand complementary LAA priorities, national initiatives and each other’s skills and expertise. Seminars on safeguarding are currently being delivered to cultural organisations as part of the capacity building strand.

Commissioning

Effective commissioning is essential to the delivery of the right services for the best value. There are many resources about the process of commissioning, but the National Audit Office has recently produced an online guide⁹ that, rather than telling commissioners how to do commissioning, focuses on those aspects of the process that are most likely to affect financial relationships with third sector organisations. It looks at how commissioners can help the third sector to deliver services and outcomes that represent value for money. The guide sets out the main issues for effective financial relationships with third sector organisations; makes use of existing guidance in an accessible and practical way, and dispels some of the myths that exist around commissioning with the third sector.

http://www.nao.org.uk/guidance_good_practice/third_sector/successful_commissioning/successful_commission_toolkit/toolkit_home.aspx

At a time of severe cuts in public spending, there is pressure to slash budgets to protect balance sheets, without particular regard to the impact on the communities being served. Conflict can arise between what local politicians want to see and what local authority officers are prepared to spend, and Heads of Service can be caught in the middle. There is no quick fix, and it is more than ever important that Heads of Service are linked into the right partnerships where they can express their arguments forcefully with the maximum of political skill. These arguments will differ from borough to borough; they will frequently include:

Resist the temptation to cut services that are commissioned out.

Although [Connexions/Information Advice and Guidance \(IAG\)](#) services are fundamental to the 14-19 reform agenda, as the offer to young people is wider than it has ever been, and support for them and their families is increasingly important, IAG is particularly vulnerable to being cut. There are a number of knock-on effects:

- Services are likely to be restructured to reduce costs, with the result that the emphasis may well narrow to focus on job-brokerage, in a more targeted way. While this is a useful service, it flies in the face of accepted policy of treating a young person's needs holistically, in that it ignores the need for wider IAG to enable a young person to deal with the issues that prevent them from engaging with education or work in the first place (e.g. health or homelessness). The effect of failing to offer a wider range of IAG support will be that those who are least ready to access work or training will be those whose needs are least met; this in turn will increase the numbers of young people NEET, which is the reverse of what the service is trying to achieve.
- Where services cut administrative support as a cost-saving measure to keep the breadth of services available, the effect is to increase workloads for the front-line staff, which is self-defeating, both for the quality and quantity of work that can be achieved.
- Both of those short-term 'solutions' have the result that, in addition to the human cost, there will be less likelihood of meeting local targets, and in the longer term the costs of meeting increased need go up.

The corollary of this is to buy services that make a demonstrable difference, providing value as opposed to cheapness. This is a case that needs to be strongly argued in relation to meeting local targets and demonstrating prevention savings among others. It has implications for the development of service specifications that are clear about the range of outcomes to be achieved, and the associated quality assurance requirements.

Bexley Youth Advice (BYA) offers 13-19 year olds, or 25 for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, guidance on a range of topics including education, training and careers advice, health issues, welfare benefits, housing advice and volunteering all in one convenient location. It also runs workshops, provides somewhere for young people to meet up with a range of people who provide youth or advice services on a one to one basis, and offers surgeries and group work. Free internet access for young people to use for research, application forms or to create CVs is also available.

Bexley's Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS) developed Bexley Youth Advice after extensive feedback from local young people. They asked for a range of services just for them, but in one place. Bexley Youth Advice, based at 233 The Broadway, is managed by

the London Borough of Bexley and Prospects Services Ltd. It opens Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. Evening and Saturday sessions are planned for the future.

The London Borough of Bexley has been able to make use of the convenient offices in Bexleyheath thanks to Prospects Services Ltd. Prospects worked to develop the new service and agreed to relocate staff so that their offices could be used for the BYA. Young people have been involved in the development of the BYA every step of the way, from voting for the name of the centre and designing the eye catching logo, to choosing the colours and the services that will be provided.

The IYSS is made up of a range of partner agencies including the Council's own Integrated Youth Service, voluntary and community groups, Bexley Care Trust, the Police, Oxleas, Prospects Connexions, Bexley Voluntary Service Council and the London Borough of Bexley's Neighbourhood Service and Library services.

- IAG -Prospects Services Ltd delivers the Connexions Agenda (Daily service – booked and walk-in appointments)
- Targeted PAs (Council employed) (Daily service – booked and walk-in appointments –AM only)
- Housing (Daily service – booked and immediate referrals)
- Y.O.T. (Booked appointments only)
- Youth services (Booked appointments only)
- Sexual health clinics (Condoms are issued even when the nurse isn't available, on production of the 'C' card) (Nurse attend clinic three times week for 'walk-in' self referrals)
- Youth Engagement Service (offer counselling service) (booked appointments)
- Several voluntary organisations including the DAT; Metro Centre: SOVA.

Other partner organisations are invited in to interview clients such as local training providers; colleges; employers.

The IYSS (including Prospects Staff) have been co-located in Council accommodation at the Howbury Centre; with access to the PRU (Pupil referral unit), Leaving Care team and social workers.

Nicky Warren, Team Manager, Prospects nicky.warren@prospects.co.uk

Ensure that high quality staff are not lost through short term thinking

Where projects are funded in the short term, and possibilities for mainstreaming or further funding are not made clear in advance, highly skilled practitioners can be lost, sometimes unnecessarily. This applies both to local authority and voluntary sector staff, any of whom can feel uncertainty about their future prospects and either leave before the end of a project in order to secure another, more certain, post, or who have to be made redundant in January where continuation of a contract cannot be confirmed beyond March. Where contracts are then re-commissioned, there is an enforced hiatus while new staff are recruited, which means that outcomes can't be met within timescales. This is unhelpful for VCS organisations, which have to protect themselves and their staff by issuing the redundancy notices in time, but then risk reputational loss if they are unable to meet the renewed requirements.

Demonstrate the value of preventative services

Explore the links between Services for Young People and those statutory services that are not being cut, e.g. social care. If you can show a link between preventative activities and reducing care placements, for example, there are significant savings to be made. This could also apply to the contribution that Services for Young People can make to adult services (e.g. social care, custody). The caveat with preventative savings is that one service spends the money and another makes the savings – this requires increased collaboration over budgets which is much easier to say than do.

Demonstrating the value of services requires consistent, valid formulae for calculating benefits and savings, which have not yet been established. Strategic bodies, nationally or regionally, should be looking to develop and promote such formulae, though clearly this is not a short term solution for services looking to demonstrate impact now. It is an issue which Partnership for Young London will promote and seek action from regional and national government.

Project Oracle – demonstrating value and effectiveness

As part of the GLA's Time for Acton programme, Project Oracle aims to identify and share good practice in existing work with young people, particularly in the area of reducing youth violence and promoting health and development. To this end, the Oracle Evaluation Toolkit is being developed, which will consist of an Assessment Framework to provide a method of scoring interventions against set standards, and a self-assessment tool to enable service providers to measure their own intervention against the standards. At the time of writing, the draft standards are almost complete, but the aim of producing these standards is clear: "Widespread use across the London region of a single set of criteria will bring greater consistency to judgements about how to reduce youth violence and promote health and development".

VCS Framework for Action

The *VCS Framework for Action* emphasises the need for consistency in a pan-London approach to quality assurance, in particular in finding ways to align monitoring and quality assurance processes, to the benefit of those organisations working across several boroughs and engaging with the concomitant commissioning requirements. The Overview and Action Group steering the implementation of the Framework hopes to hold a round table event in 2010 to bring together funders, commissioners and the VCS to explore how best to balance maintaining standards with minimising the number of different quality marks that VCS organisations have to attain in order to be commissioned (e.g. by creating a list of quality marks and standards that will be accepted across London).

The potential for cross borough commissioning

Cross-borough commissioning needs to be improved and increased if we are to offer more, better, for less. The barriers here involve persuading elected members of the efficacy of working with other boroughs; ensuring commissioning systems are matched and appropriate; demonstrating the value of delivering services this way. There have always been services that are uneconomic to run on a single borough basis (such as support for young runaways, young people at risk of sexual exploitation, etc) where either the numbers involved are too small or the population concerned is very mobile. These services have often been delivered by the VCS, which can cross borough boundaries more easily, though not without attendant issues of multiple commissioning processes to manage, with their various requirements for quality assurance systems, and the inconsistency of offer around training and workforce

development to name but a few. This report is not the place, however, for a detailed critique of cross-borough commissioning; the aim in highlighting the issue is to draw attention to services that can be delivered for good value in innovative ways.

Shared services

Capital Ambition has developed a guide¹⁰ to help local authorities consider whether and how to share professionals or professional services, e.g. through sharing an individual (e.g. a job role) or a team, or through procuring services. The guide focuses on the first two options, which might be less appropriate than the third for IYSS. In exploring the process from deciding on whether to share, through building the business case, to managing the process (risk assessment, contractual, governance and practical issues, etc), it would be useful in any shared service situation.

There is scope for boroughs that have demonstrated success in running projects to be commissioned by other boroughs to run theirs, ensuring high quality services more efficiently and for a greater number of people. This can be applied particularly in sustaining projects for which short-term funding has come to an end. For example, all boroughs have areas of deprivation, and where these form a smaller part of that borough's make-up, the needs of the disadvantaged people within those communities are not less than elsewhere. Where new grants are dependent on indices of deprivation, boroughs that are perceived as more affluent still require funding to deliver to the disadvantaged within their communities, but are much less likely to receive it. Offering these services in a structured way to other boroughs makes financial sense and provides good outcomes for the provider and host boroughs.

Action learning sets

VCS Engage and the Commissioning Support Programme in London have set up a series of action learning sets, bringing VCS organisations and commissioners from boroughs together to learn together how to improve the process for both sectors. This learning will be cascaded more widely once the first series has been completed.

Conclusion

Even in the time it took to develop this piece of work, a significant number of documents were released that looked in far more detail than could be dealt with here – a quick glance at the resources list that follows will show that January to March 2010 saw important documents on youth work and youth services from sector specialists, alongside Total Place and other broader, efficiency-based documents. In the wake of the election, the talk has been of severe cuts to public services, and IYSS will undoubtedly be affected. We need to be able to marshal the arguments to protect services, not simply for their own sake but for the sake of the young people and their families and communities.

Whatever policy decisions follow the budget announcements at the end of June, it is likely that the importance of viewing young people in the context of their family is likely to continue. The Think Family approach in its most recent form has aimed to secure better outcomes for children, young people and families with additional needs by coordinating the support they receive from children, adult and family services. It takes account of how individual problems affect the whole family, and provides targeted support for parents and families - such as Family Intervention Projects and Parenting Early Intervention programmes designed to provide evidence-based support to families experiencing problems. While the format and funding structures may change, the holistic emphasis on families is likely to underpin future policy strands.

¹⁰ *Implementing Shared Professionals: an evolving guide* – Capital Ambition and Institute for Employment Studies

The theme that runs through the topics explored in this report is partnership working. We often hear that partnership is a meaningless word, and it was on the LGA's recent list of words not to be used in dealing with the public. Those of us who work within partnerships know, however, that the value of good collaboration is much more than the sum of its parts, and it provides possible routes to preserving valuable services, if those involved can think creatively about the best ways to achieve positive outcomes for young people.

Resources

The list that follows includes those resources that were used to support the writing of this report, and additional ones that provide useful information to service managers as part of wider reading. They have been broadly separated into two categories: those relating directly to work with young people, and those with a wider remit, for example whole-authority approaches or economic viability studies. Almost all of them are available in PYL's online resources library, at www.pyl.org.uk/resources.php (The rare exceptions are not available as PDFs.)

Youth work and Services for Young People

Better never stops – AYM, CHYPS, NCN, NCVYS, NYA, March 2010

Reducing the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training: what works and why – Ofsted, March 2010

The benefits of youth work – Unite the Union, March 2010

The Harrow guide for working in partnership with children and young people – Harrow Council, 2009

Engaging young people: local authority youth work 2005-2008 – Ofsted, March 2009

What's your problem? Young people and alcohol conference, key outcome report – North West Regional Youth Work Unit, 26 March 2009

A whole life approach to personalisation – Crosby & Duffy, In Control, October 2008

The young inspectors' pilot project interim report - Government Office for London, July 2008

The Contribution of non-formal learning to young people's life chances – NYA and the Fabian Society, April 2008

Targeted Youth Support case studies – DCSF, December 2007-August 2008

Building on the best: overview of local authority youth services 2005/6 – Ofsted, 2007

Whole authority approaches/value for money

Total Place: a whole area approach to public services – HM Treasury, CLG, March 2010

Worklessness costs audit – Inclusion (for London Councils), March 2010

Implementing shared professionals – Capital Ambition, March 2010

Britain's Lost Talent – The Prince's Trust, February 2010

The state of happiness: Can public policy shape people's wellbeing and resilience?
The Young Foundation, January 2010

Total Place – towards a new service model for Londoners – London Councils, January 2010

Draft Standards of evidence for the Greater London Authority: An evaluation standard produced as part of the Project Oracle evaluation toolkit – the Social Research Unit, Dartington, December 2009

Opportunities in an age of austerity: smart ways of dealing with the UK's fiscal deficit
– ippr, December 2009

Playing their part – culture and sport's contribution to local life in the capital –
London Councils, December 2009

Delivering more for less: maximising value in the public sector – Local Government Association, November 2009

Shared Cities Learning: Better outcomes for children (conference report), October 2009

Backing the Future: why investing in children is good for us all – Action for Children and NEF, September 2009

Public Expenditure and Investment Study (part of Total Place) – Be Birmingham (LSP) and ekogen, July 2009

Rethinking Recession – needs and opportunities for sector change – Cass Business School and The Prince's Trust, May 2009

Securing better health for children and young people through world class commissioning
– DCSF/DH, February 09

Rapid evidence assessment of effective early interventions for youth at risk of poor future outcomes – DCSF, October 2008

The Cost of Exclusion: Counting the cost of youth disadvantage in the UK –
The Prince's Trust, 2007

Benefits and costs of prevention and early intervention programmes for youth –
Washington State Institute for Public Policy, September 2004

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