

Annex A – Covering Template for Responses

Please complete the attached cover sheet when sending evidence, indicating the set of questions to which a response is being provided and contact details of the person for any follow-up queries.

Contact details for respondent	
Name	
Job title	Head of Youth and Community Team
Do you represent an organisation? (if so, name of organisation and type: e.g. voluntary, public body, private company).	Youth and Community Team Dudley MBC Local Authority
Postal address	Youth and Community Team 8 Parsons Street Dudley West Midlands DY1 1JJ
Telephone number	
Email	

	Which area of the review are you responding to? (please mark X)
Prevention strand	
Review of disabled children	
Strategy for youth services	X
Review of high cost, high harm families	

1. Local Authority Youth Services in Dudley are deployed on an area basis taking budgets and decision-making closer to the point of delivery. Youth engagement activities have increased significantly over the past 3 years, supported by TYWDF and now mainstreamed. However, more resources are needed to support this developing agenda.
2. Additional resources could be made available to increase the capacity of Youth Services for high performing managers and practitioners to support other services as improvement partners.
3. Early Years provision has seen an investment in attractive, accessible children's centres and schools are benefiting from Building Schools for the Future funding. A programme of capital and revenue funding will benefit young people and their communities, providing safe places and skilled youth workers.
4. Dudley Youth Service has noted the deep dive findings of the National Teenage Pregnancy Unit and worked closely with our Teenage Pregnancy Unit. A specialist youth worker provides young parents in Dudley high quality support and enabling the development of their skills in parenting, sexual health and basic skills.
5. Dudley Youth Service is reaching more than 25% of the 13-19 population. Targeted work is delivered through universal service provision. Extended opening hours need to take into account workforce capacity and resource implications.
6. Most young people are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities, general perceptions of young people do not always reflect this. Young people need to see evidence of change as a result of their engagement. Youth workers have supported Dudley Youth Council to produce a series of striking posters that juxtapose negative views of young people against images of young people who have been recognised by their annual awards event of making a positive contribution. (Please contact me if you would like a set of these)
7. A needs led service should reflect the local situation, include a mixed economy and have sufficient resources to respond to local need. Targeting work needs to emerge from a base line of universal access to avoid stigmatisation of our service.
8. The standards in Resourcing Excellent Youth services have provided a useful set of benchmarks for us to share with partners and for us to monitor progress. I would welcome a review of those standards together with clear definitions and guidance to avoid different interpretations. We have developed and embedded an effective quality assurance framework, based on OFSTED criteria, that is involving staff and young people. The investment into improved data collection systems and the expertise of a

management information officer mean that as a service we are able to more effectively capture data.

9. We recognise the diversity that the voluntary sector brings to young people in Dudley. Commissioning arrangements have improved with compact agreements and service level agreements offering greater security. However the long-term sustainability of funding remains a real threat. Effective work with Dudley Council for Voluntary Service has brokered improved partnership working with voluntary sector organisations.
10. The establishment of a dedicated equalities team has enabled the service to increase targeted work with those with greater needs.
11. As a result of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding, Dudley has developed detached youth work in specific areas. In St Thomas's Ward, we have worked closely with partners on the ground to address issues of anti-social behaviour and as a result has been recognised as contributing substantially to a reduction in reported incidents. The positive relationships that have been built up have been with young people, parents, partners and the local community.
The Wheels project is an example of positive partnership working. Young people are referred to the scheme that focuses on motor mechanics in order to address their behaviour. Group work skills provide opportunities for safe and constructive activities behind the wheel and access to alternative accredited opportunities. The project has grown and developed as demand and recognition continues to grow.
Me 2 have provided Dudley Youth services with the expertise to work towards fully inclusive services. The impact of this is however limited by needing increased staffing levels and skills.
12. Some young people are dissuaded by high costs and poor transport. An improved infrastructure including affordable and good quality transport, effective communication, a range of accessible and welcoming venues and enthusiastic and supportive staff can encourage young people to "have a go" at something different.
13. Dudley Youth Service has involved young people in the self-assessment and inspection of its services for the last two years. Young people's views on the service and how it needs to be improved have informed feedback to practitioners and their line managers, and these points have been incorporated in improvement plans, which are monitored through supervision. As a result, youth service provision has seen a marked improvement in terms of its self-assessment scores. This project has been identified as an example of good practice regionally, with a presentation being given to Government Office. Both young people and staff have also been asked to deliver a workshop at the regional youth work conference at the end of October.

14. People are attracted to youth work often through a belief in the potential of young people. Recruitment sometimes comes through a strong tradition of volunteering that often encourages local people to become involved in local initiatives. We have structured the entry of volunteers into our service that is depicted on a flow chart and we have a close working relationship with Dudley Volunteers Bureau. We recently undertook an exercise with staff when they told us why they became a youth worker; responses included "I wanted this job/career because I am a product of good intervention youth work. Someone believed in me and saw my potential. I want to ensure more get the same chance and opportunity." Many said they wanted to "make a difference"

What is less attractive is the level of pay for the levels of responsibility and risks involved, also the perceived status of youth workers compared to other professionals working with young people.