

Annex B3: Terms of Reference for the Strategy for Youth Services.

Key Questions

What is the current distribution of youth services and youth engagement activities available across the country/ How is that likely to evolve following the Youth Green Paper?

An overview of statutory youth services, managed by local authorities can be gained by looking at the NYA annual audit database. This will show an uneven distribution based on spend per head of youth population.

In the Youth Green Paper there is a focus on 'youth activity' but a degree of ambiguity as to the role of youth services. The Youth Matters agenda encourages more partnership working across youth service sectors and those providing activities for young people.

Building on the Youth Green Paper, is there more that could be done to improve and sustain the effectiveness in the delivery of existing services and activities?

Kent Youth Service is working with the twelve District Councils, as part of the Local Area Agreement, to develop integrated youth provision, based on consultation with young people and set out in Youth Plans. Such partnership working will increase the coherence in planning of service delivery.

What are the particular barriers faced by different groups of young people, including disabled young people, in accessing services, and what are the policy issues that arise?

Barriers to participation have often resulted from a lack of a clear needs analysis in an area. Joint planning through LAA Youth Plans, Children Consortia, and Cluster Plans and the pooling and targeting of resources to meet needs should reduce such barriers.

How can we best combine demand led provision for young people with provision that is planned and structured to have the best impact on outcomes for children and young people?

This challenging dichotomy has been addressed by successful youth services. The voluntary nature of youth work has meant it has had to ensure programmes of activity are fun and engaging, thus satisfying what young people want. In the best services these programmes are also planned, structured and challenging around addressing young people's needs in terms of their personal and social development and support in their transition through adolescence.

What more can we do to support and enable young people to exert a strong demand side influence on provision? What would we expect in return from young people – their rights and responsibilities?

In high quality youth services young people are actively engaged in decision making processes at project and service level and are therefore supported in developing decision making skills and assuming responsibility. Youth work is not a consumerist activity, but a process of informal education founded on the quality of relationships between young people and skilled and caring adults who support their personal and social development.

What principles and priorities should guide the allocation of current and future resources? And whom do we need to target?

Any model should include a floor level of universal accessibility to services and an enhanced entitlement in areas of deprivation.

What measures and milestones need to be in place to ensure that performance can be accessed and delivery monitored at a local level

Kent's experience with PSA and LAA targets is that such measures and milestones need to be agreed and monitored locally rather than centrally imposed. A centralist model creates a bureaucratic reporting structure and the scope for conflicting targets and perverse incentives whereby agencies chase targets rather than ensure outcomes are delivered in a joined up way.

Supplementary Questions.

Which projects and programmes in the last five years have had a proven and sustained impact and brought innovation to delivery of services for young people?

The deployment of youth workers into a range of multi-agency settings:-

- the 16plus service for young people leaving care;
- youth workers deployed to schools as part of preventative integrated youth support and in support of the extended schools agenda;
- the youth service managing alternative curriculum provision for excluded KS4 pupils;
- Youth advice drop –in centres working with health and other agencies;
- partnership working with Connexions, e.g. the U – Project;
- a youth worker deployed within an Adolescent Resource Centre for highly vulnerable young people, a youth worker deployed with a CDRP team;
- the E2E programme managed by KEY Training in Kent;
- the development of mobile provision to extend youth services to young people in rural areas;
- open access youth work that is able to effectively mix universal and targeted provision including supporting young people who occasionally need targeted support.
- The establishment of Kent Youth County Council