



NYA Commission into 'what is a sufficient youth offer'



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About the National Youth Agency

The National Youth Agency (NYA) is the national expert and development organisation in youth policy and youth work, supporting those who work with young people in England with a particular focus on local government and their partners.

Our focus is youth work and we believe strongly that by investing in young people's personal and social development they are better able to live more active and fulfilling lives. We support those involved in the planning, commissioning and delivery of young people's personal and social development, and whose work is concerned with enabling all young people to fulfil their potential as individuals and citizens.

We work in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations in seeking to secure better policies and outcomes for young people. We work with, and through, the sector to create an influential set of products which help organisations and practitioners to deliver more effectively to young people and improve the quality of practice. We are also involved in developing tools to support the demonstration of the impact of youth work approaches on outcomes for young people and in securing new resources for the sector through private sector engagement.

Executive summary

Introduction

There are real challenges in establishing what a sufficient offer to young people should look like. The Commission heard a number of conflicting views and opinions, and there was considerable debate over how explicit an offer should be – whether it should be aspirational or realistic and whether it should be for the 'here and now', or an offer that all can work towards achieving.

Local conditions on the ground mean that producing a 'one size fits all' description of what a sufficient local offer would look like is of limited value. However, a consensus has emerged over the role that local and central government must play. This is supported by evidence found in research and the NYA's own work with councils.

Preconditions for sufficiency

The Commission is clear that there are a number of pre-conditions that support a sufficient local offer.

- Young people matter. The vast majority of young people make a positive contribution to society and are fortunate enough to be able to access what they need and want. There are, however, a minority that require further support.
- The extent of the challenges that face most young people at normal times are exacerbated by the global recession, which has led in turn to significant cuts in the very public services that support young people.
- Services cannot be provided without adequate funding. We do not believe that the solution to sufficiency can simply be set as a minimum spend per head. Such a simplistic approach

would not take into account the contribution that the voluntary and community sector plays, and would make reporting on expenditure subject to massive interpretation. We believe that the local authority should give specific consideration to whether its current provision in the area, through all providers, is sufficient to meet the needs of young people. If this is not the case, then it is failing in its duty. We also call for a specific Youth Premium, funded by central government and administered by local government to ensure that those young people requiring further help can receive it.

Youth workers create conditions where young people can thrive. The Commission believes that there is a clear role for youth work in improving the lives of young people. A good sustained youth work intervention can reduce the likelihood of a young person needing high cost, more interventionist services later on.¹

What a sufficient local offer looks like

A sufficient local offer to young people requires the involvement of both local and central government. We cannot prescribe a 'one size fits all' model of sufficiency as this would not be practical. However, the Commission believes that the following action points must be addressed by local and central government to ensure that an offer is sufficient.

Central government must

1. Play an aspirational role – it must set the direction of travel that it expects of councils. A clear statement from government on the importance of providing a sufficient offer to young people is required.

¹ Leisure Contexts in Adolescence and their Effects on Adult Outcomes: A More Complete Picture, Feinstein, L and Robson, K, May 2007

2. Set minimum levels of expectation. It should set out defined processes that councils must follow to ensure that provision is as effective as it can be. These are set out below in our expectations for local authorities. However, whilst this must be prescribed nationally, it should be for councils to determine how they will deliver this.
3. Hold local authorities to account on their ability to provide an overall offer of sufficient quality. Government must be prepared to intervene where services are not functioning to the agreed level.
4. Play an enabling role – collecting and promoting examples of excellence to share learning.
5. Introduce a Youth Premium that will run alongside the local authority offer for young people. This will secure a targeted entitlement for all young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to access free, high quality youth work. This should be a specific funding stream from central government and administered by local authorities, with an addition to Statutory Guidance to ensure use of the Youth Premium is determined in conjunction with young people themselves.

Local authorities must

1. Assume the leadership role – they have the greatest understanding of what is happening in their area and are best placed to ensure that all stakeholders are at the table. The local authority must play the key quality assurance role in the local offer to young people.
2. Be effective commissioners. The best councils know what is needed and the outcomes that are required, and should look at the best way to deliver this. This must include the involvement of stakeholders and young people in the process, a detailed needs analysis and

an understanding of effective outcomes-based commissioning.

3. Include the right mix of open access provision alongside targeted activities. It is not sufficient to assume that open access provision will be delivered by others.
4. Actively build capacity within their boundaries and seek to develop a market for providing services to all providers which encourages high quality provision. This could include seed corn funding to enable new providers to tender for and provide services.
5. Work with all key partners. Without the involvement of schools and FE, health, community safety partnerships and VCS providers, it could not be considered a fully joined up offer.
6. Ensure that planning is not undertaken in isolation. It must include consideration of existing provision and the development of a shared ambition for the local offer, and include the active involvement of young people in the co-production of services.
7. Ensure that there is a workforce with the skills to engage with young people on their terms and reflect and meet their needs.
8. Ensure that all services are accessible to young people. A sufficient offer would provide innovative ways to address barriers – for example, access to transport. This must also take into account the new 'right to challenge' and community transfer of assets.
9. Publicise the offer and provide information on what is available and where, and highlight where improvements have been made to the offer as a result of young people's involvement. Built into the offer must be contingency planning to affect change should provision be insufficient.

Introduction

Why the need for this Commission?

Positive for Youth, a new approach to cross-Government policy for young people aged 13 to 19,² published in 2011, is the Government's policy for young people and youth services. Within it the Government confirmed that the statutory duty on local authorities to secure access to a local offer is to remain. The duty, contained in Section 507B (inserted into the Education Act 1996 by section 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and brought in by the Labour Government) required that:

"Every local authority in England must, 'so far as reasonably practicable', secure for qualifying young persons in the authority's area access to:

- a) sufficient educational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities; and
- b) sufficient recreational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities."

The term 'reasonably practicable' was described as 'depending on the specific circumstances of the local authority and the particular requirement for access to such activities and facilities'.

It went on to state:

"In judging what is reasonably practicable an authority may take into account its resources, capabilities and other priorities, as well as that of its children's trust partners in the public, private and third sector. However,

what is practicable or impracticable in one time and place may not be in another. To ensure transparency it will be important for the local authority to document – and publish within the Children and Young People's Plan framework – its assessment of local need for positive activities, as well as the basis on which it has determined whether actions are, or are not, 'reasonably practicable'. By doing so, the authority will, if challenged, be able to offer a rationale for its decision-making."

"A local authority must secure access to 'sufficient' positive leisure-time activities and facilities (where 'sufficient' is judged in terms of quantity). It will be for each local authority to decide what constitutes 'sufficient'; taking into account the needs of young people in its area. In forming this judgement, local authorities will need to be mindful of the needs of young people facing particular barriers to accessing sufficient provision, for example disabled young people. A local authority may not be failing to fulfil the duty because an individual young person's particular need is not being met at a particular time, because it may not be reasonably practicable to do so. However, if the local authority's decision was challenged it would be for a court to decide what constitutes 'sufficient' and 'reasonably practicable'."³

In March 2012 the Coalition Government confirmed that it will retain the duty on local authorities (as set out above) to secure sufficient educational and recreational leisure-time activities for the improvement of the well-being of 13 to 19 year olds, so far as is reasonably practicable, and published a streamlined version of guidance to accompany this. The Department for Education (DfE) has since consulted on this guidance.

2 <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/positive%20for%20youth.pdf>

3 Statutory Guidance on section 507B Education Act 1996, Department for Children, Schools and Families, March 2008

However, this new guidance does not make clear the Government's expectations for what a good or sufficient offer should look like. The document simply states:

"Local authorities are responsible for securing, so far as is reasonably practicable, a local offer that is sufficient to improve young people's well-being and personal and social development. A sufficient local offer will result in positive feedback from young people on the adequacy and quality of local provision, and positive trends in data that are indicative of local young people's well-being and personal and social development.

The extent to which a local authority is doing all that is reasonably practicable to secure a sufficient local offer will be reflected in:

- a) the extent to which it has given due consideration to this and other relevant statutory guidance;
- b) its performance relative to other similar areas in improving the well-being and personal and social development of young people; and
- c) the extent to which it has drawn on available support and challenge to drive continuous improvement in the quality and impact of local services, including from the local authority sector nationally."⁴

Positive for Youth arrives at a time of severe difficulties for our sector. The lack of ring fencing of budgets for services for young people and the overall impact of cuts to the Early Intervention Grants mean that at least eight out of 10 heads of

Young People's Services say they are facing budget cuts.⁵ It's not just statutory services that are facing cuts – two-thirds of voluntary and community organisations who provide youth services have seen their income reduced in the last 12 months.⁶

From our work with local authorities it is clear that major revisions are underway in the way councils and their partners deliver the vital youth services that support young people's well-being. In a number of areas, there is a particular focus on early intervention with vulnerable young people or on targeting limited resources to support the most vulnerable. It is clear that, whilst in a few places services were simply being cut, in many more there was a strong ambition to find new ways of delivery that go some way to meeting young people's needs.

Amidst this background there are still over 70,000 professionals engaged in supporting young people in informal education settings, with an additional 500,000 engaged in some form of voluntary work.⁷

There are clear concerns from within the youth sector as to whether the guidance will be adequate in ensuring that the local offer will be of sufficient quality to meet the needs of young people.

The NYA therefore believed that there was a real need to establish a Commission to gather and scrutinise evidence from across the sector to create a clearer picture of sufficiency. Not only would the findings help inform the Government's thinking on the offer, but they would also support local understanding of what 'sufficiency' means, taking into account the different models of service delivery that exist in local authorities.

4 Draft Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Services and Activities to Improve Young People's Wellbeing, Department For Education, March 2012

5 National Youth Agency, Financial Implications for Local Authority Youth Services

6 NCVYS and Children and Young people Now Magazine, 2010, Comprehensive Cuts: Report on funding changes in the voluntary and community sector

7 CWDC

How the Commission was established

To ensure that the Commission was representative of the sector, we invited figures from the statutory and voluntary sectors, academia and, of course, young people to serve as Commissioners. The Commission was chaired by members of the NYA Board of Trustees with the NYA acting as secretariat for the group. For a full list of Commissioners, see Appendix 1.

To learn from the past and present, and inform the Commission's thinking, the NYA carried out desk research to examine what has already been said about the key elements of a sufficient offer. For a full list of source materials covered, see Appendix 5.

The NYA produced a short survey which was promoted through a variety of routes, including e-newsletters, websites and the Supporting Services for Young People knowledge hub.⁸ We received written submissions from 18 organisations representing a good cross section of local authorities, voluntary sector organisations, unions and academics. The full list can be found in Appendix 2.

We held two days of evidence gathering where we invited figures from the sector to discuss and inform the Commission's findings. Both sessions followed the same format and were informed by both the desk research and the findings from the initial survey data.

What you told us: Summary of the evidence received

We structured the two evidence gathering sessions round a series of broad questions. Below is a summary of the findings.⁹

1. On whether a local offer should be based on

what young people need or also take account of what they say they want.

There was a strong consensus that any offer to young people must meet their needs and wants, believing that it is not possible to determine need without taking account of what young people and their families say they want. Most agreed that the calculation of need would require a formal analysis using local demographic information, Indices of Multiple Deprivation et al.

"The youth offer should respond to local needs defined through an analytical process of needs assessment. This should take into account local demography, information from community safety and the Police, alongside existing outcomes measures."

It was felt that whilst demographic analysis of an area can be used to determine where there is a need, without consulting young people the determination of what provision they need is going to be flawed and will impact on whether it is sufficient.

"An open access youth offer based on what young people want enables unknown needs to be identified and met, and young people to be supported through progressive universalism."

"A youth offer should be open to all young people to support their transition from adolescence to adulthood. For an offer to be sufficient and effective it must have some regard for the expressed wants of young people, their families and communities."

Quote: "Any offer should be based on the articulated wishes of young people mediated by the detached analysis of skilled and experienced youth workers, and others who work and live with and for young people."

⁸ https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/signin?p_p_id=58&p_p_lifecycle=0&_58_redirect=%2Fgroup%2Fsupportingservicesforyoungpeople%2Factivity5 National Youth Agency, Financial Implications for Local Authority Youth Services

⁹ Please note this summary also includes evidence from written submissions to the Commission

There was a feeling that it is not simply a 'right' for young people to be involved in the decision making process – it actually helps improve the offer to them. One example given was the evaluation of the Mayor's Youth Offer in London which found that the involvement of young people 'helps to determine rules and targets that are relevant to them and ensures that activities are more engaging, which will ultimately improve take-up'.¹⁰

It is not just young people that need to be consulted. Decisions must also be informed by the views of parents, families and other key stakeholders such as schools and communities.

However, not everyone agreed with the concept of universality. A minority made the case for publicly funded provision to be targeted at those young people who do not receive support through their schools, family and social contexts. One respondent argued:

"Vulnerable young people (including looked after children, SEN and disabilities, involved with or at risk of involvement with the youth justice system et al) should be the priority for provision."

The more typical response was that even a needs led service should not be synonymous with a targeted service. A sufficient needs led service would allow for local communities to define their needs in terms of 'personal development, enjoyment, well-being and social interaction' in addition to local authority defined priorities. To meet these requirements, open access and targeted provision may be required.

Quote: "Increasingly it appears that the open access/universal offer is becoming the domain of the VCS and independent provision with statutory services ensures provision for the most vulnerable or hard to reach young people."

2. *When asked to discuss whether there should be a quantifiable level of provision below which would be considered insufficient.*

This question provoked huge discussion and no overall consensus emerged. Views ranged from the need for a very prescriptive figure based on a variety of methodologies, to a much broader concept of provision. What was clear was that whatever the extent of provision, it must be of sufficient quality. A number of respondents used a calculation based on a defined distance such as 'every young person should have ready access to informal education within 30 minutes and £1 of their home', or 'the concept of the ½ mile youth offer is a good start'. However, others noted that this 'one size fits all' approach would not take into account the real and/or perceived divides for young people, with one respondent saying:

"In our experience young people like to come together and meet young people from different areas and communities but they also express a desire for local facilities. There is a variation depending on what is on offer."

Other formulae offered were based around young people being able to access at least 'x' opportunities per week. For example, one respondent stated that the learning from the Youth Justice Board's Youth Inclusion programme determined that young people who were likely to get involved in crime needed to be involved in positive activities for 10 hours a week to keep them on track.¹¹ Others talked about retaining the best value performance indicator of contacts of 25 per cent of the 13 to 19 population.

Quote: "The youth offer should enable young people to travel the 'last mile' into thriving and sustainable adulthood, not just support survival and the ability to cope with disadvantage."

¹⁰ <http://www.lda.gov.uk/publications-and-media/publications/mayor-s-youth-offer-evaluation.aspx>

¹¹ <http://www.yjb.gov.uk/publications/resources/downloads/YIP-Evaluation03.pdf>

Other respondents gave a much broader answer.

"An insufficient level of provision would be wherever a young person could not access a service to meet their needs. Locally defined processes should assess local social need in partnership with members of the youth population and wider community, and explain where (and why) the local authority is unable to meet those needs."

"Simply setting a specific quantifiable level of provision is inadequate for determining sufficiency if other factors, particularly accessibility, are not taken into account."

3. When asked to discuss whether there should be a quantifiable level of public resource below which should be considered insufficient.

Again, there was no clear consensus as to how this would look in reality, with responses ranging from the general to the specific, nor was there agreement on whether any level should be set nationally or locally. One submission stated that calculating a 'spend per head' is starting in the wrong place stating:

"The key questions should be around how far provision that comprises the offer enables young people to open their talents and make a contribution to their community. Any interrogation of failure in this regard may well turn out to relate to lack of resources, but it is erroneous to assume that because a certain level of resources is being expended that provision is adequate ... It is our experience that some of the providers with the lowest levels of unit spend per head also have some of the most creative and effective provision."

Quote: "It is difficult to attach a monetary amount to this and much will depend on the contribution that VCS and independent providers make to the youth offer."

This view was shared by a number of respondents, with concern that the wide range of provision that promotes young people's well-being makes it hard – if not impossible – to accurately calculate the real expenditure figure. A consensus also began to emerge around the dangers of setting a minimum amount, because in setting a minimum it may suggest no further investment is required. Despite these qualifications, a number of respondents stated their preference to previous systems such as those set out in Resourcing Excellent Youth Services.¹²

"The view taken by the Education Select Committee was interesting as it pointed out how little is spent on young people outside school. The previous work done by the NYA on '£100 per young person' seemed reasonable before the huge budget cuts that local authorities and the VCS are facing."

"Youth services and youth work in particular are traditionally the poor relations in Children's Services spending. Resourcing Excellent Youth Services indicated some resourcing levels that made sense at the time, though even they remained aspirations in many areas. I would suggest revisiting this and carving out a role for youth work as an approach to early interventions."

There was broad agreement in the requirement that local authorities ensure that, regardless of the size of the offer, they require other local budgets, for example the Police and Community Safety areas to consider how they can meet local need in a more innovative and encompassing way. This would include working in partnership with local VCS groups to add value to local youth services and serve identified policing needs.

4. When asked to discuss what components and features should be part of a 'sufficient' local offer.

There was a broad consensus that youth work

¹² Resourcing Excellent Youth Services: <http://www.nya.org.uk/catalogue/archive/reys-dec-2002>

should at the very least be a substantial part of the local offer, an offer that is focussed on improving outcomes for young people. One respondent stated:

“Youth work has demonstrated that it can help young people to achieve new skills, knowledge and confidence through informal education. This can be demonstrated through accredited awards and sound processes for recording the outcomes young people achieve.”

Another respondent went further and suggested that youth work must be funded through the public purse stating:

“Youth work is too important to young people’s lives to be funded entirely by communities or by the whims of big business’s corporate generosity.”

Another area of agreement was the necessity to break down barriers to young people’s participation in activities. Transport was the most common issue raised, however it was not the only area. Another common thread was the use of existing resources, particularly buildings within a local area. Many people suggested the need for a duty to maintain buildings specifically for the use of young people, either paid for by the public purse or, if transferred to the VCS, then maintained by the council. This duty should also ensure that there are adequate spaces for young people within multi-use community centres.

The role of schools within the youth offer was viewed as crucial. Without their active involvement in the offer it is doubtful that an overall offer would be sufficient.

There were some real concerns on the extent to which current quality assurance and accountability processes set out in the draft guidance will ensure that any local offer is of sufficient quality. One respondent said:

“I hope the revision to the statutory guidance on positive activities will make it easier to

hold local authorities to account if they fail to provide sufficient good quality youth work for young people in their areas.”

However, there was no consensus as to what processes should be in place to safeguard against this. One local authority respondent stated:

“Due to the widely differing mix of structures within local authorities of targeted and open access youth provision, of which there are a myriad of configurations in the UK, this makes comparisons very difficult to make and conclusions even harder to draw.”

There was also some discussion over the term ‘sufficient’, with many agreeing that this was not ambitious enough. A number of respondents suggested that the offer should be clearly stated as a minimum offer, not a guideline or aspiration.

“Sufficient isn’t really good enough for our young people – just like satisfactory is not good enough for OFSTED! The offer should be as aspirational as possible.”

And finally there was some discussion, though no agreement, on the idea that local authorities should be encouraged to apply these guidelines to their own offer from services that they provide directly, rather than considering the added value brought to the locality by grant-funded or profit making VCSs.

Preconditions to a sufficiency offer

There are real challenges in establishing what a sufficient offer to young people should look like. As the previous section highlights, the Commission heard a number of conflicting views and opinions during its evidence gathering. There was considerable debate over how explicit an offer should be, whether it should be aspirational or realistic and whether it should be for the ‘here and now’, or an offer that all can work towards achieving, setting out a direction of travel for both local authorities and government.

The Commission is clear, however, that there are a number of pre-conditions that support a sufficient local offer.

1. Young people matter. The public perception of young people is still not as positive as it should be. The vast majority of young people have happy childhoods and make a positive contribution to society. There are, however, a minority that require further support as they are troubled, rather than troublesome.
2. The extent of the challenges that face most young people at normal times are exacerbated by the global recession which has led in turn to significant cuts in the very public services that support young people.
3. We recognise that in the current climate there are not the resources in the system to meet the needs of young people and that it is not realistic to expect that a formula could be found that would redistribute existing resources in a way that would close the gap between the significant needs and limited resources.
4. The Commission recognises that many young people are fortunate enough to be able to get access to what they need and want because their families have the resources to pay for that access. We are acutely aware that, for a significant and growing proportion of young people, families did not have the resources. The Commission is clear we want all young people to get this because we know that young people involved in structured activities outside formal education do better. This is why we are calling for a specific Youth Premium, funded by central government to run alongside the local offer from councils.
5. Youth workers create conditions where young people can thrive. The Commission believes that there is a clearly defined and articulated role for youth work in improving the lives

of young people. A good sustained youth work intervention can reduce the likelihood of a young person needing high cost, more interventionist services later on.¹³ Many who gave evidence to the Commission felt short term cuts in budgets for young people's services would have significant long term social and economic consequences.

What a sufficient offer looks like

A sufficient local offer to young people requires the involvement of both local and central government. We can not prescribe a 'one size fits all' model of sufficiency as this would not be practical. Whilst we recognise that services must be adequately resourced, the solution is not to simply set a minimum spend per head. Such a simplistic approach, while potentially offering some benefits, would not take into account the contribution that the voluntary and community sector plays, nor indeed the dynamic nature of our sector, and would make reporting on expenditure subject to massive interpretation.

However, the Commission believes that the following action points must be addressed by local and central government to ensure that an offer is sufficient.

We expect central government to

1. Play an aspirational role – the champion for our sector. Government must set the direction of travel in a statement that sets out what local authorities must do.
2. Set minimum levels of expectation. These are set out below in our expectations for local authorities. Whilst this must be prescribed nationally, it should be for local councils working with their partners to determine how they will deliver the offer in their area.

¹³ Leisure Contexts in Adolescence and their Effects on Adult Outcomes: A More Complete Picture, Feinstein, L and Robson, K, May 2007

3. Hold local authorities to account on their ability to provide an overall offer of sufficient quality to young people. Government must be prepared to intervene where services are not functioning to the agreed level. At the same time we expect Government to play an enabling role, highlighting examples of excellence within local areas to ensure that learning can be shared by all.
4. Introduce a Youth Premium to complement other measures being introduced as part of the Government's 'fairness premium' designed to help children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to get a better start in life. The coalition Government is investing over £1.25bn in 2012-13 into its Pupil Premium to reach the 1.3m children who have been in receipt of free school meals at some point within the last six years. The local Head Teacher determines how this funding should be used.

The Youth Premium would augment the local youth offer securing a targeted entitlement for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to access free, high quality youth work.

We believe that the Youth Premium should be a specific funding stream from central government and administered by local authorities, with an addition to Statutory Guidance to ensure use of the Youth Premium is determined in conjunction with young people themselves.

We believe the Youth Premium should be funded by reallocation of existing resources, probably from more than one government department. For example, monies currently allocated by the MoJ to Youth Offending Teams for preventative services; some of the funding set aside to grow numbers in NCS in future years; reassigning some elements of the DfE Early Intervention Funding; elements of CLG funding for Troubled Families and Community Safety and a proportion of the DWP funding for Youth Contract and Work Programme targeting 16 to 18 year olds.

The NYA is currently undertaking a costing and feasibility exercise for the Youth Premium and this will be shared with government and stakeholders shortly.

We expect local government to

1. Assume the leadership role. It has the greatest understanding of what is happening in its area and is best placed to ensure that all stakeholders are at the table. Effective partnership working, led by the local authority, leads to an increase in likelihood of securing additional resources and more effective delivery of services – in effect getting 'better for less'. The local authority must play the key quality assurance role in the local offer to young people.
2. Play an effective commissioning role. The best councils are beginning to develop strong approaches to strategic commissioning first and then look at who is best placed to deliver them. This is not based on a conversation with themselves about whether that is an in-house or external provider; it is about saying we can actually model the specifications of what we need for our young people and then put that out to whoever is able to deliver it. An effective commissioning process must include:
 - the involvement of all stakeholders in the process, including young people themselves;
 - an understanding of the wants and needs of young people in their community through effective needs analysis; and
 - an understanding of outcomes-based commissioning.
3. Include the right mix of open access provision alongside targeted activities. It is not sufficient to assume that, by supporting communities to deliver open access work, it will be possible to target resources and the time and skills of professional staff on the young people who need it most. The relationship and interdependency between the two is intrinsic to ensure there isn't an increase in a 'conveyor belt of need'.

4. Build capacity within its boundaries and seek to develop a market for providing services to all providers which encourages high quality provision. This must be open to new providers and might include seed corn or start-up funding to enable new providers to tender for and provide services.
5. Engage with all key partners. Without the involvement of schools and further education, health, community safety partnerships and VCS providers, it could not be considered a fully joined up offer. Effective partnership working will need to be more than simply mapping provision. It should involve consideration within the authority of the sufficiency of existing provision and the development of a shared ambition for the local offer. Therefore, planning should not be undertaken in isolation. Partnership working must also include the active involvement of young people in the co-production of services.
6. Engage a workforce with the skills to engage with young people on their terms and develop a curriculum based on their needs. Local authorities must ensure that whoever the provider is, they employ a high quality workforce that reflects and meets young people's needs. All providers must make provision for ongoing development of the workforce, including support for continuing professional development.
7. Ensure that all services that it offers, including open access provision, is accessible to young people and available when it is needed. This may require innovative approaches, for example by allowing providers of services to use local authority-owned transport, or offering mobile provision where appropriate. We therefore expect local authorities to ensure that there are dedicated spaces that young people are able to access – in those areas with Myplace Centres provision could benefit from links with these centres. ? We support the Government's plans for community transfer of assets and believe that this could go some way to ensuring young people have places to go. However, this on its own is not enough. VCS organisations cannot be expected to maintain these without support from the councils. We believe that councils should lead on this and also ensure that any spare capacity in existing council premises would be offered to VCS providers free of charge.
8. Ensure that services are adequately resourced and funding is sustainable and long lasting. We believe that the local authority should give specific consideration to whether its current provision in the area, through all providers, is sufficient to meet the needs of young people. If this is not the case, then a local authority is failing in its duty.
9. Publicise the offer and provide young people and communities with information on what is available and where. We expect councils to provide these groups with information on what improvements have been made to the offer as a result of their involvement.

Appendix 1: Members of the Commission

Don Stewart, Chair, The National Youth Agency

Becky Holloway, Vice Chair, the National Youth Agency

Denise King, Chief Executive, The Girl Guides

Momodou Sallah, De Montfort University

Jack Sweetenham, O2 Think Big Alumni

Sam Mardle, O2 Think Big Alumni

Fiona Blacke, Chief Executive, The National Youth Agency – advisor to the Commission

Appendix 2: List of organisations that submitted evidence

CYWU Section of Unite

Changemakers

City of London LA

Community Matters

Foyer Federation

Hackney LA

London Youth

Merton LA

National Children's Bureau

North West Regional Youth Work Unit

Nottinghamshire LA

Oxfordshire LA

Pimlott Youth and Community Work

Rotherham MBC

South West Regional Youth Work Unit

Staffordshire University/Youth Ministry

Unison

Wakefield LA

Appendix 3: List of organisations attending the round tables

British Youth Council

Brent LA

Catch 22

Central Bedfordshire Council

Changemakers

The Children's Society

Community Matters

Confederation of Heads of Young People's Services

Learning and Skills Improvement Service

London Youth

Medway LA

Merton LA

North West Regional Youth Work Unit

Ofsted

Oxfordshire LA

Scope

Southwark LA

Unison

Wakefield LA

Young Hackney

Youth Access

Appendix 4: Questionnaire

Q1: Which of the following components/features would you expect to see in a 'sufficient' youth offer (tick as appropriate)?

- Young people involved in the planning, monitoring and evaluation
- Provision in place to address a range of outcomes
- A professional workforce
- An offer underpinned by a clear youth work methodology
- Engagement of the statutory, voluntary and community and business sectors in planning, funding and delivery
- A focus on building capacity in the community
- Clear quality assurance and performance management systems and processes
- Mechanisms to train and develop the workforce

Q2: In order to be considered sufficient, can the youth offer be based purely on what young people need or should it also take account of what young people and their families/communities say they want? (300 words max)

Q3: Is there a quantifiable level of provision one would expect to see in a given geography below which we should consider it insufficient? (300 words max)

Q4: Is there a quantifiable level of public resource that should be committed to the local youth offer below which it would be seen as insufficient (e.g. a percentage of the overall local spend on children's services or a minimum £ per head)? (300 words max)

Q5: What is missing from this list? (300 words max)

Any other comments (300 words max)

Appendix 5: Background research

1. Key historical documents

Resourcing the Youth Service, NACYS, 1989

This report was published by the National Advisory Council for the Youth Service (NACYS), which was set up for three years following the Government's response to the Thompson Review. A subgroup was set up in July 1987, working with a small number of local authorities and voluntary organisations, to 'consider issues of resourcing Youth Service work, including levels of resourcing, methods of allocation, sources of funding, and any relationship which can be established with effective youth work'. Its work focused on calculating the costs of staffing – as the single largest element of expenditure – based on a formula identifying the levels of staffing needed for particular types of work, together with weighting for specific groups such as unemployed young people, and levels of deprivation indicated by census data.¹⁴

The model requires estimations and judgments to be made in five areas:

- The nature of the population to be served – e.g. age range targeted.
- The level of service required – e.g. the proportion of the age range intended to be reached and the average contact rate;
- The nature of the service to be made available – identifying the balance between three mutually exclusive modes of interaction: formal one to one work, formal group work and informal work (open sessions, larger groups);
- The session staffing requirements for adequate effective work of particular types; and
- The proportion of worker time which can be given to direct work with users.

The formula can be used to predict:

- What staffing might be required to make available a particular service;
- What service might be made available with given resources; and
- The effect of changes in resource levels on overall performance.

The model was intended to describe the sum of youth service provision in a given area and was neutral in terms of assumptions about the balance between statutory and voluntary provision and the contribution to be made by non-youth service agencies. The subgroup also stressed that the 'scale of under-resourcing is such that no formula which might be used for redistributing existing resources will close the gap between need and response, but youth service providers need to be aware of the full staffing costs of undertaking work of various types. This informs strategic analysis by identifying the resource requirements of alternative forms of provision.'

Planning for a Sufficient Youth Service, Sufficiency Working Group, 1994¹⁵

Following the Community and Youth Work Union's (CYWU) policy statement and an NYA conference

¹⁴ See Appendix 1 for further details

¹⁵ *Planning for a Sufficient Youth Service: legislation and funding for the youth service, a consultative paper 1994.* Available at http://www.cywu.org.uk/index.php?id=8&type_id=24&article_id=171

on adequacy held in 1993, an ad hoc Sufficiency Working Group bringing together individuals from local authority, voluntary and national youth sectors produced a consultative paper. This distinguished between adequacy and sufficiency, drawing on the comments of the judge in the 1992 Warwickshire case brought by CYWU which argued that the council's decision to cut £1.7m of its £2.1m youth service budget put it in breach of its statutory duties under the 1944 Education Act. The application was refused by the judge largely because the lack of a definition meant that 'adequacy' could not be linked to a level of spending. The working group also refers to debate on the 1992 Further and Higher Education Bill, during which ministers stated that the duty to secure 'sufficient' provision was 'somewhat stronger' than the requirement to secure 'adequacy', which offered a greater degree of local discretion.

The working group concluded that a 'sufficient youth service' would require at least two million places for 10 to 19 year-olds, catering for one in three young people, each of whom would be funded to receive 100 hours of informal social and political education a year. It also called for new legislation requiring local authorities to have a duty to provide for a 'sufficient service' on the basis of a separate education related Standard Spending Assessment figure, stating that local flexibility and autonomy could only be achieved on the basis of nationally guaranteed formula funding. Other elements identified by the paper included requiring local authorities to work in partnership with the voluntary sector; minimum levels of professional staffing and infrastructure support; a system of integrated training and peer endorsed qualification and a national audit of premises available for youth work with a view to a new capital expenditure programme. They offer a funding formulation based on the costs of formal schooling.¹⁶

Drawing on previous work on this subject, the booklet argues key new points to secure the future of the Service. In summary, the following points are argued:

- There should be at least two million funded places for young people between the ages of 10 to 19 and each funded place should provide for 100 hours of informal social and political education per annum. This would give one in three young people social and political education opportunities equivalent to just over 10 per cent of the time provided for their schooling. It would also allow for the provision of sufficient JNC qualified workers to address aspects of development within the service.
- New legislative underpinning of the Youth Service should require that local authorities have a duty to provide for a 'sufficient service' on the basis of a separate education related Standard Spending Assessment figure.
- Partnership in provision with the voluntary sector should be a requirement for local authorities.
- A minimum level of professional staffing and infrastructure of service support to enhance the educational purpose of youth work should be required within each local authority organisation.
- This should be supported by a system of integrated training and peer endorsed qualification.
- A national audit of premises available for youth work should be undertaken with a view to a new capital expenditure programme.
- Local authorities, in partnership with voluntary sector organisations, should determine how best to use resources to achieve the desired outcomes and jointly publish an annual plan with clear statements of who was setting out to achieve what, set against a statement of the use of both Government and voluntary resources.

The paper also cites an earlier (1980) East Midlands Regional Youth Work Unit working party report on adequacy, which identified the following key elements for defining 'adequacy':

¹⁶ See Appendix 2 for further details

- Staffing ratios
- Clear statement of purpose
- Resource allocation
- Curriculum related concerns
- Importance of qualification in staffing
- Importance of evaluation at all levels
- Importance of status of service personnel
- Importance of administrative and ancillary support
- Integral relationship with voluntary sector

The working group proposes a funding formulation related to 1993-94 expenditure per head on secondary school pupils, adjusted down to exclude activities required by schooling which are not relevant to the youth service and to reflect the fact that youth work salaries are lower than their teacher equivalents, and adjusted up to reflect the relatively higher costs of schooling 18 year olds compared to 11 year olds. This leads it to conclude that the average cost per hour per head would be £2.83, or £283 a year. The overall cost of two million funded places would be approximately £566m, plus a further £20m for transport and national and regional support structure. It calculates that the voluntary sector could contribute £188m towards this level of provision, requiring government to fund the remaining £400m.

Agenda for a Generation, United Kingdom Youth Alliance, 1996

The UK Youth Alliance brought together 15 youth work bodies from across the UK, including NYA, NCVYS, British Youth Council and CWYU. Its *Agenda for a Generation* called for 'an unequivocal statutory basis for youth work, placing a duty on local authorities to secure sufficient youth services within their areas in partnership with voluntary organisations.' It identified the key elements of sufficiency.

"A sufficient youth service is not simply a question of more resources. It will involve formalising a number of requirements to ensure quality and encourage good practice. These will need working out in detail at local level but, in overall terms, its components include:

- A clear statement of purpose, together with an outline of the curriculum entitlement.
- Arrangements to ensure both access and equity and to secure appropriate quality.
- An outline of the partnership arrangements between the local authorities, the voluntary organisations and the young people themselves, and the arrangements for consultation and joint planning in each area.
- Proposals for securing sufficient and trained staff, both employed and voluntary, to deliver and support the provision.
- Formal procedures for the consistent designation of resource allocations, both capital and revenue, appropriate to the delivery of the curriculum entitlement.

On this basis, the Government should require all local authorities to audit the existing youth work provision in their area and prepare five year development plans to ensure its sufficiency. Those plans should be published for consultation and, when completed, be public documents."

The Youth Pledge, 1996-2001

Agenda for a Generation was accompanied by an NYA leaflet which proposed a set of minimum standards

for youth provision, including a 'safe, warm, well equipped meeting place within a bus ride for every young person', opportunities to take part in sport, drama, music and voluntary action, opportunities to develop personal skills and access to reliable information. Over the next few years, the NYA developed the youth pledge – or 'youth guarantee' – further, issuing reworked versions in publications including *Invest in Futures: a blueprint for young people's social inclusion* (1997), *Modern Services for Young People: proposals for action* (1999) and *Quality develops: towards excellence in youth services* (May 2001).

Quality develops outlined the concept of a 'youth pledge of entitlement' as follows:

"The concept of a 'Local Youth Pledge' of entitlement can help to shape local services and hold politicians, officers, community leaders and workers to account for their sufficient and effective delivery. This framework is an expression of a customer and citizen-driven philosophy. Such a pledge needs to be created locally if it is to reflect local circumstances and be acceptable to key local interests. It must be feasible and this depends on local circumstances. However, important elements might be statements that young people will have access to:

- A safe, warm, well equipped meeting place within a bus ride, with facilities for drama, music, sport, voluntary action and international experience.
- A wide diversity of youth clubs and youth activities.
- A set of programmes, related to core youth work principles and based on a curriculum framework, which supports young people's development in citizenship, the arts and in personal and social education, including through residential experiences and peer education.
- A comprehensive confidential information, advisory and counselling service, easily accessible to all 11 to 25 year olds.
- A youth council or youth forum for each locality with more than, say, 10,000 residents of all ages with the intention of supporting youth engagement in local democracy in a wide range of ways.
- A youth led 'youth audit' project, involving young people in auditing and evaluating the services available to them locally.
- A defined project for youth volunteering and voluntary action.
- The opportunity to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, or similar schemes for recognising young people's achievement.

Local authorities need to secure sufficient facilities to achieve these ends including:

- A curriculum framework for youth work in clubs and centres.
- Sufficient outreach and detached work to connect with and sustain contact with substantial numbers of disengaged young people.
- Defined support to formal education in the context of plans for out-of-school-hours learning and behaviour support.
- Defined support to and work with voluntary and community organisations, to local strategic partnerships and to Children's Fund Partnerships.
- Defined support to the Connexions Service, to Youth Offending Teams and to Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies.

Transforming Youth Work: Resourcing Excellent Youth Services, 2002

Published by the Department for Education and Skills in 2002, *Resourcing Excellent Youth Services* (REYS) provided, for the first time, 'a specification of a sufficient local authority youth service'. REYS set out what the Government expected a local authority to provide through its strategic leadership role, providing direction regarding:

- The local authority's duty to provide a youth service.
- The Secretary of State's powers of intervention and direction.
- A youth service plan agreed by members following consultation with partners.
- The contribution the youth service makes to other Government priorities, such as tackling anti-social behaviour and crime.
- A local pledge to young people.
- National standards of provision.
- Health and safety requirements.
- Mainstreaming equal opportunities, diversity and community cohesion.
- Support and investment to voluntary and community-based youth work.
- The youth work curriculum.
- Targeted provision.
- Local authority planning and delivery of substantial increases in the resource and activity levels of their youth services.
- Clearly designed quality assurance processes.

REYS set out the elements of local provision, which included a clear curriculum statement, the expectation that local authorities would work to the standards of service of youth work provision developed by the NYA, mechanisms and structures for involving the voluntary sectors and the development of a local pledge with the full involvement of young people, drawing on the NYA's earlier work.

Staffing ratio for 'effective' contact according to type of work:

• Counselling/welfare rights	1:1	} [residential 1:3 to 1:10]
• 'Difficult' groups	1:3	
• Outdoor pursuits	1:5	
• Youth councils	1:10	
• 'Drop-in'	1:15	
• Open youth club	1:15	
• Member run activity	1:20	
• Socials/disco etc	1:25	

'Effective contact' is based on the proposition that at any one time an adult can maintain:

A deep befriending relationship with	2 to 3 young people
Effective educational contact with	10 to 15 young people
Casual contacts with	10 to 15 young people

The staffing model can take account of:

- Different age bands.
- Different geographical areas.
- Different sub-sections of young people defined by other dimensions, e.g. gender, employment status.
- Specific sections of young people defined by a particular issue, e.g. single parenthood, drug use.

It also announced clearer arrangements for identifying potential youth and community spending, increased funding for youth services and, through the NYA standards, an objective for authorities to 'provide sufficient financial resource to secure an adequate youth service'. This was expressed as a target of at least £100 per head (13 to 19 year old population) per annum, with additional funding for intensive work and disadvantage including scarcity.

It set out a local authority pledge to young people, standards and expectations of local authorities.

Local authority pledge to young people

- 'A safe, warm, well equipped meeting place within reasonable distance of home, accessible to young people at times defined by young people, giving an opportunity to participate in personal and social development activities including arts, drama, music, sport, international experience and voluntary action.
- A wide diversity of youth clubs, projects and youth activities.
- A set of programmes, related to core youth work values and principles, based on a curriculum framework which supports young people's development in citizenship, the arts, drama, music, sport, international experience and personal and social development, including through residential experiences and peer education.
- A comprehensive generic, confidential information, advice and counselling service.
- Mechanisms for ensuring that their voice is heard, perhaps (though not exclusively) through a youth council or youth forum for each locality, with the intention of supporting youth engagement in local democracy in a wide range of ways.
- An annual youth service questionnaire involving young people in auditing and evaluating the services (provided by the local authority youth service) available to them locally.
- A defined project to promote and secure youth volunteering and voluntary action.
- The opportunity to participate in programmes which offer accreditation for learning such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Youth Achievement Award or similar.'

2. Local authority leadership

"Local authority leadership for the youth service should be seen in the context of its role in community leadership and in promoting the quality of life for its citizens, which include the young. Thus it should: Provide strategic leadership for the whole youth service.

- Ensure the local authority youth service is a key contributing partner to the Connexions Service and local preventive strategies.
- Ensure the active participation of young people in the specification, governance, management, delivery and quality assurance of youth services.
- Secure appropriate and coherent youth work provision through coherent partnership arrangements.
- Take a leading role in representing youth service interests at local, regional, national and European governmental levels.
- Provide high quality youth work in settings where the local authority is uniquely placed to make direct provision.
- Ensure safe environments supervised by skilled and caring workers providing a facility in which the community has the utmost confidence.

3. Standards of youth work provision

"Local authorities should ensure the delivery of a service which:

- Targets the 13 to 19 age range but may also be working at the margins with 11 to 13 and 19 to 25 year olds.

- Aims to reach 25 per cent of the target age range in any given year of operation (and similar proportions for different ethnic groups).
- Maintains a balanced range of provision delivered through a variety of outlets.
- Deploys appropriately trained and qualified staff.
- Has sufficient resource to invest in provision, including Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and to provide capital investment in existing and future building stock.
- Has a sufficient balance of well trained managers to qualified youth workers.
- Has a capacity to respond to new demands and needs of young people.
- Has a continuous professional development programme for all staff, voluntary or paid.
- Has a clearly defined quality assurance process.”

Local authority expenditure

Howard Williamson comments on the “glaring disparities in per capita expenditure on young people between local authorities, well beyond what can be justified by local discretion” revealed by the NYA’s annual audits (last carried out for 2007-08).¹⁷ He highlights the difficulties in making an accurate assessment of ‘sufficiency’, given the multiple sources of funding and contexts for youth work, but states that “there has, however, been a reasonable consensus over the years that a minimum level of expenditure on youth work/non-formal education should be some 2 per cent of education budgets.”

2. Youth provision

Services for Young People Select Committee report¹⁸

The relationship between universal and targeted services for young people was one of the major areas explored by the Education Select Committee’s inquiry into services for young people.¹⁹ Virtually all responses to the Select Committee argued that universal/open access and targeted provision were mutually interdependent, at best operating on a continuum, with young people moving between services. Even where responses accepted the need to prioritise the needs of disadvantaged young people at a time of financial stringency, they stressed the importance of this work linking with a universal youth work offer to improve support, options and outcomes for young people. Those providing evidence provided a range of arguments for this interdependence, often highlighting the dangers of setting up a false dichotomy between open access and targeted services. These included the following.

- An effective relationship between providers and deliverers of universal and targeted services is vital if young people’s needs are to be speedily identified and addressed (with their involvement) in the most efficient and cost effective way, potentially reducing the need for much more costly (in both economic and social terms) interventions when problems are more entrenched.

¹⁷ Williamson, H (2006), *Youth work and the changing policy environment for young people*. NYA

¹⁸ Education Select Committee (2011), *Services for Young People* <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmeduc/744/74402.htm#evidence>

¹⁹ In asking for evidence the committee used the term ‘universal’ services, but subsequently decided that ‘open access’ was a more accurate description

- Services should be easily available via universal settings with clear pathways to targeted or specialist provision, in order to increase uptake and minimise stigma.
- Conversely, targeted work should have clear pathways and support for young people to access a broader youth offer, which would provide opportunities to mix with young people with different backgrounds and experiences, promote their personal and social development, and offer 'light touch' support if they no longer need specialist provision.
- A joined up approach between universal and targeted services helps identify gaps and reduce duplication.
- The priority given to targeted services had undermined the contribution which universal youth services make to the development of young people more generally, through helping them develop a range of personal skills and relationships rather than focusing on specific problems.
- Services increasingly undertake needs assessment processes in order to focus provision on communities with greater levels of deprivation and needs. Such provision is then open to all young people in those areas, who may not be targeted as 'at risk', but may particularly benefit from informal social education which helps them increase their aspirations and confidence and engage positively within their communities.
- Stand alone targeted provision can create 'ghettos' and stigmatisation, discouraging the young people who could most benefit from services, and run the risk of further isolating vulnerable young people.

Some responses offered examples of provision to support their argument that targeted work is most effective within strong universal youth provision. They included the following:

- One authority has an Adolescents Service within Family Services, to which the youth service seconded a member of staff. This provides outreach and therapeutic support for 11 to 18 year olds that are at risk because of their behaviour, peer influence and individual and family circumstances. One of the key successes of the work has been to offer a range of youth work opportunities which match the young people's interests, are fun and engaging and have clear progression routes, and which allow youth workers to build positive relationships with the young people. The authority argues that high level services such as the Adolescents Service are most effective when delivered in partnership with universal services.
- One authority highlighted the success of Youth Leisure Nights, which emerged from a multi-agency group keen to offer young people new opportunities in response to concerns about rising anti-social behaviour. Young people are encouraged to visit local leisure centres, exclusively open to them, staffed by youth workers and sports staff, on Friday nights. Figures show that since the nights began, criminal damage by under-17s has reduced, fitness rates have improved, smoking has declined and young people have gone on to take part in further projects. The authority attributes the success of this project to the skilled intervention of youth workers and the universal offer that neither stigmatises nor alienates.
- Over the past two and a half years, youth workers in one county council have worked alongside education attendance officers, targeted personal advisors, emotional health workers, parent and family support advisors and targeted substance misuse workers. As a result, workers operating in universal and more targeted settings have worked as part of one team supporting a 'One Door' approach which enables young people to access the appropriate level of support when they need it.

Responses also highlighted the ways in which young people are involved in determining provision. In one authority, for instance, young people were said to be involved in recruiting and training staff; evaluating tender presentations as part of commissioning processes; taking part in consultations; sitting on management committees and steering groups; securing and allocating funding; inspecting services and representing other young people. Another described a range of participation structures operating at

different levels, including youth forums for every project, area-based network forums, an authority-wide youth council and cabinet, and a young inspectors' team.

Make Space campaign

Kids Club Network (now 4Children) launched its 'Make Space' campaign in 2003. Its initial aim was to set up (in partnership with Nestlé) 3,000 after-school clubs for young people aged 11 to 16, offering a safe place to meet, staffed by one paid worker for each 10 young people, supported by volunteers including parents and teachers. On its relaunch as 4Children in 2004, it called for a £10bn funding programme to create 10,000 children's centres in and around schools to be open from 8am to 6pm and in school holidays. In June 2006 it launched a 'youth review', which reported in July 2007. Drawing on consultation with 16,000 young people focusing on their lives, the challenges they faced and the support they needed, the youth review called for an integrated offer for young people, based on an inspirational youth centre in each community, support for parents, action on bullying, the involvement of young people in their communities and free public transport and access to leisure centres for under-18s. Its recommendations on access to local services included the following:

- The creation of 2,000 Young People's Centres in every community, open after school, at weekends and during school holidays. These would offer fun, structured activities, social space and access to information and specialist support where needed.
- A new young people's workforce to lead and coordinate the offer to young people around the new Young People's Centres.
- Entitlement to a recognised and inspirational Young Person's Curriculum to offer wide ranging and high quality activities in their area.

It also recommended that all public policy decision making should be required to include 'young people impact assessments' and the creation of a youth mayor and youth fund in each area to give young people a voice in shaping policy and their local communities.²⁰

myplace

An evaluation of the progress of myplace, the major government programme intended to establish 'world-class' places for young people offering positive activities and access to a range of services, was published in April 2011.²¹ Writing to projects in December 2010, Minister Tim Loughton set out a number of priorities for myplace. These included a central role for projects in the 'ongoing reform of local youth provision', a strong focus on evidence-based early interventions for vulnerable young people and the use of capital investment to lever in ongoing additional investment.

The evaluation makes a number of recommendations related to the programme's intended outcomes. These include the following:

- Participation: the need to embed young people's participation into both work programmes and

²⁰ See <http://www.4children.org.uk/Page/Make-Space-Youth-Review>

²¹ Durham University/YMCA George Williams College (2011), *myplace evaluation - final report* <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/MYPLACE-FIN-REP>

governance arrangements, and to address issues related to continuity, succession and the different interests of succeeding generations.

- Targeted and universal provision: regular review of the role of IAG services in relation to the underlying ethos of the centres, seeking opportunities to address issues of disadvantage through structured educational approaches, offering positive opportunities for peer support rather than in 'problem-based' services and building on existing relationships with schools to include more disadvantaged young people.
- Hub models: monitoring the process of centralisation – including users' previous experience of youth provision, whether myplace is taking up work lost by other services and assessing the impact on outlying localities and implementing strategies for improved access.
- Community organisation: exploring the potential for centres to encourage community participation while maintaining the central focus on activities and services for young people.

The researchers conclude that for larger centres to be successful, they generally need to have one or more of the following qualities:

- Offer some unique activity or enthusiasm which attracts core groups of enthusiastic and committed young people who might make a broader contribution to the success of the centres.
- Be located on or near a school or college campus in order to ensure visibility and to offer access to a wide range of local young people in a way that is complementary to school timetables and content.
- Be designed around offering specific services associated with the circumstances of young people such as counselling or housing support as a basis for the development of a wider range of participatory activities and youth education and empowerment.
- Link into some long established provision and/or tradition of work that is able and has a history of mobilising resources and volunteers, and managing larger buildings in order to improve the network of opportunity available for young people, to draw upon existing local expertise and to offer opportunities for the further development of these complementary organisations.
- Exploit some aspect of the local economy in order to benefit from and contribute to that economy and to emphasise its relationship with local young people's experiences.

Somewhere to belong: a blueprint for 21st century clubs²²

Clubs for Young People's 'blueprint' inquiry set out to identify the elements of 'a great youth club' and what needs to be done to develop and sustain such clubs, in order to influence local and national policy-makers. Its 2009 report, *Somewhere to belong...* identified five primary elements that are essential to consider when designing or improving a youth club: location, design, staff and volunteers, activities, and young people's involvement. Its recommendations included the following:

- The development of a nationally agreed definition of youth clubs and clear guidance around purpose.
- Further development of a youth club infrastructure based on the successful Youth Sport Partnership model, including a national lead body and the full engagement of local authority and voluntary sector partners.
- Future policy direction supporting open access provision in socially deprived neighbourhoods rather than targeting individual young people.
- The development of a set of National Occupational Standards based on quality assured qualifications for club-based youth work.

²² See <http://www.clubsforyoungpeople.org.uk/page.asp?section=68§ionTitle=Somewhere+to+Belong+%96+a+blueprint+for+21st+century+youth+clubs>

- The development of a national quality standards framework and outcomes monitoring framework for youth clubs.

Commissioning services

An Ofsted report on commissioning young people's services based on 12 local authority areas and national organisations found that approaches to commissioning were inconsistent and generally underdeveloped. Only two of the local authorities surveyed managed commissioning as a strategic process incorporating a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of current arrangements and taking into account the full range of alternative providers. At its best, however, a well managed approach to commissioning meant that young people had access to a wider range of provision in their locality which reflected their needs and interests, and specialist services were targeted effectively in supporting those identified as being at risk. Other key findings included the following:

- Creating a collaborative culture of shared values across organisations is as critical as getting the technical aspects of commissioning correct.
- In less effective practice, the process of commissioning was poorly understood; confusion between procurement and commissioning impaired planning.
- Practice in relation to young people's participation in commissioning activity was often good. The young people involved learned much from this.
- Monitoring arrangements paid insufficient attention to young people's learning, achievement and progress.

The report makes recommendations for local authorities. They included the following:

- To take a lead role in creating a collaborative and shared approach to commissioning.
- To ensure commissioning is informed by evidence-based judgements.
- To ensure they give proper consideration to using new providers including those from the voluntary sector, community and charitable organisations.
- To ensure a proper role for voluntary, community and charitable organisations in the design, decision making and monitoring of commissioned services.
- To recognise the value in maintaining local networks of practitioners and other local organisations.

It also noted that the most effective operational approaches to commissioning seen during the survey included the following:

- Ensuring the commissioning process received an appropriate level of local authority professional support.
- Nurturing new and different providers.
- Enabling established providers to have a role in supporting new or emerging organisations.
- Considering the cost efficiency in awarding contracts of a large enough scale and for a long enough period.
- Making good use of the knowledge held by existing networks of providers and practitioners.
- Tackling adversarial attitudes between organisations where they occurred.
- Involving elected members in key decisions.
- Underpinned by robust, intelligent monitoring by the local authority.

Publicising the offer

The research organisation Substance reported on its DCSF funded project in 2011, through which it worked with 20 local authorities to help them deliver accurate, comprehensive and accessible information to encourage more young people to participate in structured activities. The project focused on using the Plings – www.plings.net – platform, which brought together activity information from local authority, community and voluntary and private sector providers.²³ The project found that better use of information, including data collection/analysis and feedback from users, could be used to inform a wider commissioning strategy, based on desired results and outcomes. It makes various recommendations, covering aspects such as coordination, improving and joining up internal systems, arrangements for updating and involving young people. Key recommendations include the following:

- **Coordination:** the need for strategic leadership from a single service to coordinate a cross-department response, based on identifying which service is best placed to take responsibility for managing a new style of information gathering and promotion.
- **Availability:** it is critical that trusted information is placed in the places and spaces where young people already go – including both new media and traditional print/leaflets – rather than expecting them to go and find it.
- **Promotion:** local authorities need to raise awareness of information resources through promotional campaigns to fully realise the benefits of their efforts to collect, aggregate and publish activities information.
- **Peer sharing:** opportunities should be provided to support the sharing of information about activity provision on a peer-to-peer basis and drawing on friendship networks, making young people more likely to take part in an activity.
- **Feedback:** young people are more likely to feed back on the range and quality of activities if they can do so in ways that are appropriate to them – feedback mechanisms should be obvious, quick and easy.

3. Sufficiency in other sectors

Children's centres

Statutory guidance

The Childcare Act 2006 (amended by the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009) places a duty on every local authority to secure sufficient provision to meet local need so far as it is practicable and to consult before opening, closing or significantly changing children's centres. The previous administration published statutory guidance on children's centres in March 2010 and, in February 2011, the DfE reminded local authorities that these duties remained current, although the delivery context has changed.²⁴ In particular it highlighted the sections on the duty to make sufficient provision of children's centres to meet local need, so far as is reasonably practicable, and on consultation.

The guidance stresses that local authorities, with partners, should determine what constitutes sufficient

²³ Substance (2011), *Spreading the Word DfE Information and Signposting Project final report*. <http://www.substance.coop/sites/default/files/Spreading-the-word-January2011.pdf>

²⁴ DfE (2010), *Sure Start Children's Centres statutory guidance* <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00020-2011>

provision in order to ensure that 'universal access to children's centres is achieved, with children's centres configured to meet the needs of local families, especially the most deprived'. They should be guided by demographic factors and demonstrate an understanding of the different communities – both geographically and socio-economically – children's centres will serve. Local authorities should also take into account views of local families and communities in deciding what is sufficient provision'. The guidance states that local authorities should be also guided by the expectations underpinning the national rollout of children's centres from 2003 to 2010, when they were advised to plan on the basis of each children's centre serving around 800 children under five, although this would vary according to the area and population served.

At the same time, the DfE stated that it was working with a range of partners to develop a new shared vision for Early Years. It consulted on the 'core purpose' of Sure Start children's centres during summer 2011, reporting that 91 per cent of the 500-plus respondents agreeing that children's centres should help to improve outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged, in order to reduce inequalities in child development and improve parenting aspirations and skills and child and family health and life chances. A statement of intent jointly produced with 'sector leaders' says that the core purpose can be achieved by the following:

- Assessing need across the local community.
- Providing access to universal early years services in the local area, including high quality and affordable early years education and childcare, with the recognition that 'in good children's centres, these universal activities bring in many of the families in need of extra support'.
- Providing targeted evidence-based early interventions for families in greatest need, in the context of integrated services.
- Acting as a hub for the local community, building social capital and cohesion.
- Sharing expertise with other early years settings to improve quality.²⁵

This statement of core purpose has been included in the revised statutory guidance for Sure Start children's centres, issued for consultation on 5 March 2012 with responses due by 1 June 2012.²⁶ The revised guidance seeks to make it clearer what local authorities and statutory partners must do because it is required by legislation and what local authorities and partners should do when fulfilling their statutory responsibilities.

Relevant points in the guidance include the following:

- The statutory definition of a Sure Start children's centre is intended to make it clear that 'sufficiency of children's centres is as much about making appropriate and integrated services available, as it is about providing premises in particular geographical areas.'
- A children's centre should make available universal and targeted early childhood services either by providing the services at the centre itself or by providing advice and assistance to parents and prospective parents in accessing services provided elsewhere. Local authorities must ensure that children's centres provide some activities for young children on site.

²⁵ <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/earlylearningandchildcare/a00191780/core-purpose-of-sure-start-childrens-centres>

²⁶ Available at <http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1808&external=no&menu=1>

A chapter on 'Sufficient Children's Centres' states that local authorities must²⁷ 'ensure there are enough children's centres in their area to meet local need'.²⁸ They should fulfil this by ensuring that a network of children's centres is accessible to all families with young children in their area, taking into account distance, travel, opening time and availability of services, and targeting young children and families at greatest risk of poor outcomes. They should increasingly commission provision from a diverse range of organisations, including voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises, and should agree priorities and best arrangements for delivery. Local authorities also have a duty to consult when proposing significant changes to provision, including opening, closing or merging provision, with the starting point said to be 'a presumption against the closure of children's centres'.

Authorities are also required to carry out a sufficiency assessment of childcare in their area at least every three years and revised statutory guidance was issued in 2010.²⁹ This outlined the factors to be taken into account in assessing what is 'reasonably practicable', including the state of the local childcare market, the state of the labour market, the resources available to and capabilities of childcare providers, the need to develop an effective, phased programme to meet the sufficiency duty and the local authority's resources, capabilities and overall budget priorities. If challenged, a local authority may be called upon to demonstrate how it has done all that it can to secure sufficiency, taking into account these constraints.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sure Start

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sure Start was set up in June 2010, during which the group undertook a series of inquiry sessions designed to hear the views and experiences of a range of key stakeholders at the heart of Sure Start delivery. Its February 2012 interim report raised concerns that local authorities often struggled to identify how many Sure Start centres they operate, what constitutes a Sure Start centre and whether reorganisation of services had led to a reduction in centres or services. It therefore recommended that the DfE produces nationally applicable guidance on how numbers of Sure Start centres should be reported, ideally accompanied by an 'easy access' guide explaining their services. MPs also advised that the Government establish quarterly reporting of the number of Sure Start centres locally and nationally, and the level and range of services delivered. Where councils are identified as in danger of breaching their duties, the DfE should provide them with a clear set of requirements as to how they can meet their obligations and, where local authorities fail to follow these instructions, consider further sanctions.³⁰

Sure Start Children's Centres Statutory Guidance, chapter 2, Sufficient Children's Centres

Outcome

Local authorities have sufficient children's centres to meet the needs of young children and parents living in the area, particularly those in greatest need of support.

²⁷ Emphasis in the guidance

²⁸ See Appendix 4 for the chapter in full

²⁹ DCSF (2010), *Securing Sufficient Childcare, statutory guidance for local authorities in carrying out their childcare sufficiency duties*

³⁰ All Party Parliamentary Group for Sure Start (2012), *Sure Start Delivery in 2011/12, an inquiry*. http://offlinehbpl.hbpl.co.uk/NewsAttachments/PYC/Sure_Start.pdf

To secure delivery

Local authorities **must**:

- Identify parents and those expecting a baby in their area who are unlikely to take advantage of early childhood services available and encourage them to use them.³¹
- Ensure there are enough children's centres in their area to meet local need.³²
- Have regard to the presumption (in statutory guidance on school organisation, issued under the Education and Inspections Act 2006) against closure of maintained nursery schools, where a children's centre is operating on the site of a maintained nursery school.

Local authorities should:

- Ensure that a network of children's centres is accessible to all families with young children in their area.
- Ensure that children's centres and their services are within reasonable reach of all families with young children in urban and rural areas, taking into account distance and availability of transport.
- Ensure that opening times and availability of services meets the needs of families in their area.
- Target children's centres services at young children and families in the area who are at risk of poor outcomes.
- Not close an existing children's centre site in any reorganisation of provision unless they can demonstrate that where they decide to close a children's centre site, the outcomes for children – particularly the most disadvantaged – would not be adversely affected. The starting point should therefore be a presumption against the closure of children's centres.
- Take account of families crossing the border to use children's centres in their authority. Families and carers are free to access early childhood services where it suits them best.
- Take into account wider duties under section 17 of the Childcare Act 1989 and under the Child Poverty Act 2010.

The local authority's role in commissioning sufficient children's centres to meet local need

Local authorities should fulfil their duty to have sufficient children's centres to meet local need³³ by commissioning this provision in ways that increasingly involve a diverse range of organisations that have a track record of supporting families and young children. Such organisations can bring expertise in developing innovative services for families and young children. This includes voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises that have specialist knowledge and skills in engaging the most vulnerable families.

Local authorities should agree priorities for funded services and facilities with local partners and how these can be most effectively delivered and efficiently funded, including considering with their employees the options for them to set up and transfer into a public service mutual in line with their 'Right to Provide'.

In determining the best arrangements locally to meet local needs, value for money and the ability to

³¹ Section 3(3) of the Act

³² Section 5A(2) of the Act – Local need is the need of parents, prospective parents and young children in the authority's area.

³³ Section 5A(1)

improve outcomes for all children and families, especially families in greatest need of support, should be important guiding considerations.

Significant changes to children's centre provision and the duty to consult

Local authorities must ensure there is consultation³⁴ before:

- Opening a new children's centre.
- Making a significant change to the range and nature of services provided through a children's centre and/or how they are delivered, including significant changes to services provided through linked sites.
- Closing a children's centre.
- Merging centres.
- Reducing the services provided to such an extent that it no longer meets the statutory definition of a Sure Start Children's Centre.

Local authorities (or a third party acting on the authority's behalf) should consult everyone who could be affected by the proposed changes, for example local families, those who use the centres, children's centres staff, advisory board members and service providers. It should be clear how views can be made known and adequate time should be allowed for those wishing to respond. Decisions following consultation should be announced publicly.

Libraries

The Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964 (the 1964 Act) sets out the statutory duty for all local authorities to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service set in the context of local need – i.e. specifically of those who live, work and study in the local area. Public Library Standards were launched in 2001 (covering factors such as proportions of households living within given district of libraries by type of authority, opening hours and visits per 1,000 population and user satisfaction) but have now been abolished.

The Culture, Media and Sports Select Committee is currently undertaking an inquiry into library closures and requested written submissions on the following issues by 12 January 2012:³⁵

- What constitutes a comprehensive and efficient library service for the 21st century?
- The extent to which planned library closures are compatible with the requirements of the Libraries & Museums Act 1964 and the Charteris Report.
- The impact library closures have on local communities.
- The effectiveness of the Secretary of State's powers of intervention under the Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964.

There is no information on when the Select Committee is due to report, but there are clearly similar issues emerging from the inquiry and evidence submitted, which include the following:

³⁴ Section 5D of the Act

³⁵ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/culture-media-and-sport-committee/inquiries/parliament-2010/library-closures/>

- The relationship between national framework/vision and delivery to meet local needs.
- Co-locating library and other services.
- The potential role of community-run projects in public library service provision.
- The relationship between 'super-libraries' and community libraries/mobile services.
- The importance of seeking views and needs of (actual/potential) service users.



About the National Youth Agency

The National Youth Agency works in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to support and improve services for young people. Our particular focus is on youth work and we believe strongly that by investing in young people's personal and social development, young people are better able to live more active and fulfilling lives.

Working with young people, we advocate for more youth-friendly services and policies. We have four themes:

- Developing quality standards in work with young people
- Supporting services for young people
- Developing the youth workforce
- Promoting positive public perceptions of young people.

We deliver our work through training and consultancy, campaigning, publishing and online communications. Through our activities we want to ensure that young people have a strong voice and positive influence in our society.

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