

# CITY OF PLYMOUTH



## Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Working Group

### **Youth Matters Green Paper**

**November 2005**

**PLEASE NOTE:** This scrutiny report has been drafted following meetings of the appointed by the Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Panel during September 2005.

The report together with the outcome of a further meeting of the Select Committee will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2005 and until they have been accepted at that meeting, this report may be subject to change.

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## Preface



Plymouth City Council's responses to Government Green Papers have, to date, been collated by officers and offered to Members as a corporate response. The maturing of the scrutiny process has meant that Members themselves have more information on the processes undertaken within departments and are becoming more expert within their scrutiny areas. Because of this the Children and Young People's panel were asked to create a working group who would prepare a corporate response to the Green Paper "Youth Matters". This has proved beneficial on various fronts.

It has given Members a closer, more detailed picture of how the Green Paper will impact on services.

It has brought Members into dialogue with officers at different levels.

It has allowed open debate between Members and partner organisations.

The consultation processes used allowed for face to face witness sessions, written submissions and on-line questionnaires and, I would suggest, are an exemplar of information gathering. I believe this to be the way forward for any response to Government consultation.

I have greatly enjoyed working on this response and I would like to thank Members of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Working Group, Lead Officer Christina Smale, Council Officers and witnesses who have supported the review.

Councillor Fletcher  
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Working Group

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## **Panel / Select Committee Membership**

Councillor Fletcher (Chair)

Councillor James (Vice Chair)

Councillor Williams

Councillor Nicky Wildy

Mr Willis (co-opted representative)

## **Meetings**

The Working Group met or discussed the Youth Matters Green Paper in evidence sessions held on four occasions during September 2005.

## 1.0 SUMMARY

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Working Group have completed their enquiry of the Youth Matters Green Paper. The Working Group's aim was to take an opinion on the Green Paper and shape a political response. We have made the following recommendations.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **We recommend** that Appendix 4 to this report be accepted as the Council's response to the Government consultation on the Youth Matters Green Paper.

***For the attention of: Cabinet***

## **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **3.1 Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Working Group**

3.1.1 The Government published its' Youth Green Paper "Youth Matters" on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2005. Building on the ambition of Every Child Matters, which promotes the idea that all young people should achieve five key outcomes. The Green Paper seeks to radically re-shape the services for young people aged between 13 and 19 years. A consultation process was set up to allow service providers an opportunity to feed into the discussion. It proposes a facilitating role for local government and councillors and as such is very significant.

The scrutiny process was asked to take an opinion on the Green Paper. It was anticipated to receive views from a range of providers and deliverers across the city. To look at how the government's recommendations would impact delivery of services for young people locally and formulate a response for consideration by Cabinet.

3.1.2 Youth Matters encompass a strategy to promote the idea that all young people should achieve five key outcomes:

- being healthy
- staying safe
- enjoying and achieving
- making a positive contribution
- achieving economic well-being.

### **3.2 Terms of Reference**

3.2.1 The purpose of the review, as identified in the Scrutiny Plan was to consider –

- how the City Council could fulfil the leadership role in delivering the Young People's Agenda.
- how the City Council would implement the four key challenges highlighted in the Youth Matter Green Paper -
  - to investigate how to engage more young people in positive activities and empower them to shape the service they receive.
  - to investigate how to encourage more young people to volunteer and become involved in their communities.
  - to investigate how to provide better information, advice and guidance to young people to help them make informed choices about their lives.

- to investigate how to provide better and more personalised support for each young person who has serious problems or gets into trouble.

### **3.3 Matters to note**

- 3.3.1 Young people today have available to them more opportunities than previous generations. Many take advantage of what is offered and successfully make the transition to independent adulthood. Standards of educational achievement are rising and a higher proportion of young people post 16 are in education and training than in 2002.
- 3.3.2 Yet in other areas there is little improvement and outcomes not achieved. This is the case, for example, with some aspects of teenager's health such as drinking, sexual health and obesity. A minority of teenagers face serious or multiple problems and some become involved in anti- social behaviour and youth crime.
- 3.3.3 Government agencies and Local Authorities, working with the voluntary sector and parents, must provide the right mix of challenge and support for teenagers in these situations.
- 3.3.4 The teenage years are a time of transition and full of challenges, which can relate to a wide range of issues including money, employment, self-esteem, health, accommodation, parents and relationships. These challenges can be even greater for young people with disabilities, for those who are homeless, with special educational needs or black and minority ethnic groups.

## **4.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **4.1 The National Context**

- 4.1.1 The Youth Matters Green Paper is a national consultation paper which is seeking views on how to reform services in England. While it focuses on teenagers, some of the proposals it contains are also relevant to young people who are slightly older than 19 or younger than 13. The paper starts from a premise that, while existing national services, such as, Youth Services, Connexions, mainstream services and voluntary organisations, which provide a wide range of targeted support programmes, it was apparent that service improvement was hindered through a lack of coherence.
- 4.1.2 Nationally it was recognised that there are many examples of good service provision for young people, however, some service areas could be improved, in particular –
- ❖ services do not always meet the needs of individual young people;
  - ❖ the various organisation providing services and help for young people do not work together as effectively or imaginatively as they should, with the result that money and effort are wasted;



- ❖ not enough is being done to prevent young people from drifting into a life of poverty and crime;
- ❖ services are failing to exploit the full potential of the internet, mobile phones and other new technologies;
- ❖ teenagers and their parents do not have enough say in what services are provided.

4.1.6 The principal aim of the Youth Matter Green Paper is to reform the services provided nationally based on six underpinning principles –

- ❖ making services more responsive to what young people and their parents want;
- ❖ balancing greater opportunities and support with promoting young people's responsibilities;
- ❖ making services for young people more integrated, efficient and effective;
- ❖ improving outcomes for all young people, while narrowing the gap between those who do well and those who do not;
- ❖ involving a wide range of organisations from the voluntary, community and private sectors in order to increase choice and secure the best outcomes;
- ❖ building on the best of what is currently provided.

4.1.7 The national consultation period for the proposals highlighted within the Youth Matters Green Paper will close on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2005. The target audience is Local Authorities, schools and colleges, Connexions Partnerships, Youth Services, the private, voluntary and community sectors, the health sector, the wider community and in particular young people and carers. Subject to the responses received by Government and the success of the pilots, it is intended that the reforms outlined in the paper should be implemented by April 2008.

## **4.2 The Local Context – Experience in Plymouth**

4.2.1 Plymouth, on becoming a unitary authority, inherited a youth service integrated into a broader model of community education. This received a below than national average investment by comparison to other Authorities across the country.

4.2.2 In the period 1998 to 2001 the Authority conducted two partial internal reviews. This resulted in a decision to retain a devolved and integrated system of management for youth work and adult and community learning,

through community college structures and area teams. Additionally these reviews adopted a youth development entitlement model based on a minimum of one youth worker per ward across the city together with an incremental increase in investment in youth work in the period 2001 to 2003.

- 4.2.3 Plymouth City Council currently operate a devolved system of managing youth work and has over the last two years operated service level agreements. It has entered into youth work units through five Community Colleges and two Area Teams across the city. The service level agreements aim to consolidate a partnership approach between the Local Authority and Youth Work units. This ensured a consistent and coherent provision based on a youth development entitlement model across the City, in line with the National specification for Local Authorities as outlined in Resourcing Excellent Youth Services (DfES 2002).
- 4.2.4 In the period 2001 to the present date two key documents have been produced by the Government Transforming Youth Work (2001) and Resourcing Excellent Youth Services (2002) which reflect a commitment to modernising and extending Youth Services by the end of 2006. Resourcing Excellent Youth Service identified the role and responsibilities of Local Authorities to provide strategic leadership designed to achieve a modern, high quality, well managed, and effectively resourced youth service aimed at the 13 – 19 age group.
- 4.2.5 The Resourcing Excellent Youth Service was designed to enable Local Authorities to build the architecture of Youth Services so that there is increased capacity to contribute to government agendas in improving community cohesion, tackling anti social behaviour and crime and overcoming alienation amongst young people. In March 2005 the Department for Education and Skills wrote to all Local Authorities to reinforce the statement made by the Minister for Children, Young People and Families at the end of 2003 included reaffirmation of the vision and specification outlined in Resourcing Excellent Youth Service. The statement also –
- confirmed a commitment to ensure that Youth Services play a central role in future arrangements for the provision of Children's Services and in partnership with a range of other stakeholders such as drug action and youth offending teams through newly created Children's Trusts reflected in the Green Paper Every Child Matters.
  - confirmed the Government's expectation that Youth Services would continue to achieve against performance measures set nationally.
  - require Youth Services to set objectives concerning the contribution of the five outcomes Every Child Matters: Change for Children.

4.2.6 The Police Authority actively work across the community and are frequently engaged with service providers as well as young people. Much can be done to further develop an integrated service approach with a range of stakeholders through a range of intervention strategies e.g. Restorative justice. There is a view that through a single strategy, key players having mapped the provision and facilities and identified the gaps this will improve the youth offer. Specialist professionals should remain as such within their highly respected areas but work in a more integrated way with other service providers.

To move the agenda forward there is a view that the resources and support issues across the city need to be coherently addressed.

4.2.7 The Youth Matters Green Paper was published on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2005, and outlined the way in which the Government believes support and development services for young people should be delivered to ensure successful outcomes for young people. As part of the scrutiny process the Working Group compiled the City Council's response to the Central Government consultation based on the findings and conclusions of this review.

## **5.0 EVIDENCE**

### **5.1 Written Evidence**

5.1.1 The Working Group considered the Youth Matters Green Paper in conjunction with other supporting documentation, which included written submissions from various witnesses during the course of the review.

5.1.2 A summary of the main issues highlighted by the Paper are summarised below.

<b>Key Areas/ Concerns</b>	<b>What can be done?</b>
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Integrated Service (Children's Trust)	To review the national evaluation of Trust Arrangements and determine the most appropriate structure for Plymouth. Consider how to further develop the delivery of services offered by the voluntary and community sector.
Hard to Reach Groups	To further the work with the community and voluntary sector to promote and engage with a range of young people, to include black and ethnic young people and those who have not fully integrated within a community.
Opportunity Card/Fund	Ensure that the funding available is not bound by a set of criteria that will add to more young people being excluded.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Establish arrangements to monitor and evaluate the impact of service delivery by all external providers and involve young people within the process.
Funding	Ensure delivery of a sustainable service that will develop the personal as well as academic skills of young people.

## 5.2 Oral Evidence

- 5.2.1 The Working Group held three evidence sessions to hear from Council Officers and representatives from external organisations during September 2005.
- 5.2.2 As part of the review, the Members received a presentation from the Director for Children's Services, which focused on the current service provision and the Youth Development Plan 2005/06. The presentation also highlighted the findings from the recent external review of the Youth Service, carried out by the National Youth Agency.
- 5.2.3 Members also received a presentation from the Youth Service based on the outcome of the Young Peoples Open Day held on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2005. The findings of this consultation can be found at Appendix 4 of the report.

## **6.0 FINDINGS**

### **6.1 Findings Section 1 – Integrated Service**

- 6.1.1 Member's Group learned that the proposals outlined in the Green Paper expect to see the delivery of front line youth services through a single body that will have responsibility for youth policy. This would bring together a range of services and would result in the pooling of expertise and possibly resources. The Paper does not detail the practicalities of how multi-disciplinary teams will operate, and how sustainable investment or the extent of the role of the voluntary and community sector, which at present represent a large percentage of the service delivery.
- 6.1.2 A Children's Trust would be responsible for planning and commissioning services from a range of public, voluntary and private providers against revised local authorities' statutory duties, to secure positive activities for all young people. The Green Paper appears to leave local discretion around who would actually deliver which services. There was an inference that the role of local authority youth services would be organisers or commissioners of youth work and not necessarily deliverers.
- 6.1.3 The Paper encourages partnership arrangements as the way forward with a focus on utilising charitable and or community-based organisations along with private providers as part of the service delivery infrastructure. Concern was expressed about the impartiality of advice if the principal role of a local authority is that of commissioners of services.

6.1.4 The Paper does not explicitly acknowledge or recognise the full youth service offer. For example the contribution made by the community and voluntary sector over the previous five years towards improving the youth offer has increased. Using high quality professionals, dedicated trained youth and community workers young people can now access a range of facilities and services with support from detached and out reach workers. It was disappointing that the Paper neither showed little recognition nor reflected existing good provision being delivered within localities and youth centres.

## **6.2 Findings Section 2 – Hard to Reach Groups**

6.2.1 The Paper offered a framework to engage with those who are willing to be involved with community activities. However, it became clear that the Green Paper did not offer suggestions for the engagement of a number of young people e.g. black, minority ethnic or disengaged young people. There are a range of young people who have yet to experience the value of belonging to a community. Where there are examples of practice that have resulted in changing the lives of hard-to-reach groups, these should be widely shared by a central function. i.e. the Youth Enquiry Service.

6.2.2 The principle aim of the Green Paper is to put power in the hands of young people, allowing them to influence services that they receive. To reach disengaged young people, they must feel there is a purpose. The key to engagement is to ensure that their ideas are visible and are implemented.

6.2.3 Pump priming for new initiatives, especially if the aim is to be self-financing must be made available and not expected to draw from existing resources. For example the new helpline for carers and parents.

## **6.3 Findings Section 3 – Opportunity Card or Fund**

6.3.1 A number of those interviewed did not favour the card as it was felt that a card may not address inclusion and reward poor behaviour. The Green Paper encourages setting of standards in the informal context. As the provision for young people is regulated by Ofsted, consideration should be given to using self assessment against generic standards that will involve young people benchmarking their personal standards against others. The personal evaluation would have future benefit as it could be translated to the national qualification framework, thus allowing young people to see the value of progression.

6.3.2 Plymouth City Council currently delivers a high quality outdoor activities service. If the opportunity card were linked to a quality service such as the Outdoor Activities Centre this would not only begin to ensure equity of access to facilities but will also set personal standards that would be linked to academic achievement.

6.3.3 A number of those interviewed favoured the card as it was felt that it gave new opportunities to young disadvantaged people.

- 6.3.4 Young people favoured the concept of an opportunity card as it was felt that they would be offered free “opportunities”
- 6.3.5 All those interviewed favoured a locally determined fund, as this would enable the providers to deliver against the actual needs and requirements of the young people.
- 6.3.6 The Green Paper promotes the development of an opportunity for all. However, it was felt that the nature and scope of the opportunity should be determined and managed locally. Promoting a card on its monetary value and not other benefits may devalue the purpose.
- 6.3.7 The general perspective was that opportunities that would be opened to young people as a result of the card placed too much emphasis on sports as an incentive/reward. It is for this reason that Recommendation 1 seeks for the process and opportunities for improving access to services to be locally determined.

#### **6.4 Findings Section 4 - Monitoring and Evaluation**

- 6.4.1 Members were informed that the Council’s Youth Service were familiar with developing evidence based systems to monitor the progress.
- 6.4.2 The Youth Service had developed a management information system to record and report engagement and progression with young people between the ages of 13 to 19. However, in light of the Change for Children agenda the service was reviewing its system.
- 6.4.3 The Green Paper did not offer a recommended process for monitoring and evaluating multi agency working.
- 6.4.4 The Working Group welcomed the opportunity to prepare the Council’s response to the Consultation on the Youth Matter Green Paper. Members also felt that a more comprehensive consultative process would inform the shaping of the future once the proposal was passed by Parliament.

#### **6.5 Findings Section 5 - Funding**

- 6.5.1 There was a universal concern that funding may either be ring fenced or specifically targeted. The Green Paper offered little encouragement that accountable bodies (Local Authorities) would be encouraged to identify and develop areas of local importance as a partnership to improve outcomes.
- 6.5.2 The inclusion of the private sector appears to be an opportunity overlooked. To achieve reform and ensure sustainability of provision, the engagement of employers as well as young people is critical to the shaping of local services.

## **7.0 CONCLUSIONS**

### **7.1 Overall Conclusions**

- 7.1.1 The Green Paper supports the Change for Children agenda and seeks to involve the beneficiaries of the service in its decision-making processes. Following the Green Paper recommendations Plymouth may need to review how the provision of young people services is delivered. Using existing partnerships, and through a range of coherent and comprehensive consultative mechanisms, service deliverers will be better placed to address the needs and requirements of young people.
- 7.1.2 A number of those interviewed held a cynical view of the purpose behind the Green Paper. It was felt that many of the initiatives outlined were already in place. Although the objectives within the Paper were clear, many felt uncertain as to where the boundaries started and ended. For example, would citizenship be imposed upon the young? It was also felt that there needed to be more emphasis on the role and expectations of the Health Service in supporting 13 to 19 year olds, although the majority felt that neighbourhood based services was a good idea.
- 7.1.3 All participants supported the idea of a Children's Trust but some expressed a view regarding confidentiality and the utilisation of health data. This was illustrated through the use of opportunity cards to engage with young people with disabilities.
- 7.1.4 A Children's Trust would have a number of partners. A Children's Trust is a structure that will enable Plymouth City Council to join together in a local partnership to commission and, as relevant, directly provide services for children, in particular those with a combination of health, educational and social care needs. The Children's Trust Vision has the child at its centre and is taking a "whole systems approach" to children's services. The principles of having a single point of contact were accepted, although consideration should be given to the funding and management arrangements, with particular consideration as to the interface with the voluntary and community sector. The option for the City is to consider whether a trust, or trust like arrangements will deliver the services sought?
- 7.1.5 The real value of opportunity cards was hard to determine; there is a view that the cards will create even more disaffection amongst young people from differing backgrounds, especially if a clear right to provision were not set. A concern was expressed with regard to the emphasis placed on sport, that being insufficient emphasis was placed on encouraging young people to participate in culture, arts, leisure linked to activity centres and the music zone etc.



- 7.1.6 Those interviewed supported the notion of an opportunity fund but not the cards. A view emerged that a post-code based model could be developed to enable young people to participate in schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- 7.1.7 It was felt by participants that the Green Paper was not explicit in its links with the Change for Children agenda. However, improving outcomes for all children and young people underpins all of the development and work within Children's Trusts who are seen as the primary delivery vehicle.
- 7.1.8 It was disappointing that the term 'active citizenship' was omitted from The Paper as this was seen as a partnership project that would bring young people in to contact with the community. As a standards driven subject the connection between expectations and delivery might be more realistic from the outset.
- 7.1.9 The Green Paper encouraged the participation by young people in the design and delivery of services to shape the youth offer provided. It also seeks to offer suggestions for the greater involvement of young people with their communities. However, it does this from a certain restrained perspective and does not recognise current engagement.
- 7.1.10 The most important issues facing the young people interviewed in Plymouth are facilities, opportunities and crime. Young people feel want to feel safe as well as having something to do. A multi- agency approach to service delivery can begin to address the concerns.
- 7.1.11 The benefits of an integrated service are closely aligned to the development of the Change for Children Agenda. With a strategic body overseeing the provision of all services for children and young people services there should be few duplications and a better understanding of the needs and gaps in provision. The principal challenges will evolve around standards and who will deliver what, as under a single inspectorate the local authority retains the accountability. .
- 7.1.12 The use of an identity is always welcome as it easily recognised. However, there are mixed views by young people on the support received by youth workers the Connexions Service etc. Again, it was felt that a local agreement would enable a more personalised service for the immediate community to be developed.

## **7.2 Future Consultation**

- 7.2.1 The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel will follow the progress of the Green Paper and anticipate being involved in any future consultation and development of its recommendations.

## **Appendix 1 – Reference Materials**

1. Youth Matters Green Paper
2. Witness submissions
3. Youth consultation findings
4. Power-point presentations

## **Appendix 2 – Contributors**

The Working Group would like to express their sincere thanks to all those who provided information and advice:

Tom Abbott – Senior Youth Officer, Plymouth City Council  
Rob Bourne – Government Office South West  
James Coulton – Head of Leisure and Learning, Plymouth City Council  
Chris Herriot – Senior Youth Officer  
Hannah Jordan – Youth Participation Development Worker  
Bronwen Lacey – Director for Children’s Services, Plymouth City Council  
Ruth Marriott – Youth Enquiry Service  
Gill Millar – Learning South West  
Casey Mitchell – Honicknowle Commnet Ltd  
Steve Moore – Youth Offending Team  
Councillor Purnell – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services  
Samara Rolt – Plymouth & District Racial Equality Council  
Christina Smale – Business Manager for Lifelong Learning, Plymouth City Council  
Hilary Steer - Devon & Cornwall Constabulary  
Brendan Wake – Development Worker  
Councillor Weekes – Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities  
Steve West – Connexions  
Youth Service Participation Team

## Appendix 3 – Consultation Findings

Central to the consultation regarding the Youth Matters Green Paper is the voice and influence of the young people of Plymouth.

The decision was taken to carry out this work in two parts, firstly through a questionnaire and secondly through a city-wide consultation event. The work was facilitated and supported by the PCC Youth Service.

One hundred and sixty two questionnaires were completed and returned to the Youth Service Participation Team and the results collated and recorded. The age range of young people was from 11 to 19. The findings have been made available to the scrutiny review panel and other interested parties as well as contributing towards the national consultation.

On Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September the Plymouth City Council Youth Service facilitated a successful citywide consultation event at the Plymouth Pavilions. More than 70 young people from the 'Young People Network Group' attended the event, this included young people from the Efford Youth Development Forum, Plymouth Youth Cabinet, Shed Youth Action Group and a group of 'Here by Right' researchers. Also, there were young people from a number of community based youth centres and interested individuals. The age range was between 11 and 25 with the majority of young people being in the 13 to 19 range.

Using the 'British Youth Council Consultation Tool Kit, the event sought the views of young people on their opinions, ideas and suggestions on the Green Paper'. Feedback was gained through small group work facilitated by youth workers.

Examples of the questions asked were:

**“How would you like to be involved in improving things for teenagers in your area?”**

*Responses included:*

- More advice centres for young people
- More space for young people to do what they what to do
- More young people events like this...
- Questionnaires that are more 'young people friendly'

**“How would you like to tell your local council what you think about activities and services for teenagers?”**

*Responses included:*

- Let local councillors come to 'our' forums
- Invite councillors to meet our groups
- Get local councils to come and visit young people in youth centres, parks and in schools etc...
- Let young people have a vote in things that are happening in Plymouth.

***“Would a card that gives you discounts and money to spend on activities encourage you to do more in your spare time?”***

- 38 young people said yes,
- 7 young people said no, and
- 25 young people were not sure.

The young people involved were particularly interested in, and supported the opportunity card, although they wanted more detail on the parental top-ups. This related to concerns expressed about low-income families, and in particular the overall fairness and management of the process. For example, who would decide on the removal of top-ups and.

The objectives of the paper were in principle welcomed by the young people and there was a consensus that if it improved facilities and services they would support it. Caution was expressed around the punitive elements and who would decide on the removal of privileges and how would that be monitored.

Young people were keen to be involved in future consultative work and many left their contact details.

*Youth Service, Curriculum Development Team*

## Appendix 4

# Plymouth City Council

## Response to the Youth Matters Green Paper

An underlying theme of the Green Paper is the belief that what is now called citizenship is lacking among the younger generation. Whilst this may be a truism for certain groups, we would suggest that the majority of young people are responsible and understand their role within society. In this way we felt that the document was too general in its approach. For those groups who appear disaffected, such as BME groups and those not in education or training, the Green Paper offers little. It was also felt that the Green Paper appeared to highlight contradictions between government ambitions such as inclusion targets and anti-social behaviour targets. The time scale for consultation and the questions posed by the Green Paper did not allow for a proper analysis of these apparent dichotomies.

### **1 The most important issues facing young people now and how the issues differ for younger (13-16) compared to older (17-19) teenagers**

*Young people are most concerned with the facilities and opportunities within their local area. The principal difference between the age ranges are the type and nature of facilities and opportunities, in particular the issue of safe accommodation. For example, affordable sports and leisure facilities are important to younger teenagers whereas job prospects, wages and low levels of crime are important to older teenagers.*

### **2 The issues faced by particular groups of teenagers that are not addressed in the consultation document**

*There are a range of young people who have yet to experience the value of belonging to a community. Where there are examples of good practice that have resulted in changing the lives of young people of hard-to-reach groups, these should be widely shared from a central function.*

*It was felt that the Green Paper did not offer practical suggestions for the engagement of a number of young people e.g. black, minority ethnic, disengaged young people or those who had special educational needs. The Paper offers a framework to engage with those who are willing to be involved with community activities.*

### **3 Successful projects and initiatives tackling the challenges covered in the document**

*Pump priming for new initiatives, especially if the project is to be self-financing must be made available to support start up and initial running costs, such as the new helpline for carers and parents. There are a number of successful projects (e.g. Youth Enquiry Service) that local providers expressed a concern for insofar the local initiatives may be at risk if the management was centralised.*

#### **4 Encouraging young people to take their responsibilities seriously; incentives for good behaviour; sanctions to be applied for poor and disruptive behaviour**

*The concept of incentives is not favoured, on the basis that inclusion and poor behaviour would not be positively addressed.*

*The Green Paper recommendation to set standards in the informal context was welcomed, as the provision for young people is regulated by Ofsted. Consideration should be given to extending the process of self-assessment measured against generic standards, to be used by all service providers thus ensuring a consistent approach to benchmarking and self-monitoring. The use of a personal evaluation would have future benefit as it would incorporate trust with young people as they would also be able to monitor service provision and could be translated to the national qualification framework, thus allowing young people to see the value of progression.*

#### **5. What more could be done to divert young people from risk-taking behaviour, like smoking, binge-drinking and volatile substance and illicit drugs misuse?**

*The Green Paper could have extended its recommendations relating to sport as it is felt that there would be a benefit for extreme sports such as abseiling/rock climbing to be offered to young people who had shown a history of taking risks, as an alternative way to addressing the excitement factor.*

#### **6. The practical benefits and challenges in developing an integrated youth support service.**

*The recommendation to deliver front line youth services through a single body that will have responsibility for youth policy is welcomed. The benefit of this is that services could pool resources and expertise. However, the paper does not offer comments on the practicalities of multi-disciplinary teams working alongside each other, sustainable investment or the extent that the voluntary and community sector could contribute to service improvement, which at present make up for a large percentage of service delivery.*

*The benefits of an integrated service are closely aligned to the development of the Change for Children Agenda. With a strategic body overseeing the provision of all services for children and young people services there should be few duplications and a better understanding of the needs and gaps in provision. The principal challenges will evolve around partnerships agreeing and monitoring standards as under a single inspectorate the local authority will retain accountability. If the intention is to centralise the offer to young people, concern was expressed as to how good practice will be preserved.*

#### **7. The use of the Connexions brand within the reformed system**

*The use of an identity is always welcome as it easily recognised. However, there are mixed views by young people on the support received, but felt that a locally monitored agreement would enable a more personalised service for the immediate community to continue to be implemented.*

#### **8. What more can we do to ensure that reformed services are focused on achieving the improved outcomes we all want to see**

*There was a universal concern that funding may either be ring fenced or specifically targeted. The Green Paper offered little encouragement that accountable bodies (Local Authorities) would be encouraged to identify and develop areas of local importance as a partnership to improve outcomes. It is important to have a standard framework but flexibility needs to be retained in order that services may be proactive.*

*The inclusion of the private sector appears to be a prospect overlooked. To achieve reform and ensure sustainability of provision, the engagement of employers as well as young people is critical to the shaping of local services.*

### **9. The proposals to empower young people in shaping local services**

*The Green Paper promotes the development of an opportunity for all. However, it was felt that the nature and scope of the opportunity should be determined and managed locally. It was disappointing that the term 'active citizenship' was omitted from the paper as this is an area if developed would socially develop young people and provide them with the confidence to shaping the future of local services.*

### **10. Central support for developing and delivery local opportunity cards**

*The real value of opportunity cards was hard to determine; there is a view that the cards will create even more disaffection amongst young people from differing backgrounds, especially if a clear right to provision were not set.*

*Concern was expressed as to how the opportunity card would be administered. There are merits for management at a central and local level. However, to administer centrally would only duplicate the work of local operations.*

### **11. Development of opportunity cards so that the maximum number of young people can benefit**

*The general perspective was that opportunities would be limited by placing the emphasis on sport, and not encouraging young people to participate in culture, arts, leisure linked to activity centres and the music. Additionally, sustaining young people's involvement might be difficult for some sectors of the community e.g. carers once the fund ceased.*

*A number of young people interviewed favoured the opportunity card against a card based on a post-code model to encourage more young people to participate in national schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, as it was felt that it gave new and free "opportunities" to young disadvantaged people. All those interviewed favoured a locally determined fund, as this would enable the providers to deliver against the actual needs and requirements of the young people.*

*Central support would be welcomed to ensure that good practice from other schemes could be shared as well as developing innovative ideas to positively challenge young people.*

### **12 The proposed national standards**

*As previously noted, the setting of standards is welcomed in the informal context. If Ofsted were to regulate the provision for young people, we would wish to see the use of a self-assessment that will enable young people to benchmark their personal standards.*

### **13 Will the proposals, taken together with those of the Russell Commission, lead to increased mutual respect between young people and others in the community?**

*The recommendations for youth volunteering set out in the Russell Commission Report are welcomed as they identify issues and offer solutions for disengaged young people. Through a national framework allied to a formal inspection regime, standards and values can be monitored and maintained.*

### **14 What more can be done to recognise and celebrate young people's positive contributions to their communities**

*It was felt that there are a range of existing arrangements that illustrate the contribution of young people to their communities and that a national award or "week" could raise the profile to recognise their achievements. Furthermore, more could be done to recognise and understand the value young people believe they are making towards improving their communities.*

*By not restricting or ring-fencing the use of monies distributed through the funding streams youth services will have greater flexibility to work with partners, LSC, schools, youth and community centres, to develop the volunteering recommendations outlined in the Russell Commission and bring young people closer to their communities.*

**15 Opportunities to earn rewards motivate young people to get involved in their communities.**

*The opportunities that a rewards system would bring were difficult to determine, as the sources of evidence were not supplied. Furthermore, no definition of involvement within a community was offered. With this in mind, the views of young people were that they welcomed the In principle idea of a card that accrued points although some young people expressed a concern that parental top-ups may not be possible for low-income families and could lead to unfairness, labelling or judgments being made by their peers. Concern was also expressed as to who would decide on the removal of points particularly if parents could influence the situation.*

**16. Ensuring young people from a diverse range of communities are effectively engaged by service providers**

*Through a partnership approach, using the skills and expertise of providers operating across a range of sectors including the voluntary and community sector, providers will be able to share areas of good practice and begin to have a broader understanding of the diverse issues within communities.*

**17 What kind of help and support is most important for young people**

*Young people require practical assistance to help them to develop themselves. Again, locally determined solutions are required to meet the changing needs of young people. Concern was expressed as to the impact on young people if the scoping of service was not locally determined.*

**18. Ensuring information, advice and guidance provided to young people is comprehensive, impartial and challenges rather than perpetuates traditional stereotypes?**

*The current information, advice and guidance model delivered through the Connexions service needs to be built upon and not changed. Developing new initiatives with existing local arrangements should be encouraged to develop creativity and partnership working. Particular issues relating to transition and continuity arrangements between ages and services were raised. We would welcome greater collaboration between central departments that resulted in improved arrangements between the service providers many of which have different funding criteria.*

**19 Proposals to devolve responsibility for information, advice and guidance to children's trusts, schools and colleges**

*The Paper does not explicitly acknowledge or recognise the full youth service offer. For example the contribution made by the community and voluntary sector over the previous five years towards improving the youth offer has increased. Using high quality professionals, dedicated trained youth and community workers young people can now access a range of facilities and services with support from detached and out reach workers. It was disappointing that the Paper neither recognised nor reflected existing good provision being delivered within neighbourhoods and youth centres and only focussed on existing structures.*



## **20 The use of quality standards for information, advice and guidance**

*The use of quality standards for information, advice and guidance was welcomed in principle to ensure consistency and accessibility resulting in improved choices. Ensuring that young people have easy access to a range of service offers will start to mean that they will have even more opportunities to consider and options to explore.*

## **21 How can the standards be made affordable without putting pressure on financial or workforce resources?**

*An ideal situation would be through a common assessment framework performance management, inductions and appraisal systems could be monitored to ensure consistency of standards. However, it is recognised that without equality of funding this could not be achieved. Targeted funding to develop the interfaces between electronic systems would not only ensure continuity but would also provide quality data to inform performance management.*

## **22 IAG to ensure high quality and impartiality**

*The Information, Advice and Guidance national framework defines standards for adult services. If applied as a minimum standard to all young people services, this would level the quality standards between providers, ensure minimum expectations and promote joint working arrangements.*

## **23 The case for bringing together within children's trusts responsibility for commissioning different services, which provide support to young people with additional needs.**

*The Green Paper appears to leave local discretion to those who would actually deliver services. There was an inference that local authority youth services would be seen as commissioners of youth work and not actual providers.*

*We strongly believe that the decision on how services are delivered must be locally determined and would be concerned if the determination of how services are provided is centrally structured. Also, we welcome the Paper's promotion of partnership working as the way forward, with a focus on utilising charitable/community-based organisations as it draws in the expertise of others.*

## **24 Ensuring that young people who face particular barriers are effectively engaged by service providers**

*We strongly believe the promotion of partnerships under a single body will determine and respond to local issues. A locally determined infrastructure planned around the needs of the community will ensure that the most appropriate youth offer is commissioned. This might include developing parallel strategies to support young people and the parents and avoid them disengaging at an early age.*

## **25 Ensuring that the new lead professional role is successful in co-ordinating the delivery of targeted support to young people who need it**

*The appointment of a lead professional will ensure that the Change for Children Agenda is central to implementing a partnership strategy and ensure effective frontline delivery of services. Providing the role of the lead professional is locally determined services functions can be tailored according to the needs of the young people.*

## **26 Helping older teenagers make a smooth transition to adulthood**

*The Green Paper was not explicit in its links with the Change for Children agenda. However, improving outcomes for all children and young people underpins all of the development and work within Children's Trusts.*

*It was disappointing that the term 'active citizenship' was omitted from the paper as this is an area, if developed could link to the national vocational framework and develop a broader range of skills. We would welcome target funding to develop a local strategy that provided for greater collaboration between youth and adult services, which resulted in improved transitional arrangements.*