

Youth Services

Draft

Scrutiny Inquiry Report

Introduction and Scope

- 1 At the first meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in June 2006, members agreed that they wished to look at youth services across Leeds as one of their major inquiries for the coming year.
- 2 In order to decide on an appropriate and manageable focus for the inquiry, the Board commissioned a small working group from amongst its membership to scope the inquiry. The working group met with the council's Head of Youth Service on 27th July.
- 3 The group had a wide ranging discussion which included an overview of developments in the council's own youth services over the past few years; the range and variation in services on offer to young people across the city; the many different providers; and the balance between targeted and universal service provision.
- 4 As background to their deliberations members of the working group considered the government publication Youth Matters: The Next Steps.
- 5 In order to provide a clear focus for the board's work, the working group decided to recommend that the inquiry took as its end point the question 'What should Leeds City Council include in the youth offer that it will have to publish next year?'
- 6 In order to answer that question it was felt that the inquiry should look at current provision and how it varied across the city, in order to build a vision for the future. This would include different service providers and partners as well as different types of targeted and universal provision. The inquiry also needed to consider what young people want and expect from youth services as fundamental to mapping future provision.
The board hopes that this inquiry will assist the council in responding successfully to the Youth Matters agenda and ensuring that the 5 outcomes for children and young people are embedded in the youth offer.
- 8 The purpose of the inquiry was to make an assessment of, and where appropriate make recommendations on, the following areas:
 - What should Leeds City Council include in the youth offer that it will have to publish next year?
 - What can be learnt from the existing patterns of provision across the city?
 - What do young people want and expect from youth services in Leeds?
- 9 We were pleased to welcome a wide range of witnesses to our Board meetings, representing a

Introduction and Scope

wide range of agencies from all sectors involved in providing services for young people. This was complemented by our extensive programme of visits to a variety of facilities. We particularly valued the opportunity to talk directly to young people at some of these venues and hear first hand about what they want from a youth offer.

- 10 We would like to thank everyone who took part in our inquiry for giving willingly of their time and for helping us to explore some of the complexities surrounding the provision of youth services today.
- 11 The conclusions and recommendations we have set out below are supplemented by a more comprehensive summary of the evidence we received. This is available as a separate document, from the Scrutiny Unit (see contact details below).

Terminology

- 12 During our inquiry we became aware of some of the confusion that can arise from the use of terminology.
- 13 Throughout this report the term 'youth work' is used to describe professional youth work delivered in accordance with youth work principles. The term 'youth services' is used to describe the broader range of services available

for young people. However the term 'Youth Service' refers to the council's service, which primarily delivers 'youth work'.

- 14 Similarly, the term 'extended services' is currently replacing the concept of 'extended schools'. We have used the former term in this report.

Conclusions and Recommendations



- 1 The requirement to produce a 'youth offer' of sufficient educational leisure time activities and facilities for young people's personal and social development is set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- 2 The local authority will be required to consult on, prepare, publish and deliver the youth offer on an annual basis. The content of the offer will need to reflect the strap line of the government's Youth Matters programme 'something to do, somewhere to go, someone to talk to'.
- 3 There is an expectation from government that the offer should embrace a very wide range of services including for example, youth work, information, advice, guidance, arts, sports, libraries, environmental initiatives and volunteering.
- 4 The youth offer also needs to be seen within the wider context of the core universal offer for all children and young people, set out by Children Leeds. The youth offer will form an integral element of the core universal offer.
- 5 Our inquiry recognised that 'youth services' cover a far wider range of activities than the predominantly 'youth work' role of the council's own 'Youth Service'. They also include a huge range of activities offered by other partners - ranging from other parts of the council such as leisure services to voluntary, community and faith sector groups. Some of this provision also falls into the category of professional 'youth work', but there is also a great deal of other youth services activity taking place across the city.
- 6 One issue that arose during our discussions was the tension between universal and targeted provision when allocating Youth Service funding. Leeds has consciously focused on targeted work in the past, and this almost certainly contributes to the perception of differing levels of provision across the city that Members highlighted as one of their concerns from the outset of this inquiry.
- 7 Another factor which we had to bear in mind was the separate requirement for an information, advice and guidance service. New guidelines for this service, encompassing the current Connexions services, have recently been published. Connexions and igen contributed to our inquiry, and it was clear from the evidence presented to us that there was a demand from young people for an element of information, advice and guidance to be included within the youth offer.
- 8 The Board is very pleased that the Youth Service already formally recognises the need for

Conclusions and Recommendations



engagement of young people to start well below the statutory youth work age of 13-19, through the allocation of 20% of Youth Service funding for 11 and 12 year olds.

- 9 Nevertheless, probably the strongest message emerging from the evidence presented to us, was the need for far more activity and funding to be targeted towards the 8-12 age group and for the engagement of young people to be well established before the age of 13.
- 10 The Board was also made aware that some groups of young people (for example carers, looked after children and young people with disabilities) may need a different approach or extra assistance to access the types of opportunities available to other young people. In some cases this may mean making specific provision available to meet the access or social needs of these groups; in other cases it may be about ensuring that they are able to overcome any barriers to taking part in universal provision.
- 11 The Board was aware that not all activity that may come under the banner of the youth offer would necessarily be restricted to young people. It is important that inter-generational interaction is retained and developed, particularly in encouraging community cohesion.

Recommendation 1

In light of the evidence presented during our inquiry, we recommend that the youth offer for Leeds needs to address the following key findings:

- **The need for a more equal distribution of universal youth services on offer across the city**
- **That the youth offer in Leeds should extend beyond the statutory 13-19 age group, at least to cover 11 and 12 year olds, but preferably to cover the 8-12 age group**
- **The need to include advice and signposting within universal provision**
- **The need to recognise that some groups of young people (for example carers, looked after children and young people with disabilities) may need a different approach or extra assistance to enable them to access the types of opportunities included in the universal youth offer**
- **The need to recognise young people's expressed desires for venues and spaces to undertake their own (unstructured) activity**
- **The important role of inter-generational/all age activities as well as specific young people's activities**

We ask the Director of Children's Services to report to us within 3 months on how each of these issues will be addressed in the published youth offer.

Conclusions and Recommendations



12 One area that was of particular interest to us was the influence of area management on the Youth Service. When Area Committees were established in 2004, the Youth Service was one of the first services delegated to them to influence and allocate resources for.

13 However, what we also realised was that only about half of the funding for the Youth Service is delegated to Area Committees, and funding for the Youth Service is in itself only a proportion of the funding directed to youth provision city-wide.

14 This was particularly significant in relation to the concerns some of us had about the current formula for allocating Area Committee funding for the Youth Service. This funding is currently allocated in two parts: 50% as a per capita 13-19 head count, and 50% based on the number of children within families that are on benefits (a deprivation factor). This compares to the Area Well-being Funds (also controlled by Area Committees) which are allocated 75% on a population basis and 25% by deprivation factors.

15 We had some debate about whether this was the most appropriate split, and whether other factors should be taken into account such as rural distances

and the availability/proximity or otherwise of alternative facilities. Whilst we could not come to a consensus on the issue, we felt that it needed to be resolved at a political level. However, we also acknowledged that, in the light of what we had learned about funding, it was not as significant an issue in itself as we had at first thought it might be in shaping the overall provision of youth services in Leeds.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the Executive Board reviews the allocation of Youth Service funding to Area Committees, taking into consideration the issues raised by the Scrutiny Board.

16 We were pleased to hear about the development of the Leeds Youth Work Partnership, and also the emerging work of local networks in some areas of the city, in promoting a stronger partnership approach to working with the voluntary, community and faith sector in providing youth services.

17 Representatives from the voluntary, community and faith sector told us how highly they valued a change in the relationship on the principles of an equal partnership. However for this to be a reality, there needs to be the capacity within the sector to fulfil a strategic role.

Conclusions and Recommendations



- 18 We also noted the value of local networks in assisting smaller organisations, or those for whom youth activity was only a small part of their business, to negotiate the safeguarding and monitoring requirements which were a condition of funding. This nurturing role is an important contribution to the expansion of provision at a local level.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that the Director of Children's Services ensures that arrangements for funding and commissioning youth services through the voluntary, community and faith sector includes provision for the strategic capacity of the sector to be an effective partner in service delivery and development.

Recommendation 4

We also recommend that the Director of Children's Services promotes the development of local networks to help smaller organisations to play an effective part in the youth offer and qualify for funding.

- 19 During our inquiry we talked to representatives from Leeds Community Safety, the Youth Offending Service and Youth Inclusion Projects (YIPs), as well as visiting a Junior YIP. Whilst we recognise that it is not the role of

youth services to act as an extension of the law enforcement services, we also see evidence of excellent working between the two services that has a very positive impact for individual young people and for communities.

- 20 In particular, the value of work with the 8-12 age group was again emphasised in engaging young people positively and preventing future anti-social behaviour.

- 21 We feel that this is an area where the Children's trust can promote city-wide good practice based on existing examples in some parts of the city.

- 22 We were pleased to hear that the Youth Service had agreed in principle to provide support to young people leaving the Junior YIPs.

Recommendation 5

We recommend that the Director of Children's Services prioritises resources to support the work of the Youth Inclusion Projects (YIPs) and Junior YIPs in the way described to us during our inquiry.

Recommendation 6

That the Director of Children's Services finds ways of promoting positive relationships between the police and youth services more widely, building on the good examples that exist in some parts of the city.

Conclusions and Recommendations



- 23 We valued the opportunity to hear the views of some young people as part of our inquiry, both directly and indirectly.
- 24 However, we were concerned that the Youth Service's survey only involved current users. We feel that it is vitally important that future consultation needs to include young people who do not currently use the service, in order to find out what might attract more young people to access the service.
- 25 We were also interested to hear how young people are more directly involved in shaping services that affect them directly. The best example we heard about was from igen, where young people are formally involved in the management of the service, and also helped decide the decoration scheme for the refurbishment of the Eastgate Connexions centre.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the Director of Children's Services ensures that, in addition to existing consultation with service users, specific efforts are made to consult with non service users about their views on the Youth Service.

Recommendation 8

We also recommend that the Director of Children's Services considers how the examples of young people's involvement in the management of governance of services can be more widely applied across children's services.

- 26 Overall, we were excited by the range of activities, facilities and services available to young people in Leeds.
- 27 What frustrated us most was the knowledge that the amount and distribution of this provision across the city was limited.
- 28 Whilst in some areas individuals have worked hard to overcome the potential barriers presented by different service infrastructures and priorities, in order to make the most of their combined services, this is not the case everywhere in the city.
- 29 We hope that the combined efforts of the Leeds Youth Work Partnership and Children Leeds will provide greater strategic direction for youth services throughout Leeds, resulting in a more effective and co-ordinated range of provision across the city, and produce an excellent youth offer for our young people to enjoy.

Evidence



Monitoring arrangements

Standard arrangements for monitoring the outcome of the Board's recommendations will apply.

The decision-makers to whom the recommendations are addressed will be asked to submit a formal response to the recommendations, including an action plan and timetable, normally within two months.

Following this the Scrutiny Board will determine any further detailed monitoring, over and above the standard quarterly monitoring of all scrutiny recommendations.

Reports and Publications Submitted

- Department for Education and Skills – 'Youth Matters: Next Steps' – March 2006
- Leeds Youth Council Manifesto 2005-08
- Report of the Head of Youth Services – 'Youth Services Inquiry' – 2nd November 2006
- Leeds Youth Services Ofsted Action Plan updated at 17th October 2006
- Leeds Youth Work Partnership information
- Leeds Youth Network (Morley) information
- Report of the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing – The Impact of Area Management upon the Youth Service – 2nd November 2006
- Report of the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing – Inquiry into Youth Services: Leeds Community Safety Response – 14th December 2006
- Report of the Chief Social Services Officer – Inquiry into Youth Services: Youth Offending Service response – 14th December 2006
- Igen – Briefing paper – 14th December 2006
- Connexions – Report by Partnership Director Leeds – October 2006
- Learning and Leisure Department - Provision for Children and Young People: Arts and Events – 14th December 2006
- Learning and Leisure 'Reach' Figures for Young People
- Provision for young people 13-19 years in Leeds Museums and Galleries
- Public Private Partnership Unit briefing paper– Use of PFI schools by community groups and third party groups – 14th December 2006
- Report of the Director of Learning and Leisure – Youth Service work with young people with disabilities – 14th December 2006
- A New Universal Offer presentation – Children Leeds
- Local Youth Work Networks
- Local Area Agreement (LAA) Year 9 Project Information
- Youth Service User Survey 2006 - summary of results

Evidence



Reports and Publications Submitted – Evidence from Visits

- Flipchart work in preparation for the Leeds City Council Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) visit to HYPE group
- Connexions/igen information pack 'Moving on in Year Eleven' – June 2006/07
- igen - Scrutiny Board visit presentation and pack of information for young people, including:
 - Connexions West Yorkshire 'Directory of Voluntary and Statutory Agencies 2006 – A guide for referral prepared for Connexions Personal Advisers in Leeds
 - 'Get That Job' – Summer 2006
 - Learning Leeds – Learning Entitlement for 14-19 year olds
 - Leeds Destinations 2005
 - University - Frequently Asked Questions for 2007 entry
 - Routes into..... A Guide to 21 career areas for young people aged 16 – November 2006
 - Where next in Leeds? What can you do at 16? – September 2006
 - Decisions: Information for parents and carers of young people with additional support needs – September 2006

Dates of Scrutiny

- 27th July 2006 – working group meeting
- 2nd November 2006 – Scrutiny Board meeting
- 14th December 2006 – Scrutiny Board meeting

Visits

- 18th November 2006 – Corn Exchange, Leeds City Centre, detached youth work
- 21st November 2006 – Archway
- 22nd November 2006 – igen Leeds Careers, Eastgate
- 27th November 2006 – The Marketplace
- 4th December 2006 – Hyde Park and Burley Junior Youth Inclusion Project (YIP)
- 5th December 2006 – Mobile Youth Provision Service, West Flatts Park, Wortley
- 6th December 2006 – Armley Lazer Centre
- 7th December 2006 – Leeds Sailing and Activity Centre, Yeadon Tarn
- 16th December 2006 – Leeds Youth Council meeting

Evidence



Witnesses Heard

- John Paxton – Head of Youth Service
- Rosemary Archer – Director of Children’s Services
- Dave Ashwell – Voluntary Services Unit, Youth Services
- Mark Law – BARCA / Leeds Youth Work Partnership
- Satbinder Soor – Senior Youth Officer, Youth Services
- Cllr Robert Finnigan – Chair of South (Outer) Area Committee
- Dave Richmond – South Leeds Area Manager
- Louise Megson – St Luke’s Cares }
- Brent Lumley – Willow Young Carers } voluntary, community and faith sector
- Jeni Sawdon – The Marketplace } representatives
- Andy Mills – Head of Community Safety
- Jim Hopkinson – Youth Offending Service Manager
- Peter Hunter – Hyde Park and Burley Junior YIP, Leeds Prevention Programme
- Terry Walsh – Director of igen Leeds Careers
- Shaid Mahmood – Partnership Director Leeds, Connexions West Yorkshire
- Andrew Macgill – Head of Arts and Events,
- Kris Nenadic – Landscape Construction Officer, Parks and Countryside
- Sara Birkinshaw – Senior Sports Development Officer, Sport and Active Recreation
- Britta Heyworth – Arts and Reader Development Manager, Libraries and Heritage
- Mike Kinnaird – Head of Policy and Performance, Learning and Leisure department
- Ken Morton – Director, Learning Communities Team, Education Leeds
- Mark Smith – John Smeaton School
- Dave Outram – Head of the Public Private Partnerships Unit
- Shirley Parks – Deputy Programme Director, Building Schools for the Future, Education Leeds