'In the Boot Room':

Organisational contexts and partnerships

Second Interim National Positive Futures Case Study Research Report

Tim Crabbe

Research Team:
Davies Banda, Tony Blackshaw, Adam Brown, Clare Choak, Tim Crabbe, Ben Gidley, Gavin Mellor, Kath O'Connor, Imogen Slater, Donna Woodhouse

January 2006

Contents

'In the Boot Room: Executive Summary

Following the publication of our first interim report focused on PF, engagement and relationship building (Crabbe, 2005) in this second case study report we turn our attention to the supply lines, channels of communication, management structures, partnerships and cultures of operation which both enable and inhibit the achievement of PF programme objectives. As with our first report we utilise the PF strategy document *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* (Home Office, 2003) as a benchmark.

More specifically we focus on the extent and ways in which projects and staff have understood the approach articulated in *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* in terms of:

- the characteristics of appropriate lead agencies
- the nature of strong effective local partnerships
- the skills and training needs of the PF workforce
- the need for a central monitoring and evaluation framework

Whilst this summary is intended to highlight the key themes emerging from the research and the policy and practice issues associated with them, it is from the detail of the main report that a full appreciation of the issues considered emerges and from which we have drawn the conclusions presented here.

Lead agencies

In general terms our case study examples suggest that:

- In terms of agency lifespan the longevity of an agency's provision prior to involvement in PF provides little assurance of enhanced provision.
- Whilst offering a number of benefits, jointly led projects have generally proved more difficult to manage than projects led by a single agency.
- In terms of organisational status it is more appropriate to identify the ways in which different organisational forms relate to, inhibit or enable alternative styles of provision than to focus on organisations themselves.
- Whilst the geographical reach of projects nationally ranges from activity on a single housing estate to provision over a local authority's entire area of jurisdiction, *thick* spread patterns of delivery are preferable to those which are *thin* spread.
- In terms of style of delivery a key distinction can be made between those agencies which adopt a more engaged, organic and fluid approach and those which organise activities in a more detached and rigid fashion.
- PF projects, nationally, use a variety of approaches towards targeting and participant referral.

In attempting to clarify how effective lead agencies might be identified, *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* highlights a number of features including the need to be:

- Independent and innovative
- Organisationally transparent
- Co-operative and non-duplicating
- Value for money
- Funded from a range of sources
- Capable of growth

There are undoubtedly examples of good work at all of our case study projects, as we revealed in our last interim report, but it seems clear that examples of good practice are more likely to occur in particular circumstances. Generally this is where it has developed 'organically' through continuous adaptation on the basis of lived interactions between the project and its participants. As such, those agencies which are most suited to this field of work promote and enable this style of working through their:

- Structural independence or autonomy
- Willingness to innovate
- Flexibility
- Passion and desire to enhance provision
- Use of intensive, long term participant focused delivery styles

---

Key Conclusion: PF requires an approach which is distinct from more conventional patterns of statutory sector public service delivery. As such many community based voluntary sector groups have organisational structures which would more easily accommodate the preferred characteristics of PF lead agencies.

Partnerships

The organisational types identified as potential partners by the *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* strategy document are essentially reflective of wider PF approaches which seeks to develop personal progression pathways and embrace:

- Referral agents enabling access to vulnerable young people
- Delivery agents able to maintain young people's engagement
- Agencies that can provide pathways onwards from PF's own activities

Whilst these descriptions reflect the developmental essence of PF and re-enforce the approach that it advocates, through our research we have identified a wider array of partnership types which embrace and extend this approach, including:

- Commissioning agents

- Referral agencies
- Host organisations
- Delivery agents
- Strategic partners
- Exit partners

Within each of these categorisations, what is more important is the ability to evaluate what the partnership is contributing and how this fits with the wider developmental ethos of the PF programme. As such we have identified a series of cultures and styles of working, rather than rules or prerequisites for effective partnership working. Partnerships should involve two or more agencies and/or groups and should, where possible, include a variety of key stakeholders. Individuals, groups and organisations who enter into partnerships should be those who are primarily affected by a problem and/or have responsibility for developing solutions. They also need to:

- Develop (where this does not already exist) common aims and shared visions of what the problem is and how it should be overcome.
- Agreed plans of action on what should be done to tackle the problem. These do not always have to be formally written down, but they should be understood by all partners.
- Understand, acknowledge and respect the contribution that different agencies/groups can bring to partnerships.
- Be open, responsive and seek to accommodate the different values and cultures of participating agencies/groups.
- Exchange information and communicate regularly. This communication should extend beyond formal partnership meetings, especially at the delivery level.
- Share resources and skills.
- Be innovative, flexible and should be prepared to take risks rather than avoid them.
.

> **Key Conclusion**: It is clear from our case studies that there is no viable 'model' for partnership working to follow. Indeed, our experience suggests that where forms of partnership working are imposed this is more likely to contribute to organisational tension and the emergence of counter productive competing styles of working

Understanding Positive Futures

- There remains a lack of consistency in relation to understandings of the PF approach at the project level with a wide variety of interpretations apparent amongst our case studies.

- Considerable effort has gone into improving both internal and external communications in accordance with the commitments made in *Cul-de-sacs and gateways*.
- This process has embraced the continued roll out of the Workforce Quality Initiative and accredited training courses.
- As part of the national team's communications strategy one-to-one support has been offered to all projects in order to help them develop their own communications skills and media strategies.

> **Key Conclusion**: As the programme develops, more consistent understandings of the PF approach should be easier to achieve through smaller scale incremental expansion rather than the launch of fresh 'waves' of projects

Monitoring, Evaluation and Training

- The launch of *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* in 2003, which emphasised PF's role as an early intervention 'relationship strategy', was associated with a recognition of the need for new means of capturing the nature of the work and the journeys made by participants.
- Beyond the difficulties associated with quantitative monitoring frameworks, conflicting demands are made by lead agencies' parent bodies and the requirements of other funding partners who work with PF.
- In this context PF has sought to develop a new national monitoring and evaluation framework to achieve new ways of assessing and learning.
- The new framework embraces three tiers of reporting and has been designed to ensure its compatibility with project partner's information needs through an embracement of the *Every Child Matters Outcomes Framework*, DAT/DAAT targets and wider youth work oriented models of assessing participant progress.

> **Key conclusion:** The roll out of the new monitoring and evaluation framework over the course of the next year will increasingly flag up those agencies which are not embracing the core delivery principles of the PF approach whilst better reflecting the extent and nature of the work of those that do.

Part One: Introduction and Research Methodology

1.2 Introduction

In the first interim case study research report, *Getting to Know You* (Crabbe, 2005) we provided a detailed introduction to both the case study research and the PF projects that have been included in this study. After revealing the neighbourhoods and social contexts in which each of the projects is operating we went on to consider the ways in which these projects have sought to engage and build relationships with participants. In this sense the report was presented from the 'coal face' or 'frontline' and focused on the ways in which PF is delivered rather than on how the projects themselves are organised in any specific sense. In this second case study report we intend to turn our attention to what lies behind those delivery mechanisms and to focus on the supply lines, channels of communication, management structures, partnerships and cultures of operation which might both enable and inhibit the achievement of programme objectives. In doing so we will once again utilise the PF strategy document *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* (Home Office, 2003) as a benchmark.

More specifically we will focus particularly on the extent and ways in which projects and staff have understood the approach articulated in *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* as well as considering the key elements of the final section, 'passing on the baton: ensuring continuity', which outlined PF's vision in terms of:

- the characteristics of appropriate lead agencies
- the nature of strong effective local partnerships
- the skills and training needs of the PF workforce
- the need for a central monitoring and evaluation framework

We will then conclude with a series of recommendations focused on the most appropriate format for organising and delivering PF.

Before moving on to the main task in hand, we will briefly introduce the orientation of the methodology and the various techniques which have informed our findings.

1.2 Methodology

To date, attempts to gain an insight into the organisational processes associated with local PF projects and their partners have largely relied upon the Key Elements Survey and Survey of Partner Agencies conducted by MORI[1]. These garner basic quantitative and 'closed-question' responses from key staff around issues such as project objectives and developments; future plans; targets; barriers to progress; partner involvement and benefits from PF; staff training etc.

---

[1] See http://www.drugs.gov.uk/young-people/positive-futures/ for example surveys

The more longitudinal Participative Action Research (PAR) approach associated with the case study research which we outlined in our first interim report (Crabbe, 2005) aims to unearth data which lies beyond the remit of such survey methods. As Williamson reveals there is a difference between the 'documentary life' of organisations and their 'informal private life' (2002: 588), which the PAR approach helps the researchers to access.

As we have shown previously, PAR provides a family of research methods united by a set of principles and a 'style' of orientation rather than a positivistic set of procedures. It is cyclical, moving between action, critical reflection and practice, and bringing them together in pursuit of practical solutions to issues of concern to those involved. It also aspires to empower participants through this collaboration, by promoting the acquisition of knowledge to achieve social change, whilst attempting to circumvent traditional hierarchies associated with researcher/researched dichotomies. In this sense PAR is characterised by a dynamic relationship between theory and practice. PAR is then not just concerned with using participatory techniques within a conventional monitoring and evaluation setting. It is about radically rethinking who initiates and undertakes the process, and who learns or benefits from the findings since it involves the implementation of a local process rather than the imposition of an externally defined set of procedures.

However, whilst our participant observation in project offices and intra- and inter-agency meetings has enabled us to produce detailed 'thick' descriptions (Geertz, 1973) of the organisational contexts in which the work is situated we are also conscious of the potential pitfalls of this approach in these settings. For PAR is not an approach which has been designed with the interests of institutions and established organisational processes in the foreground. Indeed Aimer (2000) flags up issues pertaining to PAR involving local authorities, such as the challenge it represents to 'experts', the desire to control the balance of power in the research relationship and the potential to withhold information and resources. Similarly Avison et al (2001) have drawn attention to the potential for 'controlling' the action research project. Generally, we have experienced little sense of project partners attempting to control researchers' access to discussions, and project meetings have largely been arenas where participants have both taken on board and challenged data generated by the research, as well as conducting their scheduled business openly. In accordance with previous studies though, in the context of the local authority led projects, alongside a determined desire to be involved in the research, we have on occasion experienced much stronger sensitivity towards its wider purpose.

Whilst we have received consistent positive feedback on the benefits of the research exercise allied to a desire to be able to use the research reports for publicity purposes, in one case this has been accompanied by a concern to obtain control and copy approval over research publications pertaining to the project. At another project, where the coordinator is much more relaxed about the

research, it has taken more time for senior management to come to terms with the research approach and the status of feedback presented to the project management and partners. As with the work with frontline delivery staff then, in this sense the research process is itself revealed as a dynamic in the process of project management which we have had to consider.

In terms of the specific techniques employed, we have used low-key but highly engaged participant observer methods to get behind the quantitative data that typically defines such projects in the eyes of social policy analysts. This has been done to understand their internal structure, style and cultures of operation. The use of a participatory approach has enabled us to quickly gain a feel for issues specific to the individual projects and their partners whilst the relatively long term nature of the research has enabled us to be at the heart of specific case examples as and when they have arisen.

In addition to becoming actively engaged in the day to day activity of each of the case study projects in both delivery settings and management, partner and regional PF meetings, we have conducted a broad range of interviews with project staff, managers and partner agencies. This has included a combination of intermittent project history interviews with staff as well as group qualitative discussions. These have, in the main, been loosely structured and in certain situations have taken the form of informal discussions rather than recognisable formal 'interviews' in order to capture what has been described as 'naturally occurring data'. Through the use of these interviews we have sought to establish how a variety of individuals and partner agencies talk about and represent the place of PF within their wider professional practice.

In order to build on the more quantitative data emerging from the existing PF monitoring and evaluation framework we have also included an archival dimension focused on documentary sources relating to referral patterns, partnership structures and the role of sport in local community development processes. We have surveyed sources to establish the historical emergence of lead agencies whilst also considering the documentary basis for their inclusion in the wider PF programme.

Part Two: Organising Positive Futures

2.1 The national management of PF

2.1.1 The historical context

PF was launched in 2000 as a result of a partnership between the UK Anti-Drug Co-ordination Unit, the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and Sport England. At that time PF was genuinely experimental and limited to 24 sites. These included twelve existing Sport England 'showcase' projects and twelve new initiatives tied to YJB nominated Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIP) and Youth Offending Teams. Whilst the current programme emerged out of these initiatives there was initially only limited strategic direction to guide them since the programme was intended to be quite diverse and experimental at this stage. What was consistent was the guidance that encouraged a focus on work with the most vulnerable young people in each of the target areas which were themselves all located within the top 10% most deprived wards in England.

This guidance borrowed from the YJB's 'Top 50' model[2] in terms of generating a 'targeted' approach which was based on cross partner consensus and a symbolic focus on a 'Core 50'. This focus was further developed however with the guidance that projects work with a broader population within the geographical limits set by the project, although continuing to be defined as 'youth at risk'. Indeed this wider group were seen as essential precisely in order that the project's 'priority' group would become engaged and sustain their participation. Nevertheless and almost inevitably projects varied in terms of the strictness of their interpretation and adherence to the concept of targeted work with a 'Core 50' group.

In many ways this initial guidance provided a legacy which has informed the approach of many PF projects despite more recent attempts to introduce a change of emphasis. The expansion of the programme in 2001 with the roll out of an additional 33 projects was borne out of a rigidly structured assessment of applicants and associated outcome measures based largely on the initial guiding principles outlined above. What it continued to lack was a more fully developed strategic framework focused around the ways in which a sports based social inclusion programme could be mobilised to engage and meet the needs of disadvantaged young people. As such, as the programme developed, it was defined as much as anything by existing patterns of community sports development work and the individual characteristics of the various lead agencies and their key partners rather than a distinct PF vision.

A clearer sense of focus developed once PF was transferred into the Home Office Drug Strategy Directorate in 2002, where it currently sits within the

---

[2] See www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk

Directorate's Treatment and Young People Team. Following this move and the appointment of a national management team, the three year strategy document, *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* was published in 2003. The new strategic framework and the authority associated with the Home Office location enabled a far clearer management structure and sense of direction for the programme to emerge.

2.1.2 The national management structure

The programme is nominally guided by a national advisory group with representatives from:

- Department of Health
- Department of Culture Media and Sport
- Department for Education and Skills
- Youth Justice Board
- Sport England
- Countryside Agency
- Metropolitan Police
- Football Foundation

The majority of these agencies have actively engaged with the group throughout the three year strategy period although the Department of Health and Department for Education and Skills' have had a more tangential relationship to the programme which is reflected in non attendance at these meetings. Whilst the advisory group provides a forum for the exchange of information and a gathering for agencies involved with sport-based social inclusion initiatives the programme itself has, in reality, been largely driven by the core National Team.

The National Team includes three full-time staff who are based in the Home Office. These are the National Director who has led the strategic development of the programme, the National Coordinator who facilitates the implementation of the programme and a National Administrator who manages day-to-day operations. One member of staff was recently seconded from Crime Concern and reports to PF's National Director but works at the Football Foundation to help them develop a strategic approach towards their investment in PF for the period 2005–08.

As well as organising the programme the National Team has been responsible for communicating PF's ethos, aims, objectives and strategic approach through the production of strategy, impact and research reports; the organisation of regional and national meetings; the development of a workforce training strategy; and a national monitoring and evaluation framework. In this regard the team is assisted by a range of specialist external service providers who have provided PF with support in three key areas:

- Research, monitoring and evaluation

- Communications strategy
- Workforce Quality Initiative

2.1.3 The regional and local delivery structure

In terms of delivery, PF directly grant-aids 96 projects across England and Wales which are accountable to the Home Office Drug Strategy Directorate. A further 19 football-oriented projects are funded by the Football Foundation, which are mostly delivered on their behalf by Nacro and managed by Nacro's Football Foundation funded National Football Manager. These projects still report to the Home Office in terms of monitoring and evaluation and benefit from the programme's central strategic direction.

Whilst clear structures have been put in place, inevitably, as we move away from the centre, management of the programme is revealed to be more diverse as we consider in more detail later. As far as the management structure is concerned though, regionally, PF seeks to work with Government Office Drug Teams through their Young Person Advisers who have occasionally come together at the Home Office to discuss strategy. However, on the ground the response has been patchy. Whilst several Government Offices have provided excellent support by getting involved in regional network meetings and ensuring that local DAATs engage with projects, others have offered less support.

This also extends to Sport England regional officers with a responsibility for 'social inclusion' who have generally shown little practical interest in the development of PF, despite the agency's status as a founding partner, in the face of what they might regard as a range of more pressing agendas. As such the principal support that projects receive at a regional level is through PF's own regional network meetings, which bring projects together with input from the national PF team, and the Workforce Quality Initiative, the delivery of which has been organised on a regional basis.

At the local level measures have been put in place to encourage the development of strong local partnerships involving DAATs as well as YOTs, schools, the police, social services and other local agencies to support PF projects with funds, referrals, staff training, advice and strategic direction. In this respect the national PF team has placed an emphasis on making sure that the Young Person's Lead at the DAAT and the PF project coordinator know each other and meet regularly, ideally sitting on each other's local steering groups and young persons commissioning groups.

The extent to which this occurs is clearly not consistent but is reflective of the wider local dynamics that the case study research has sought to uncover. As such, in the remainder of this report we intend to focus more directly on the structure of PF in the context of the case study projects that we have been engaged with in the hope that we can draw out the key features which

characterise successful projects. We will begin by identifying some of the core characteristics before going on to assess how they fit with the wider PF approach.

2.2 Characterising lead agencies

In our first interim report we suggested that PF is essentially a 'locally negotiated enterprise' embodying a variety of management approaches which have given rise to a diverse and distinct set of project management styles. On the basis of our observations at the seven case study projects we then divided these enterprises into three main provisional types as presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Provisional Positive Futures case study typology

Type	Organisation	Approach	Example
Community based	Voluntary	Radical, innovative and participant focused	Calderdale North Liverpool Southwark
Local authority	Statutory	Traditional, formulaic, 'top down'	Sefton Leeds
Hybrid	Partnership	Pragmatic	Keighley Wandsworth
			Source: Crabbe, 2005

Whilst we acknowledged that in practice all the projects involve broad partnerships with a range of agencies we argued that their character is typically defined by the lead agency, its cultural style and its staff. However, as we stated then, whilst identifying discernable differences and enabling comparisons which facilitate the research and analysis, such 'ideal type' classifications do not fully reflect the specificity of the individual projects or allow for their adaptability. Nor do they fit necessarily with the characteristics of other PF projects within these organisational categories which have not been included as case studies. As such we intend here to provide a more sophisticated and detailed consideration of the key characteristics associated with the organisation of PF projects whilst also seeking to draw out some conclusions regarding the most appropriate organisational format for delivering PF.

The PF projects included in the case study research were consciously selected to reflect the breadth of organisations and cultural orientations associated with the PF programme nationally. As such they each have their own unique history which has influenced how they came to be involved in the work and how they have since gone on to organise its delivery. Beyond the loose categorisations identified above it is useful then to examine the similarities and distinctions between the case studies in relation to a broader range of organisational characteristics, including:

- Agency lifespan
- Joint vs. single leadership
- Organisational status
- Geographical reach
- Range and style of delivery
- Approaches to targeting

We will do this before going on to consider their fit with the key features of a successful lead agency identified in the *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* strategy document.

2.2.1 Agency lifespan

Generally the launch of a PF project does not result in the creation of a new organisation as such. Rather PF can be regarded as a programme of work which is typically taken on by an existing organisation or organisations. Accordingly the work itself can become an extension to other ongoing programmes rather than an easily discernible 'new' set of activities.

For one of our case studies in particular, its core business has long been estate-based work with young people using sports and other appealing activities alongside personal development and educational work. In a sense, since their inception a decade ago, they have been doing exactly the sort of work PF is focused on, whether the work was funded by PF or not. PF has provided one of many funding streams that has enabled them to get on with the work that they do. In this context PF benefits from the agency's experience and strong local networks and connections with young people.

What enables this to work however is not necessarily the firm establishment of the lead agency but the fit of its approach with that of PF. Other projects which benefit from even stronger roots provided by a location within local authority sport and leisure departments undoubtedly gain more straightforward access to a range of partner agencies, but can also suffer from the burden of a more bureaucratic organisational framework.

The projects led by statutory sector organisations that we have observed bring with them a set of organisational procedures, policies and commitments which are specifically characteristic of new forms of public sector management. Typically located within a local authority leisure facility, senior management tend to have a background in sports and leisure management and are influenced by the traditions of this more institutional approach. As such PF activities can be geared towards complimenting and contributing to their hosts corporate aims and key performance indicators within a hierarchical team structure governed by stringent policies and procedures, rather than the more organic and developmental approach articulated by PF nationally in *Cul-de-sacs and gateways*.

In this sense, longevity of provision provides little assurance in and of itself and our research suggests that, although not the norm at present, entirely new, delivery agents can be established by appropriate partners to lead PF projects. One of our projects described itself in its initial application for funding as a 'community enterprise' which was to be led by a local community sports organisation. Approximately 18 months on, the PF project is still run as a community enterprise but has developed beyond the confines of its original sponsor and has become a more independent entity in its own right, employing a project coordinator, three area-based activities development workers, eleven sessional workers and one full-time administrator. Furthermore, the project is expanding with staff who do not necessarily have conventional formal sports and educational qualifications but rather have an array of life experiences, good interpersonal skills and an empathy and passion for the PF approach.

2.2.2 Joint vs. single leadership

Two of the PF projects we have considered do not have a single delivery agency but rather are characterised by a partnership or 'hybrid' approach. Whilst offering a number of benefits, this mode of organisation has generally proved more difficult to manage.

One of the projects involves two lead agencies who operate, in theory, as equal partners: one is a leading professional football club and the other a voluntary sector substance misuse agency. As such there are two sets of organisational cultures, values and outlooks at play. One is driven by a desire to widen access and its fan base which is allied to a corporate social responsibility agenda which recognises the positive potential of football clubs' interventions in residential communities (see Brown, Crabbe & Mellor, 2006). The other is motivated by an organisational ethos which aims to provide effective rehabilitation services for people with substance misuse problems whilst acknowledging the need to promote the organisation in order to sustain organisational funding and recognition as a leading player in the sector.

In this case these organisational/sectoral differences bring a certain level of misrecognition, distrust and wariness between the partners as to what the other does and why. However, at the point of delivery, the fact that the PF work can be seen as something of a departure for both organisations, means that the work has itself evolved as a reflection of each agency's *staff's* young person-centred approach, the passion for sport that animates their work, and their empathy with the cultural context in which the participants operate. The staff's values and outlooks do not then reflect the organisational divergence. As such, rather than 'PF', the project is more commonly understood in terms of the leadership provided by the core staff.

Delivery partnerships of this type have been created in other situations by agencies such as YOTs which lead one of our other case study projects. This agency's leadership replicates a long standing involvement by YOTs in the delivery of PF following their initial nomination by the YJB to lead a number of the first wave of projects in 2000. Yet in this case the YOT was, from the outset, keen for services to be *delivered* by organisations with deeper and more longstanding roots in local networks and with more experience of delivery than their own. At the same time they felt that they could offer the project much in terms of strategic direction and management. In recognition of the mismatch between its own approaches and the mutuality and negotiation that goes with the PF approach then, it buys in work from the local authority Youth Service and a voluntary sector delivery agency.

Yet this model is not characterised by a co-operative partnership between the delivery agents but by a division of labour. Here, the significance is in the YOT's decision to choose two agencies from different sectors to deliver PF 'efficiently', by default to two 'different communities', using what it calls a 'dual track' approach of one agency engaging young people on the 'Top 50' list and the other having an open door policy. Sitting above the two agencies, the YOT acts as the leader, seeing itself as possessing the 'authenticity' to occupy this role because of its statutory status, its size, and its embeddedness within youth crime prevention structures, both locally and nationally.

In other circumstances PF has benefited from applicants' more intimate knowledge of potential *single* local leads. At one of our case studies the application for PF funding was led by the DAAT. The DAAT had identified a local well established voluntary sector drugs agency as the preferred lead due to a DAAT commissioner's sense of the appropriateness of this agency's pragmatic approach. Speaking to senior practitioners within the organisation, one gets a sense of ambition and the desire to promote their 'brand': their way of doing things. There is a commitment to the organisation, rather than to specific projects which has enabled PF to become integral to their wider operations which has in turn enabled the organisation to drive the project forward unencumbered by partners' alternative perspectives. However, this self belief can itself become counter productive where it contributes to the outright dismissal of alternative perspectives and associated conflict with partner agencies. In this case the absence of a 'steering group' could be viewed as positive, in that it removes a layer of bureaucracy and means the project can respond more quickly to local issues, but it can also lead to an absence of appropriate checks and balances.

2.2.3 Organisational status

In the simplest terms it is possible to distinguish between statutory, voluntary and 'commercial' organisations who act as lead agencies for PF. However this is a somewhat superficial set of distinctions, even within the context of our limited number of case study projects. In considering each of these projects, when

taking account of both the applicants for PF funds and the key delivery agencies, none of the case studies could be said to have entirely the same organisational status. Whilst there are three projects which have a direct involvement from their local authorities, two are led by sports development teams and one is led by a YOT with the involvement of the local authority Youth Service which operates in quite distinct ways from the sport development approach.

Equally the voluntary sector agencies come from a range of disciplines including community sport provision, substance misuse services and crime and community safety work. Direct involvement of the private sector comes only through the community scheme of a professional football club in partnership with a voluntary sector agency.

As such it is not possible to make clear distinctions on the basis of organisational status alone. Rather it is more appropriate to identify the ways in which different organisational forms relate to, inhibit or enable alternative styles of provision (see Section 2.2.5).

2.2.4 Geographical reach

The geographical reach of projects nationally ranges from activity on a single housing estate to provision over a local authority's entire area of jurisdiction. Our own case studies have tended to operate beyond the confines of individual estates but vary in the extent of their provision[3]. The local authority led projects are more inclined to operate over a wider geographical area, in one instance across the entire local authority and in another across six well populated wards. By contrast the other projects have tended to focus their activity on housing estates confined to two or three wards.

At one voluntary sector led project, where they nominally cover five Police Basic Command Units (BCUs) extending across the local authority, the geographical focus was initially tightened before plans were put in place to expand again, as the coordinator elucidates:

> 'When I came into post here there was five wards I was supposedly targeting or asked to target… So that's like quite a built-up urban area and then right out… like 18 miles away, so it's like another town in a different county... So to set up a scheme that big with one person on that budget was quite some task. And being the person that I am, if I'm going to do something I want to do it right and I want to put some quality in there. And I knew if I were going to set up a project like that it could be done but it would have been a joke and it wouldn't have been meaningful. And I wouldn't have had my hands on what was going on all over. It would have been too big and too hard. Because that's how the bid was written I gave it a go and it was just in my mind that it's not going to work… So what happened then is we got together with the

---

[3] see Crabbe (2005)

National Coordinator, the DAAT Coordinator, and we sat down and we looked at the five wards and I put a proposal together that we restructure and… it did help to focus the project. It gave it real focus and helped to establish it in this area. (Project Coordinator, 02.08.05)

Whilst some projects targeting of specific groups such as Looked After Children and individual isolated 'hotspots' may entail them providing support to relevant young people wherever they may appear, more generally there can be problems associated with having too broad a geographical 'reach'. This is particularly the case where such decisions are taken due to institutional pressure to deliver on the basis of administrative boundaries rather than patterns of need or strategic community development. A direct contrast in this regard can be drawn between two of our case studies, both of which are committed to developing provision in six inner city wards of major British cities. Whilst in one case this has resulted in a rather scattered approach driven by referrals from existing sources of service provision with participant contact limited to scheduled activity times, at the other a more strategic approach has emerged centred around the gradual roll out of work across the six wards. To date three area-based activity development workers have been appointed who spend the majority of their time out of the office in the various neighbourhoods with young people and other community-based workers. The coordinator's aim for 2005-2008 is eventually to have one area-based worker in each of the six wards as highlighted in the project's annual review:

In order to deliver our strategic aims, and to deliver in such a large area, we believe the best solution is to source a worker for a dedicated geographical area/ward. This way the worker can become embedded with local young people, other agencies and neighbourhood councils and address issues from within. ([Project] Review and Aims for 2005-2008)

Whilst this approach has led to some local political tensions relating to the concentration of resources in particular areas the agency's relative autonomy has enabled it to maintain its strategic direction and develop meaningful engagement with young people where it has focused operations.

2.2.5 Range and style of delivery

Without wanting to revisit the detailed discussion of the PF approach to engagement and relationship building that we addressed in the first interim case study report, *Getting to Know You* (Crabbe, 2005), it is clear that the variety of organisational forms that PF projects take inevitably influence the style of delivery they adopt. Indeed the style of delivery in many ways results from the wider organisational culture of the lead agency and the breadth of delivery of the project. The key distinction that can be made in this regard is between those agencies which adopt a more engaged, organic and fluid approach to delivery

and those agencies which organise activities in a more detached and rigid fashion.

In this respect the statutory sector led case study PF projects can be viewed as a resource which fits with and extends their wider strategies. As such, in these case examples, PF is presented *to* participants, rather than being something which is distinct and which emerges *out of* local engagement. As a senior manager overseeing one of the projects articulated:

> [PF] fits into all the elements really for us within the sport development unit, so our priorities are things like keeping the working with schools, encouraging greater participation from young people, service improvement and working better in other organisations and agencies, so Positive Futures fits with our things...But the advantage I think it has by sitting in the community sport setting is that… we are able to be flexible enough to accept that Positive Futures may engage young people in activities which are not necessarily technically sport. (Senior Community Sports Development Officer, 16.09.05)

Indeed in another location the PF project has been described by one partner as an 'umbrella' of initiatives involving a vast array of activity but with little cohesion. Through observing the development officers undertaking their day-to-day activities, it is clear that the majority of time is spent liaising with referral partners such as schools, and organising logistical aspects of the delivery of activities. In this sense the manager of the project highlights one of the problems that they face through being based within a local authority:

> We need to employ a full-time development worker who is hands on, face-to-face, out in the field. The problem is… Human Resources just won't create the post. (PF Manager, 10.03.05)

This highlights the particular difficulties faced by projects located within much larger and more institutional settings - which might also include national voluntary sector agencies - where projects' hands can be tied by the prescriptive nature of person specifications set out by a corporate human resource strategy. Furthermore, these difficulties can lead to a reliance on sessional workers who, whilst sometimes showing great skill and competence in engaging with participants can also sit 'holding coats' or 'having cups of tea' while young people take part in activities with centre-based staff. From our observations it sometimes appeared that the sessional staff were little more than chaperones who met the participants at the centre and were responsible for transporting them in the mini-bus to the given activity. The principal point is that whilst the PF manager has stated that he was less than satisfied with their approach he felt unable to control the situation as they were not *his* staff.

By contrast at another project which is run through a newly created small community based voluntary sector agency, observations of the development of

one of their estate based football teams have revealed how the structure of provision was more organic. Not only was the membership determined by the local young people, the very idea came out of a conversation the development worker had with two local boys. The two 15 year olds had previously taken part in the PF Football Focus and Audio-Visual activities. Through the time they had spent with the PF team they had become 'part of the furniture'. They often spent time in and around the PF offices, and had suggested that there was a real need for some work on their estate. The two lads told the worker that 'we need something like this (FF) on our estate and we think that loads of our mates would come along because there is nothing to do.' (Development worker, 26.09.05).

The project worker then decided to turn up on the estate one Monday evening and through word of mouth see what the level of interest would be. It was immediately encouraging and since then the numbers have fluctuated between 12 and 18 lads on any one evening. Even now there is not a football team per se. Rather the activity is referred to as the 'footie lads', an impromptu gathering of boys who 'turn up and play a bit of football'. However, when the team do have a tournament in the pipeline the sessions become more structured and focused on traditional coaching skills. The level of involvement ranges from three and a half to seven hours a week and it is viewed as long-term rather than fixed by a set period of time. This type of young person-led, organic development of activity sessions is reflective of the project's wider ethos.

2.2.6 Approaches to targeting

PF projects, nationally, use a variety of approaches towards targeting and participant referral. It is possible to identify a continuum which runs across this spectrum from projects who work via external agency referral with those young people who are 'at risk' and classified as amongst the 'Top/Core 50' through to a 'turn up and participate' self referral approach. We will consider the nature of the case study projects' partnerships in more detail later but for now it is worth making a general distinction between formal 'referrals' and the more informal movement of young people between partners.

For those projects whose approach is rooted in conventional sports development methodologies it can be hard to conceive of doing work on an impromptu basis with an undisclosed number of participants and without a clear delivery plan. Their preference is often for the delivery of clearly defined, pre-determined activities at set locations with identified groups of participants. These projects typically work with partner agencies to develop formal referral systems and programmes of activity for identified 'client groups'. This is a common feature amongst those agencies who are primarily concerned with the development of sport for whom there can be a tendency to 'centre' sport at the expense of the personal and community development perspectives espoused by PF. Such an approach is not necessarily pre-determined by *local authority* provision as such, but rather can be identified as a feature of local authority led *sports and leisure*

provision and sports development approaches more generally. Indeed at one project it is precisely the *involvement* of the local authority youth service and their employment of staff with the appropriate skills that has enabled the project to develop a more open access element of provision as the project manager confirms:

> I have to say, a lot of this forging forward is because of [the Youth Service lead worker]. That's no disrespect to anybody else in the Youth Service but since he has worked with us on Positive Futures, I think we've come on in leaps and bounds.' (Project Manager, 31.08.05)

In this case it is the lead agency's privileging of an 'old school', targeted voluntary sector organisation over the Youth Service with its non targeted remit, store of in-house expertise and more progressive attitudes towards engagement, accreditation and community cohesion, which has been telling. This privileging has been borne out of a relationship with the magistrate system, Police and Probation and has emerged from an instrumental divide between two contrasting styles of delivery for different 'target' groups that we will consider in more detail later.

Elsewhere projects have been able to establish a better balance between the use of formal referral approaches and links enabling movement of young people between partners. Staff at one of the projects complete a Personal Development Plan for all the young people they work with. This includes an indication of the interests or needs that they may have that can be drawn upon when participants are referred on. In this way while the process may seem to operate informally to the young person (for example it may be as simple as saying why don't you come along to a football coaching session), there is also a systematic and monitored aspect.

The key point to note is that where the style of delivery is facility based and sessional rather than estate based and ongoing it is unlikely that more informal models of engagement and referral will work.

2.3 Winning teams: Lead agencies and *Cul-de-sacs and gateways*

The *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* strategy document, which has provided the benchmark for the analysis and assessment of the case study projects, places a very heavy emphasis on the need for projects to be both 'credible' and 'flexible' in the ways that they organise their work. In attempting to clarify how effective lead agencies might be identified then it highlights a number of features which it states will help projects achieve 'credibility amongst partner agencies' (p.22). These included the need to be

- Independent and innovative

- Organisationally transparent
- Co-operative and non-duplicating
- Providing value for money
- Receiving funding from a range of sources
- Capable of growth

In this section we consider the extent to which different 'types' of project have embodied these qualities. However, at the same time we are mindful of the difficulties associated with interpreting what is meant by these headings. As such we seek to offer some further clarification on the basis of a critical examination of the appropriateness of these headings to the work at hand.

2.3.1 Independent and innovative

In some respects the identification of 'independence' as a key organisational quality invites the question, 'independent from what?' All the case study PF projects have ties to existing 'host' organisations and are wrapped up in local and national policy initiatives which make demands on the work that they do. Indeed the very existence of the national PF programme and its associated strategic direction might itself be regarded as a constraint upon projects' freedom and autonomy. As such it is important to consider some different elements within this category including the extent to which agencies experience:

- Structural independence
- Organisational freedom
- Operational autonomy and innovative practice

Taking the first of these it is clear from our case studies that the statutory sector does not itself provide PF projects with any guarantee of structural independence. Rather, the local authority led projects which we have considered have until now been constrained by wider more formulaic policies and procedures. Even where the limitations of a statutory sector lead agency have been acknowledged – as with the YOT led project – this has been addressed through the appointment of more appropriate locally based delivery agencies although even then these have remained subject to the 'authority' of the YOT and its associated central government and local strategic priorities.

Voluntary sector led projects are far from being universally autonomous entities which can be separated out from wider institutional frameworks but our case studies do provide examples of greater structural independence and a far less rigid adherence to formulaic policies and procedures. This secondary point is key in that there is no benefit to be obtained from structural independence if there is no desire on the part of the lead agency to take advantage of the associated freedom to innovate. In accordance with the YOT approach, one voluntary sector delivery agency, whilst regarding itself as the key player in the development of the bid for PF funding, actually focuses its work on young people who are part of

the YOT's Top 50 and wrote a funding application which replicated their way of working. In the absence of a locally generated organisational philosophy the work inevitably reflects the YOT's own institutional priorities.

Whilst operating amidst similar institutional pressures, at other voluntary sector *led* projects there is a discernable distinctiveness which underpins the organisations' perception of and approach towards their own work which helps to hold more formulaic and rigid bureaucratic approaches at bay. This is true for all of the voluntary sector projects with which we have worked despite their respective roots in 1970s street based drugs work, 1990s community safety work, and the contemporary sports based social inclusion agenda. Theirs is an outlook which seeks to respond to government policy agendas but without committing to externally imposed public sector management models. The alternative organisational culture which underpins this freedom helps to create the space for operational autonomy and innovative practice amongst front line staff.

Whistle while we work

For the newest of the case study projects, unburdened by the weight of institutional bureaucracy, there is a culture of cooperativeness, flexibility and equity which runs through their approach. All five full-time members of staff are located within the same office which is characterised by an inviting feeling created by the ubiquity of personal affects, such as pictures, artefacts, posters and the radio playing in the background. Amidst this 'easiness' sits a hive of last minute bid writing, development work, planning and organising which often runs late into the evening. The flexible working hours are accompanied by the encouragement given to staff to manage their own workload and office time.

This flexible, open and friendly culture is not only inward facing but is also demonstrated outwards to the young people and project partners. The office space is frequented by young people who visit to hang out and chat to the team, have 'take-away' evenings and watch DVDs whilst local community groups access the facility as a free meeting space. Meanwhile the project's development officers are left to develop their activities autonomously and spend most of their time out of the office in the areas in which they work. While there are team meetings when staff relay their plans and current activities, the process of communication and feedback is largely informal and played out through the everyday rhythms of office discussion. This practice-led approach is supported by the more formal monthly steering group meetings which provide an opportunity to feedback to stakeholders, seek support in the form of resources, staff time or advice and request approval for major forthcoming initiatives.

In other cases where partnerships have developed which centralise the role of statutory agencies such as the YOT and local authority, innovation has been stifled. Generally the local authority initiatives the research has come across have been quite clear on the intricacies of policy and procedure but this frequently leaves them quite removed from the practicalities of delivery and the need to be flexible and innovative in getting initiatives off the ground. In the best

examples this is recognised by statutory agencies themselves who regard PF projects as effective delivery agents best left to deliver as *they* see fit even if results can never be guaranteed.

2.3.2 Organisationally transparent

As with the issue of independence, organisational transparency features at many levels which, beyond immediate interpersonal relations, include the interface between:

- Projects and participants
- Management and staff
- Projects and partners

At times it is not possible to sustain a transparent approach across these levels, for whilst at the frontline staff may be empowered and willing to make decisions about delivery and programme development in consultation with participants and partners, there may be tensions at more strategic levels. Certainly for those projects with more than one delivery agency, the tense relationships between partners, which we discuss in more detail later, can stifle dialogue and the sharing of ideas in terms of long-term strategic thinking and funding plans.

On paper it is possible for agencies to be accountable and transparent without this preventing different approaches and models of working from leading to conflict and mistrust. For one of our case studies, which has charitable status and has its own board of trustees who are subject to the regulations and procedures of the Charities Commission, this has not stopped the local YOT from having concerns about its approach because it does not fit with the kind of localised governance with which it is familiar. This is, however, not an issue for the lead agency which sees itself as responsive to local issues within a wider national policy framework, but is indicative of a wider statutory sector concern about the legitimacy and systems of voluntary sector organisations generally. The feeling that 'we have to keep proving ourselves' and that a voluntary sector organisation must demonstrate the thoroughness of its policies and procedures in a way which is almost taken for granted amongst statutory agents or their partners is common amongst senior staff.

The reality is that this organisation, in response to its own perception of under performance, began a quality review which pre-empted action by commissioners. The review's findings reflected the feelings of what had prompted it, that the organisation was not as responsive or proactive as it would wish to be and ultimately led to changes of staff, trustees and operational procedures. Despite the pain this caused, the organisation remains committed to the idea of regular service reviews, feeling that they counter complacency and help under achieving or stale staff to reflect.

Yet it is this outlook rather than a voluntary sector status as such which enables organisational transparency. In other circumstances, with a different board of trustees and a less delivery focused approach, governance procedures can themselves become something to 'manage' and 'hide' behind.

Who's going to the AGM?

I'd been at the delivery agency's office for an hour or so, chatting with Hayley, Magenta, Nathan and PJ. Arnold arrived back from coffee in town. He swapped chairs with me, pleading with self deprecation,
'Help an old man's back', before making a series of calls.
Part way through one call to an administrator at the agency's head office he said,
'And why doesn't anyone know about the AGM, Viv?'
He put the 'phone down and asked,
'Are you coming to our AGM?'
I told him that, seeing as though I had not been invited, I wouldn't miss it for the world.
Apparently, invitations had only been sent out to a select few, and Arnold is not sure who is on the list.
We checked the regulations governing accessibility of an AGM and agreed our understanding that the AGM should be a meeting open to any member of the public.
Arnold decided to call Mickey, one of the trustees, and someone with whom he had worked in a previous post.   He asked who had been invited and why the staff were not invited. Mickey claimed he didn't know the list was so restricted and Arnold told him that ignorance, as they both know, is no defence, that it's his job, as a trustee, to be aware of what is happening.
'How do you think it makes your staff here feel, to know they are not wanted at the AGM?' he asked.
'We had a [PF] funder here this morning who gives us a hundred grand and you've not invited her! You've not invited our researcher! What's happening Mickey?'
Arnold then asked about attendance at the EGM scheduled for the same time and when it was suggested that this would not be open Arnold responded,
'Look, I'm not going to argue. We'll have to disagree, but me and the rest of the staff are all coming up to the AGM and if you want to refuse us entry, then you'll have to do that.'

Similarly statutory sector led projects are generally protected from the *perception* of a lack of transparency due to their governance structures and the demands placed upon them in terms of Value For Money (VFM), Best Value (BV) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). As such, statutory led projects can promote the notion of transparency to an external audience through the meeting of a myriad of internal and external targets and a reliance upon formal policies and procedures to govern their work. However, such an approach does not of itself provide any guarantee of open dialogue or non hierarchical systems.

In the bar

The venue for the steering group meeting is a local leisure centre and the meeting 'room' is the bar area which smells of stale beer and acts as a corridor to other parts of the building. As we sit

struggling with our papers at the small round tables the Chair jokes about having a game of dominoes. Whilst PF tries to encourage a lack of rigidity and formality, with a vending machine humming in the background, right now the project just feels a little unloved. This is reflected in the lack of intimacy and warmth within the meeting itself. As soon as we start to tuck into our sandwiches, the Chair addresses the agenda. It's straight into business and the usual list of apologies and noted absentees which include not only project partners but also one of the delivery agencies.

The latest PF newsletter is circulated with its headline statistics on regular attenders, new attendees, female participants, 'Core 50s' engaged at present and so on. The lead worker from one delivery agency questions the statistics on Asian participants and the project manager acknowledges that the absent delivery partner is contributing little or nothing to the figure. The observation screams for a response. Why are they contributing so little? Is it due to the referral system? Is it because of the composition of the Core 50? Is it an issue with the agency? No one pursues it. This is the pattern of the meetings; reports are delivered, statistics are presented. *How* things *seem* to be is presented but there is rarely discussion of how these tacit assumptions might be challenged or how things might *change*.

Whilst on this occasion, after the Chair had gone, there were the first expressions of frustration at the lack of debate which hinted that the group may have begun to turn a corner, there is generally a weariness regarding these meetings and frustration and deflation at the end. It is hard to identify their purpose. They are not currently a site to reflect on work, or to challenge ways of working.

However, at their best, PF projects are able to maintain a transparent approach at all levels, with lines of communication kept open between participants, staff, strategic management and external partners. More often than not this is best facilitated by avoiding defensive stances and adopting the principles of involvement which underpin the wider PF programme. An example of this approach was revealed in the democratic way that one project manager facilitated a meeting over lunch with a member of the research team to discuss future funding options.

Anyone for lunch?

With the wider staff team jokily commenting 'we're gate-crashing your meeting and coming with you', as we sat down to eat, Kate informed the group 'I wanted to talk about some issues around contracts and bringing in other funding and staff but I think it would be a good idea if we have an open discussion and then we can get your opinions too.' Without having planned an open meeting it was clear that there was no reason not to have one. The staff team's involvement had the added bonus of allowing them to feel that they were being kept in the picture, whilst also gaining an awareness of the early developmental stages that need to go into the planning process.

2.3.3 Co-operative and non duplicating

If delivered according to the approach articulated in *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* it would be difficult for a PF project to duplicate existing programmes of work

precisely because of the programmes distinctiveness from other sports based initiatives. Whilst virtually all funded sports programmes have until now primarily been driven by a sports development, widening participation, crime diversion or health and physical activity agenda, PF is explicitly concerned with using sport as part of a community development strategy that recognises the merits of individual personal needs.

Equally, for many of the areas where PF is operating, their very identification as being within the 20% most deprived wards in the country means that there is currently a lack of adequate or universally accessible service provision. Certainly it is not typical for existing sports based initiatives to have strong delivery based relationships with other social regeneration agencies and this tends to mark projects out from other sports provision. For the longest established of our case study projects, whose activity in this field precedes the PF programme itself, the innovative approach they took in the early days has crystallised into a distinct model that they now seek to replicate – and, indeed, which other funders and agencies *want* them to replicate. Part of the reason for its success is the centrality of being co-operative and non-duplicating through a process of auditing what is available in an area before starting to deliver. Through this process the project seeks to establish contact, build relationships and ensure that existing provision is enhanced rather than being rivalled or merely duplicated in another way as revealed in the narrative passage below.

Such an approach is not always easy however and where projects are developing or expanding their provision they can come into conflict with existing providers even where they make the effort to operate in a co-operative and open way. One of our case study projects is currently expanding its provision from a focus on a small number of housing estates to a local authority wide remit. In this context it has been sensitive to the need to communicate, particularly with the local authority Youth Service, about their new plans.

Treading on toes

We'd spent half an hour or so wandering around town, putting up flyers advertising sessions before calling into the Youth Service project in the town centre to put up a poster. As the PF project expands the two new members of staff, Lottie and Bea, are anxious not to 'tread on the toes' of other agencies or to duplicate services already running. They thought this would be a good opportunity to meet with some Youth Service staff and talk through their plans.

Ross told us to just go downstairs, as some workers were down there running a drop-in. Bea recognised one of them as someone she had been trying to get in touch with, but who had not returned calls or e-mails. She started to explain that PF was widening its geographical remit and said she'd been wanting to chat about what the Youth Service was running so as not to replicate provision.

In the event it seemed that PF's plan to set up a football group would have overlapped with a Youth Service session, so Bea was glad to have that clarified but they had not responded to previous attempts to communicate, and, rather than chatting there and then, informally, PF were invited to attend a meeting. The implication was that Bea and Lottie would be expected to fit PF provision around Youth Service sessions, rather than provision being thought of as a whole to which they could all contribute.

It was a frosty first meeting; no smiles from the Youth Service workers in the room. No 'so you know each other' when Lottie started chatting to one of the young people at the session, who also plays football at PF. No offer of a cup of tea.

2.3.4 Providing value for money

The concept of 'value' is an inherently subjective one, particularly in the context of work with those groups who ostensibly have so much 'less' than those assigning the values. Yet it is a terminology that has increasingly become part of the lexicon of public service management. The National Audit Office's (2004) 'Value for Money' concept of public spending is built around the 'three Es':

- Economy - minimising the cost of resources used or required (spending less)
- Efficiency - the relationship between the output from goods or services and the resources used to produce them (spending well)
- Effectiveness - the relationship between the intended and actual results of public spending (spending wisely)

Within this framework the concept of Best Value (BV) is a key element of the Government's local government modernisation agenda. The aim of BV is to ensure local authorities continually improve the ways in which they function with regard to the 3 'Es'. Operating to, and evidencing, BV is now a statutory requirement for local authorities who are required to carry out reviews of their functions within this framework. These are intended to get authorities to challenge why, how and by whom a service is provided; to compare performance with that of other authorities; to consult with service users and to use fair competition wherever practical; and to secure efficient and effective services.

Whilst this approach is widely regarded as progressive it does not always fit easily with the approach advocated by PF. During an interview with the senior community sports officer within one local authority, clarification was sought from the research team on what the benchmarks are for measuring value for money in projects such as PF: 'Is it the numbers of young people engaged, type of those engaged or the quality of work done and outcome with those engaged?' In some respects the question reveals a deeper problem with the BV approach in seeking a definitive answer which implies the need for quantifiable measures which are in reality implausible to develop. Yet the Draft Guidance on Best Value hints strongly at the importance of clarity of measurement at the onset of a partnership

so that all partners agree how they are to measure their success and what has to be measured.

However, what is vital here is not the demonstration of direct causal relationships between investments in sport and improvements in health statistics, falling crime rates or other social indicators, but the opening of 'gateways' which *might* make such improvements possible. In many ways this perspective fits more comfortably with the DCMS interpretation that:

> 'Best Value reviews must consider the wider value and benefits of sports provision and sports development services to the community. This strategy provides the context for the local authorities to link the value of sport to the wider benefits of health, social inclusion, regeneration, educational opportunities and crime prevention'. (DCMS, 2000:39)

Without this realisation there is a tendency to continue to monitor performance in terms of fairly conventional notions for rationalising inputs and outputs. Yet for those projects which are able to embrace the PF approach, whilst there is recognition of the importance of being responsible when handling public money there is also recognition that BV should be informed not just by a national model, but also by its own work styles.

For some organisations, or, more specifically, for some front line workers, 'success' may be much more qualitatively focused, even at odds with the simplistic and difficult to quantify 'reduction/increase' measures of success which are sometimes used by statutory service providers. A senior Youth Service worker bemoaned the fact that some of the 'softer work' – precisely because it is harder to monitor/represent – is under valued by funders and partners, adding that youth work exists in an atmosphere of performance indicators, which actually obstruct and reduce the value of more intensive, outreach style work.

Whilst PF has been developing its own monitoring and evaluation systems, (considered in more detail later in this report) which assess value in a variety of ways and from the point of view of the programme's own priorities, within the wider context of BV it seems that credible projects provide value to their partners through their ability to deliver things that they cannot. Indeed it is precisely the lack of an excess of bureaucratic weight associated with BV and other procedural frameworks that enables the most effective projects to act quickly and dynamically. In some respects this dynamism also enables them, and sometimes requires them, to mediate between the agendas of funding agencies (around respect, responsibility, healthy-living, anti-social behaviour, etc) and the young people's own worldviews however uncomfortable it may be for them to do so. A key aspect of this capacity and the undoubted value that it brings is the longevity and establishment of projects. It takes a long time to establish effective and reciprocating partnerships, a good profile in communities, and strong relationships with young people which is rarely recognised in conventional

assessments of value and yet this is an investment that continues to pay off over time.

This point is demonstrated in a number of ways at another of our case studies which was created in the last wave of project launches. At the moment, the team is stretched because of its constant drive to establish itself on the ground through innovation and putting on more activities. This can make it harder for the project to consolidate its work in the target area with a core group of young people and yet it is precisely this consolidation which is essential if the project is to generate evidence of real effectiveness and value that will enable it to secure alternative funding to work in other areas with identified needs.

2.3.5 Capable of growth

The indication that a capacity for growth is an important element of lead agency credibility in *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* is primarily related to the PF programme's emphasis on personal development pathways. In the strategy document it states that:

> In each [PF project] area the problems and opportunities faced by marginalised groups of young people themselves provide the template for the development of work plans, with non judgmental and culturally appropriate local opportunities for personal development emerging organically on the basis of what engages effectively. (Home Office 2003:10)

As such, existing 'fixed' models and programmes of activity, however successful and impressive they might have been, may not stand the test of time. What PF is seeking then is projects that can develop and grow not for growth's sake but in order to respond to the changing needs, aspirations and demands of the young people they work with. This is especially significant in a context where the provision of 'progressional routes involving movement through the organization from user to provider' (Crabbe, 2005:115) have been identified as the 'ideal' developmental model. Quite simply, if projects cannot grow, how can they provide their participants with these opportunities?

In our research we have encountered a range of capacities for this kind of flexibility and growth. Not surprisingly in some senses it is those projects which have been created as 'new enterprises' that have experienced the most rapid development, although this can bring its own difficulties. At the moment, one of the projects is stretched because of its constant drive towards innovation and putting on more activities. With the growth of PF, the number of partners is increasing, and the nature of the partnerships is becoming more complex as the programme develops. Even where we have observed a relatively simple structural arrangement, such as that between PF and a local school, for example, these are constantly evolving. The project in question began by delivering football coaching in short six week blocks at the school. It has now extended its

provision to include after school activity, workshops such as Army team building exercises and trips, developing school teams, and a new initiative to assist in the delivery of a sports BTEC course. In this instance PF have also more recently become a conduit for other agencies coming into the school.

Therefore what we see being built and consolidated is a network of organisations in the area to which PF seems actively instrumental. However, with this kind of development it may be necessary to formalise some of the systems of communication and structures for joint working. There could also be some danger associated with this process in terms of losing some of the immediacy of interpersonal contact, and the ability to respond reflexively and adapt as a result.

At another new project the process of growth has taken a different course focused much more heavily on expansion of the staff team. The original application for Home Office funding proposed that the project would be staffed by one full-time coordinator and six part-time club-based mentors. However, currently the staffing structure embraces one full-time coordinator; one full-time administrator; three full-time area based community development officers and eleven sessional part-time staff. The growth of the team over the past twelve months has been made possible due to the coordinator securing additional funding. One of the development workers is funded by a local housing association, another with a core funding under-spend and the third from an amalgamation of other funding streams.

However, this expansion has not come about as a result of a culture of expansionism. Rather it has been informed by a strategic re-assessment which involves narrowing the project's focus in the first instance in order to generate the right kind of provision across all of the target areas in the longer term since it was felt that resources were currently being 'spread too thin' and not having the desired impact:

> There are six areas, it is very difficult because I don't want to water us down, I want to increase impact…so…if you haven't yet got your [area development] worker then you'll have more activities, but if you've got your worker then you'll have the minimum amount of activities and then your worker will help you bring in or do whatever it is, you know expand the provision in that area. Each of the neighbourhood councils will have that by the end. (Project Coordinator, 23.03.05)

One of the central benefits of the team's controlled expansion is the capacity it has created for the project to undertake in-depth, area based work. The three development officers are focusing upon three separate geographical areas and this has allowed them to focus much more time and effort into developing close links and bonds with the young people, residents and community groups.

However, in terms of development, it is also clear that as the project is expanding this can bring its own problems, especially around its inability to develop equally within the six wards at the same pace. This could be seen as a result of the initial project proposal covering too wide an area but the coordinator understands that until there is funding for a dedicated worker in each area, the team will have to look to provide more activities in those neighbourhoods without this support. In practice this can lead to tensions relating to perceived disparities in the distribution of resources as evidenced in the comments from a community representative in one of the areas not yet covered by an area development officer reveals:

> Our contact with PF and our experience of the PF has been very poor. We have tried to deliver stuff in here and we have asked PF to get involved, they haven't. Whether that is staffing or through internal problems I don't know all we get out of PF is two hours every Friday afternoon of dance, that is it… If people have got funding for the young people in our community then we want it spent on the young people in our community. (Neighbourhood Representative 16.05.05)

Nevertheless being capable of growth is in the first instance reliant upon finding ways to 'get going' rather than the strict adherence to delivery pledges. In exactly the same way that our first interim report revealed the need for approaches to delivery to be loose and organic so must their management. Rather than fixating on securing a broad base of partners who are able to provide match funding and referral pathways it is more important to support the provision of activities which engage participants and in turn attract more partners and match funding.

The model for growth is perhaps best evidenced by the longest established project which has evolved in a fairly organic way, but with a number of step changes along the path, including those made possible by PF funding. Growth at this project has been rapid and in some ways is experienced as difficult to keep pace with. The growth has led to an expansion of the programme, a broadening of both funders and partners, an enlargement and restructuring of the staff team, and an extension of the geographical span across which delivery and staff are spread. Members of staff have, at various times, expressed some misgivings about this growth, and workloads have for some increased. Nevertheless, as far as the research is able to ascertain, the organisation as a whole seems to be adjusting to the change, while management seem attuned to the effects, and are able to both plan and respond to them.

There has had to be a restructuring within the staff team in order to be able to cope with the growth of work. A stratum of middle management has been created, operating between the senior management team and staff assigned to the various sessions. This middle management includes roles that have an area or geographical focus, as well as those that have a group or activity focus, e.g. work with young women. Session leaders also fit within this middle level with

each session having a leader who has overall responsibility, plus sessional workers and volunteers. However, we have also picked up some uncertainty amongst some of the staff, and particularly those home-grown in the project, about their abilities to cope with this added responsibility. They are used to having more back-up and direction from the central management team, but now may need to find their own feet in a new stage of their progression from participant to autonomous leader.

With its growth as an organisation in terms of size, resources, programme, etc, the project has also experienced an increase in its power. This is dependent upon its work as a whole being widely regarded as particularly successful. The agency's own view is that it is known for 'quality and delivery', evidence for which is provided by its apparent flagship status within both Positive Futures and their original sponsor, Crime Concern. This has brought the agency considerable national prestige and media coverage which is self-perpetuating in that its widening spheres of influence also increase its attractiveness, thereby making the creation of new partnerships and the instigation of joint projects easier.

Despite the success that this voluntary sector project has achieved, the 'model' of growth presented here is clearly not applicable in all situations. For the local authority led projects in particular 'growth' of this type would be difficult to manage in the context of a much larger institution with its own bureaucracies and strategic structures. As such in these circumstances it may be more appropriate to think in terms of being 'capable of change' as well as being 'capable of growth', which may well involve the adoption of alternative delivery models which will be considered in more detail later.

2.3.6   Receiving funding from a range of sources

The importance of receiving funding from a range of sources relates explicitly to the issue of sustainability. Outside of PF sport-based social interventions have often been undermined by a culture of short-termism whereby projects are initiated, expectations are built up, relationships with young people develop and then the funding runs out and the activity is withdrawn. This can have an entirely counter-productive effect by letting down precisely the people for which the project is trying to provide stability and reassurance. As such PF has been concerned not only to ensure that projects organise their activities on an on-going rather than block basis but also to underpin this commitment with a sustainable funding strategy.

It is in this context that the institutional frameworks and 'permanency' of local authority structures can be beneficial. One of our case studies, which sits within the Sports and Recreation section of the local authority leisure services department, receives funding from a range of sources including the Primary Care Trust, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the DAAT in addition to Home Office funding which provides only around 25% of the project's budget. The confidence

that big institutional funding bodies have in the local authority have undoubtedly contributed to this breadth of support and team's security is to be strengthened with the mainstreaming of the project into the council's Children's Services department which will bring with it funding for permanent staff posts.

Similarly, and although it is led by a voluntary sector agency, another of our projects is protected to some extent by its location within wider social intervention programmes and the provision of core funds to the agency from the local DAAT. The PF project itself receives funding through DAAT and high crime area BCU contributions and applies for small grants for specific purposes as well as being in receipt of Intermediate Labour Market funds. Whilst the significant income from the DAAT, which extends to the agency's wider activities, is helpful, it could be argued that this intimate fiscal link means that the DAAT exercises or has the potential to exercise a disproportionate amount of leverage over the delivery agency and its PF activity.

Those projects without core sponsors are potentially less secure but have generally been adept at demonstrating their fit with a range of strategic social policy agendas, particularly as their experience grows and they become more embedded in local service provision. Through their establishment in the area over a significant period of time, and the widespread recognition of their efficacy, the longest standing of our case studies have gained a level of status which means they are now frequently invited to participate in networks and groups at a strategic level. Their recognition has also meant that they are well placed to be able to draw on multiple funding sources, and they are now frequently commissioned to do pieces of work.

Going the distance

A model has emerged at the project which involves focused work in a small area which as then expands, utilizing links and experience gained to good effect. The project is excellent at exploiting the advantages of being a voluntary sector initiative, and therefore having a high degree of autonomy, and dynamism. While it has a base (both actual as well as a home locality or neighbourhood), it also makes use of a variety of partner hosts to provide venues, resources and young people. The precise nature of the delivery in any one setting is not fixed, but is adaptable and will draw upon the range of activities and skills that the staff team have accrued. What it delivers is always tailored to the requirements of the host, and to the needs of the young people it serves. It aims to embed its different strands of delivery to form part of the wider initiatives linked to and informed by relevant local, regional and national strategies. This is what sustains the organisation, enabling both the development of further work and the ability to secure further funding.

In many respects it is this project's possession of a clear identity and an unambiguous approach to its work which facilitates the process. Elsewhere we have considered a partnership based project which has largely failed to emulate this success in attracting additional funding. Each of the two lead delivery

partners at this project have access to their own range of funding sources but the youth-based PF work that they do is currently funded solely through Positive Futures despite the aspiration to secure alternative funds. Their efforts are hampered by the lack of a base which has left the project without a centre either physically or theoretically. Whilst the project has been successful in its delivery of good quality sessions and is now beginning to benefit from the formation of successful working partnerships with a number of key agencies there has been a lack of focus and strategy overall, as well as ongoing tensions and disagreements between the two partners. Their approaches remain dissimilar, as do their understandings of PF. They have not really been able to draw on each others strengths and expertise to develop the kind of work they are well equipped to deliver and which would be likely to draw the attention of new potential funders.

2.4 Summary

It can be concluded from this overview that whilst it may not be possible, or even desirable, to define an 'ideal type' of lead *agency* it is possible to draw out a number of 'barriers' and 'enablers' in relation to each of the desired organisational *characteristics* highlighted in the *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* strategy document. We have attempted to define these in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Organisational characteristic barriers and enablers

Characteristic	Purpose	Barrier	Enabler
Independent and innovative	Currency and credibility with participants and partners	• Bureaucratic governance, policy and procedure • Fixed 'models' of working	• Structural independence • Flexibility • 'Confidence' and passion for work
Organisationally transparent	To enable monitoring and encourage adaptability	• Non-integrated front line delivery partnerships • Negative perceptions of voluntary sector • Focus on structure over delivery	• Self-reflective practice • Non-defensive and open communication
Co-operative and non duplicating	Ensuring extended provision	• Identifying PF as sports/diversionary work • 'Turf' wars	• Local audits/mapping exercises • Desire to enhance provision
Providing value for money	Demonstrating PF achievements and securing future funds	• Conventional VFM models • Inflexible budgets	• Established local networks • Intensive, long term work • New qualitative forms of monitoring which

			focus on participant journeys
Capable of growth	To develop participant pathways	• Fixed delivery models • Departmental rivalry • Thin spread	• Flexibility • Strategic approach • Strong networks • Consistency • Thick spread
Funding from a range of sources	Sustainability	• Fixed duration provision • Reliant relationship with core sponsor	• Fit with strategic policy agendas • Autonomy and flexibility

There are undoubtedly examples of good work at all of our case study projects, as we revealed in our last interim report, but it seems clear from our case studies that examples of good practice are more likely to occur in particular circumstances. Generally this is where it has developed 'organically' through continuous adaptation on the basis of lived interactions between the project and participants. As such, those agencies who promote and enable this style of working through their structural independence, willingness to innovate, flexibility, passion and desire to enhance provision, and intensive, long term participant focused delivery style, are ideally suited to this field of work.

As such the schematic framework outlined above provides a basis which all agencies should be able to use to guide their work. However, by its very nature, such an approach can never be developed in a formulaic way. For as that most astute interpreter of organisational cultures Howard Becker has suggested there are dangers associated with any 'hierarchy of credibility' (1967), whereby those in socially prestigious positions often have more power to define what is 'true' than others. Indeed the pursuit of 'credibility' through attempts to adhere to these principles in too rigid a fashion could itself be emblematic of such a distortion. For it is precisely in these circumstances that the *performance* of credibility takes over from its practice.

Part Three: Partnerships

3.1 Why have partnerships?

Over the last two decades, government policy has increasingly advocated the benefits of partnership working in all areas of social policy as a way of ensuring that the burden of work is shared between the public, private and voluntary sectors. The current Government has also encouraged different agencies within the public sector to work together in accordance with its claim that social problems cannot be understood in isolation from one another and that 'joined up' policy responses are needed to overcome complex and intertwined forms of social disadvantage.

In this sense PF merely provides one example of partnership working whereby the programme is funded centrally through the Home Office, whilst project management, working practices and the nature and extent of local partnership work have been determined locally. However, the need for individual PF projects to be 'supported by a strong partnership of appropriate agencies' is a cornerstone of the PF strategy document *Cul-de-sacs and gateways*.

The problem is that the very term 'partnership' has itself become something of a 'buzz phrase' which is routinely used in different and sometimes contradictory contexts. Although it is a seemingly succinct term, 'partnership' in fact covers a very wide range of diverse organisational relationships. At times it appears to relate to any kind of relationship between different agencies, regardless of how it is organised or what it is supposed to deliver. Whilst PF acknowledges this diversity it has attempted to bring some clarity by recognising that the most likely partner agencies for individual projects can be separated into three types of organisation:

- Agencies that are working with young people within the youth justice system or at risk of substance misuse.
- Agencies that can support the delivery of services so that the broadest range of appropriate activities is offered.
- Agencies that can identify routes and refer young people into education, training and employment programmes.

Indeed all of the case study projects have partnerships with each of these 'types' of organisation which have been well documented through their responses to the PF Key Elements Survey. The data generated by Key Elements in relation to partnerships is however merely the 'paper' version of events. Such distinctions do not tell the full picture though in the context of what can be an almost bewildering array of arrangements with myriad 'partners'. Beyond these organisational distinctions then, the nature of partnerships is also significant. This can be influenced by other factors such as the degree of formality in the relationship; the significance of personal contacts; institutional requirements; the

intellectual or practical stimulation; or the extension into multiple locations and spheres of activity amongst others.

As such the nature of the organisations, how they organise their work, the personalities involved and local conflicts and tensions inevitably help to shape the kind of relationships and roles that exist within any partnership. It is these factors that will provide the focus for this section of the report.

3.2 Getting inside partnerships

3.2.1 Structural contexts

For those projects that sit within a wider local authority structure there is undoubtedly much more ready access to a wide array of support services and resources from other departments such as Youth and Children's Services, Education, and Social Services in addition to the more typical home for PF projects in Sport and Recreation departments. Furthermore, due to established internal lines of communication and collaboration it is far easier for such projects to situate themselves within Local Strategic Plans and Local Area Agreements with all the benefits that this brings in terms of securing funding on an ongoing basis.

For one of the case study projects this is manifest in the partnership they have with the Children's Services department which is acted out on a number of levels. Children's Services provide funding and senior managerial links to the project whilst also providing referrals through their links to Education and Social Services. In turn this strengthens their capacity to secure additional work which is funded through the local authority as the manager of the PAYP programme suggested:

> They have bid in for it haven't they, so there is a bidding process but with it being local authority driven I think it gives them that bit of an edge because they are seen as part of the whole then, aren't they, not to say that [we] would exclude another agency if they got it, but I think there is a strength in this coming together. (23.09.05)

The possible mainstreaming of this project into Children's Services will bring the relationship even closer but allied to the security that comes with this arrangement is the risk that the closeness will undermine the project's independence and desire to innovate. Indeed it is apparent that they currently have complete confidence in the procedural arrangements which govern the referral systems to the project. For them, in operating within this system they are, by the very nature of the process, working with and reaching the young people who are 'most at risk'. However, in reality, it is clear that there are many other young people who would benefit from the project but who would not be picked up by their partner agencies and added onto these lists. At another project the local

authority setting, certainly initially, brought with it the development of partnerships with other local authority departments at a steering group level which helped to define their targeting and engagement strategies in more routine ways than might be desirable. This led to a reliance on links with schools and youth centres rather than the mobilisation of outreach delivery in street based settings.

Yet in the context of a voluntary sector led project the capacity to draw high level support for what is regarded in some circles as a programme which is marginal to their core concerns has been undermined through their *distance* from statutory sector structures. This project has paid considerable attention to the composition of the project's now defunct, and proposed, steering groups, with the coordinator identifying the absence of key decision makers and commissioners from the existing set up as a concern, suggesting:

> 'That's why I think it would be better that the governance sat with…the DAAT who feed into the Young Persons Joint Commissioning Group so that everything, all the money that's spent on the young people's services, is there.'

As if to emphasise the low priority of PF on the agendas of some senior workers, something they assume their peers will share, the point was made by a senior worker from another organisation that:

> 'I don't think [the Coordinator] will get a number of high ranking officers meeting up regularly to manage it…I'd certainly be happy to work…on specifics, but I can't commit a significant amount of time to it.'

Similarly at a neighbouring project the manager is conscious of the absence of certain key players from the Steering Group, particularly the DAAT and the Education Authority. Strategically, by obtaining DAAT funding, the project has secured recognition from DAAT of the Tier 2 value of PF, but personnel changes have left the project without a DAAT worker to link to and the disappearance of a representative from the Education Authority remains unexplained. This has led to concerns that at the Steering Group there is little in the way of attendance from personnel at a commissioning level, imperilling the project's sustainability.

The absence of a representative from the Education Authority is something which both baffles and frustrates the PF Manager and other partners. The Manager says that 'significant effort' has gone into persuading someone from Education to attend, including conversations with senior officers but acknowledges that with 'so many things to give attention to…spending a disproportionate amount of time trying to get agencies round the table, tends to come further down the list.'

This is a concern in a situation where non-senior workers and partner agencies may have false perceptions of the security of funding provided by PF. At one of our voluntary sector led projects partners were recently shocked to hear that the

funding of a key worker was only in place until 31st March 2006 as they had perceived PF as being a core funded Home Office project with sustainable funding, one of them commenting:

> When you hear the name 'Positive Futures' you think that it's just that about 'futures' so I was gob-smacked to hear about the short term funding. What a let down it would be to the kids. It is so difficult to get their trust in the first place. I think they would turn as they have been let down in their lives so much that they would be negative.

As such the involvement of the Home Office can provide a false sense that *all* funding is secure but whilst it may be naive to regard any funding as permanent the national programme is cognisant of these factors and has developed clear policies around the sustainability of projects. In this case it was ultimately the recognition of the contribution that this worker has made amongst local residents groups and partner agencies that has since led to the investment of time and effort in the development of plans to secure his position. This outcome is in tune with the wider programme's willingness to avoid the 'comfort zones' often associated with a reliance on less reflective forms of statutory sector provision. However, this should not be read in terms of an ideological support for 'market testing' on the basis of cost related measures of efficiency. Rather it reflects the programmes relentless quest to ensure that PF projects connect with the issues and are embraced by the residents in the neighbourhoods they serve.

As such if non-mainstreamed projects are to attract the support of core service providers there is a need for them to offer something 'more', which is out of the ordinary and beyond the reach of mainstream providers. This could be the kudos and attraction of the involvement of a professional football club which has worked for one of our projects. They approach partners by utilising an informal and personable manner, aware that they are able to offer the additional wrapping of the 'success and glamour' of a leading football club that partner organisations know is likely to be effective in attracting young people. However, most of these partners, and particularly those that work directly with young people, are also aware that they have assets that PF needs, and without which it would not be able to function.

Elsewhere a more equitable, if rather strained, relationship has emerged on the basis of long standing mutual recognition of each partner's contribution and limited resources. Here, the Youth Service Area Manager described the partnership with the PF project as being characterised by 'sibling rivalry' with the Youth Service only being able 'to cater for approximately 25% of young people in the borough', and therefore reliant on the support of voluntary sector youth organisations. Despite the resultant tensions, the working partnership seems robust, and has been maintained over a substantial period of time. There is definitely acknowledgement of a need on both sides to work together, as well as a sense of pragmatism that this is not necessarily always straightforward.

For this project it is through their establishment in the area over a significant period of time, and the widespread recognition of their efficacy, that they have gained a level of status. This means that they are now frequently invited to participate in networks and groups at a strategic level, which is unusual for a voluntary sector organization. Indeed they are now increasingly called upon to represent the voice of this sector.

Interestingly where new programmes of work have been initiated in new areas the agency's confidence has not been so visible. Indeed there have been some difficulties in establishing themselves in new areas and with new partners. This is not because of any innate problem, rather it seems it is because of the *extent* of their connections in their 'home' area, and the concerns amongst staff who are unfamiliar with what they might encounter in delivering the project elsewhere, from scratch. This sense of humility and awareness of difference can be seen as helpful in the context of another project whose key delivery agency has more of a unitary perspective towards delivery, believing that their way of working is an effective one in contrast to the long term, mutually negotiating, inter-agency co-operation that PF advocates nationally. Indeed, rather than submit to what was perceived as an externally enforced agenda from PF, one worker took umbrage and left their post at the commencement of the project.

3.2.2 Organising work, managing tensions

PF's more flexible approach to targeting, as contrasted with what one youth worker sees as a national drift towards more targeted work, means that joint working with some youth justice agencies is not always as easily reconciled with the 'Top 50' young people 'most at risk of offending' that has driven the YJB's work. At one of our case studies this shift has contributed to the YIP and PF no longer running jointly staffed sessions. The centrality of this shift of approach was also illustrated by the quiet disappearance of the group which was responsible for identifying the area's 'Top 50', as a result of invitations to attend drying up and poor attendance by PF in advance of its abandonment of the fully targeted approach in February 2006. In future PF will give priority to YIP, in terms of access to its provision but on the basis of delivery of its own delivery plans and an open door policy to other potential participants fitting the appropriate criteria.

In this sense, at its best, partnership working can be seen as a flexible approach which is responsive to changing circumstances. At the same time, such change can itself induce tension and conflict in partnership situations. The shifting approach of this project has contributed to the desire for a wider change involving an overhaul of the Steering Group which overseas both PF and YIP with the YOT expressing a desire to distance itself from the governance of PF in favour of the DAAT who they regard as more in keeping with the project's outlook. In some senses, the more flexible approach toward targeting advocated by PF itself creates a tension for those projects allied to YIPs, who can become drawn into

the more rigid Top 50 prescription of targeting. As such there has been recognition of the need to change the governance of the project for some time. However, as the YOT is currently attempting to map the future of prevention work with young people in the area there are concerns about the motivations for the proposed reorganisation with the Youth Service resisting an initial proposal.

Perversely whilst the work of such agencies is at least in part geared towards challenging divisions within neighbourhoods, such tensions can be related to conflicts over agencies' own perceptions of their domain, sphere of activity and 'patch'. Rivalries between agencies in terms of their 'turf' and claims to impacts are widespread in the social inclusion sector. At one case study a partner agency representative described the way in which agencies have traditionally worked in a manner that is both insular and competitive.

> One of the biggest difficulties… is the fractionalisation and the fact that the 'politics'… means in a sense that people don't work very well together at all and it means… it's yet another body chasing resources or chasing funding. So it's not a planned approach really and that leads to difficulties and conflicts of interests. There isn't, that's what I'm saying about the whole thing [here], there isn't really what I would call an agreed pattern or agenda… because of parochialism. It is strongly parochial and… to a certain extent everyone is chasing the same pots of money. (Youth Services Manager, 22.09.05)

Indeed the strained relationship this project has with a local community council, with the suggestion that they have not provided what they said they would, has been related to the community council's own unsuccessful tender for PF funds. The origins of the dispute cannot be determined with confidence but it is clear that it relates back to an interpretation of what PF is supposed to be and how and where it delivers work. Such conflicts are commonplace in regeneration areas where competition over the allocation of scarce resources in the face of high levels of deprivation is of vital concern. In such circumstances, of equal significance is the extent to which work is 'claimed' by different partners whereby work that different agencies have spoken about as 'theirs', has in fact been jointly instigated or delivered. Sometimes this is through the search for local competitive advantage but in other situations can be the result of wider, more instrumental activity.

At another of our projects there is a partnership with a Premiership football club which, rather like the tensions revealed in another front line delivery partnership in section 2.2.2 of this report, is complex whilst being viewed as important to both partners on numerous levels. The football club has had links with the lead agency which precedes the establishment of the PF project. In the initial months of operation, the football club's community team provided invaluable advice and support and their coaches helped with the delivery of sessions. More recently each of the partners has become intertwined in local regeneration and stadium development plans for the area which are also tied up with a new Barclays

Spaces for Sport flagship project. Whilst the project was always likely to receive funding one of the key criteria was the ability of the football club concerned to demonstrate close links with the community, especially the young people of the area.

In this respect the club was able to highlight and trade upon their close partnership with the PF project. However, whilst one of the factors which facilitates strong partnership ties is a 'shared agenda' it is clear that the core business of the football club is quite distinct from that of the PF project. So whilst the manager of the club's community team states that their work in the area is a 'genuine concern' to the club and in that sense they are real 'partners', the PF project remain a paying customer of the community scheme in relation to their use of the club's coaches. This has been acknowledged by the club who have expressed the 'need to look at' the payment structure between the two partners although their capacity to do so may well be tied up with wider strategic objectives relating to the club's redevelopment plans and internal finances.

More seriously, at another case study, the way that the particular partnerships have been mobilised has resulted in a racial division of provision. Here, one of the two delivery agencies works almost exclusively with white participants, whilst the other works with young 'Asian' participants. One of the reasons given by the lead agency for utilising their core delivery agency as a partner was its embedded links within the local 'community'. However, 'communities' are rarely single, unified and homogenous entities; they are much more readily understood in terms of their exclusivity (Hoggett, 1997). In this respect Delanty (2003) has suggested that the concept of community is often incompatible with multiculturalism because the notion of 'community' tends to accept the idea of difference only within certain limits. In this case study, the local 'community' which is the recipient of the bulk of funding and intensive work are the 'white' participants identified by the lead agency's 'Core 50' approach. The local authority Youth Service is then relied upon to engage young people from minority black and ethnic 'communities' in order that the project 'performs' a broader reflection of the wider area's ethnic make up.

It could be argued that this is an appropriate, pragmatic and locally negotiated response to challenging circumstances. Within the context of a potentially time limited project PF might not want to 'throw all its eggs in one basket' by relying on *one* agency to reach all sectors of a diverse community. It is also possible to see a rationale that as long as the project reaches across the entire community, who delivers what and to whom should not matter. Certainly there is no questioning of the Project Manager's desire to engage members of black and minority ethnic groups as participants and into volunteering roles but it is the failure to achieve this across all aspects of provision which raises some concerns.

This is particularly so in the context of 'race' being a contentious and discomforting issue for the project more generally; and a local context in which

allegations of 'Asian' men 'grooming' young white females have been prominent. The reluctance to deal with this issue has been made explicit to the research team. A senior practitioner, with whom the research was being discussed, stated 'I hope you're not going to write about the issue [Asian men grooming white young females] that's been in the news recently'. Conversations with other practitioners have unearthed shockingly stereotypical conceptions of the 'characteristics' of people from black and minority ethnic groups. There are understandings of 'race' which demonise black and minority ethnic groups as 'different', as insular, as unsophisticated and as a threat to the safety and prosperity of the 'indigenous' population. It is hard to conclude otherwise than to recognise that such perspectives will impact upon both the willingness and the capability of this agency to engage with the full range of young people which PF seeks to serve.

Ultimately these perspectives have contributed to what amounts to a racially segregated pattern of delivery which ironically sits alongside a plea for support for community cohesion work from partners. Rather than contributing to the conventional understandings of the community cohesion agenda which emphasises a break down of racial barriers and greater cross cultural interaction, the project currently serves to reinforce local divisions. At the heart of this set of arrangements in the context of this particular project lies the original institutionally defined adherence to an almost exclusively white 'Top 50' and the engagement of a delivery agent with little capacity or experience of generating cross cultural exchange. The Youth Service has subsequently been used to compensate for the lack of cross community contact through the employment of a more open approach to referrals on the basis of a far smaller budget.

Although far from a satisfactory solution, the issue of separate provision is now being partly addressed through a planned joint PF residential for early next year, via the Local Strategic Partnership, which is offering small scale funding for projects which bring together sectors of the community who might not normally spend time together.

3.3 Summary

The organisational types identified as potential partners by the *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* strategy document are essentially reflective of the PF wider approach which seeks to develop personal progression pathways. As such

- Those 'agencies that are working with young people within the youth justice system or at risk of substance misuse' can be identified as referral agents enabling access to vulnerable young people.
- Those 'agencies that can support the delivery of services so that the broadest range of appropriate activities is offered' can be identified as delivery agents able to maintain young people's engagement.

- Those 'agencies that can identify routes and refer young people into education, training and employment programmes' provide pathways onwards from PF's own activities.

Whilst these descriptions reflect the developmental essence of PF and re-enforce the approach that it advocates, through our research we have identified a wider array of partnership types which embrace and extend this approach, including:

- Commissioning agents – YOT, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund etc.
- Referral agencies – Schools, YOTs etc.
- Host organisations – Providing venues and access to young people
- Delivery agents – Sports clubs, dance instructors etc.
- Strategic partners – Steering groups, management boards
- Exit partners – Colleges, volunteer programmes, employers etc.

Nevertheless even this extended list should not, of itself, be seen as an adequate basis for assessing the validity of a project partnership. What is more important is, within each of these categorisations, to evaluate what the partnership is contributing and its fit with the wider developmental ethos of the PF programme. In this sense it is possible to draw out a number of features of effective partnerships and associated barriers and enablers. We have attempted to define these in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Effective partnership barriers and enablers

Feature	Ideal	Barrier	Enabler
Agendas	Shared	Vested interests	Complimentary interests
Funding	Availability	Perception of security amongst partners/project	Proximity to funders, networks, the 'X' factor
Bureaucracy	Minimised	Excessive meetings and procedure	Informal personal contact and information exchange
Decision making	Simple	Excessive layers, distance from final decision makers	Proximity of decision makers
Balance of power	Supportive of lead	Dominance of antagonistic or sceptical partner	Authority vested with appropriate lead agencies
Compulsion	Voluntary	Institutional 'paper' partnership	Enthusiasm for project
Organisational culture	Non- conflictual	Conflicting approaches	Understanding of agency values
Skills	Expanded skills	Duplication	Complimentary

	base		non-duplicating skills
Personalities	Willing to learn	Domineering personalities	Mutual respect
Outcomes	Recognisable	Demand for fixed outcomes	Awareness of informal, gradual benefits
Accountability	To local neighbourhoods and funders	Secrecy and isolation/distance	Open governance/ communication

These features cut across the organisational contexts in which PF is delivered and apply to the local partnerships that surround projects rather than individual agencies. A good local partnership can then help to overcome any problems that might be associated with a particular lead or delivery agency. An effective partnership can help to bring a project more into line with the approach advocated by PF and in this sense what is important is the style of working which emerges from the partnership. In this kind of environment effective partnerships are not necessarily planned, they evolve. Bits of work attract the interest of potential partners and funders but it is rarely the constitution of a formal 'partnership' group which enables progress to be made. 'Things happen' when people establish shared interests and effective personal working relationships with others.

Through an adaptation of the work of Harrison et al (2003) we can identify then a series of cultures and styles of working, rather than rules or prerequisites for effective partnership working such that:

1. Partnerships should involve two or more agencies and/or groups and, where possible, should include a variety of key stakeholders.
2. Individuals/groups/organisations who enter into partnerships should be those who are primarily affected by a problem and/or have responsibility for developing solutions.
3. They should seek to develop (where this does not already exist) common aims and shared visions of what the problem is and how it should be overcome.
4. They should have agreed plans of action on what should be done to tackle the problem. These do not always have to be formally written down, but they should be understood by all partners.
5. They should understand, acknowledge and respect the contribution that different agencies/groups can bring to partnerships.
6. They should be open, responsive and seek to accommodate the different values and cultures of participating agencies/groups.
7. They should exchange information and communicate regularly. This communication should extend beyond formal partnership meetings, especially at the delivery level.

8. They should share resources and skills.
9. They should be innovative, flexible and should be prepared to take risks rather than avoid them.

Part Four: Understanding Positive Futures

4.1 Knowing the score: Understanding the national strategy

Since, as we saw in the first section of this report, PF has grown through three phases of development with contrasting priorities and management styles, this has undoubtedly influenced how the programme has been shaped by individual projects. As the programme can itself be regarded as something of an action research project it is only with the latest phase of development, associated with the launch of a third wave of projects and expansion of existing ones allied to a coherent strategic framework that a clearly discernable PF approach has emerged. However there remains a lack of consistency at the project level with a wide variety of interpretations of the PF approach being apparent amongst our case studies.

Our only first wave project, whilst initially advocated by the YJB, is run by a voluntary sector agency which already had a track record of working in the area and established practices which have in many ways come to define the current PF approach. Accordingly it is not surprising that it is this agency and it's locally earned credibility that has 'brand value' in the neighbourhoods where it works rather than PF as such. There is little doubt that the local respect for the lead agency, built up over years of work in the area has contributed to an understanding of the project in terms which extend beyond the use of sport as a diversionary tool – something which has plagued sports based social interventions elsewhere. Rather, the project has forged an identify for itself which is locally embedded and responsive to local needs which has enabled the project to become a flagship of the PF approach and other funding streams, regularly being requested to host report launches and visits by politicians in addition to its work with young people.

It would appear that this more 'organic' approach has been harder to replicate at some of our other case studies, which have been more constrained by the organisational cultures in which they work. Rather than building on an existing platform of neighbourhood based delivery, project plans developed by the two local authority, one YOT and one DAAT led projects more freely invoke referral based approaches built around a 'Core 50' of those young people regarded as 'most at risk' of offending in the nominated areas.

At one of the local authority led projects, a focus on working with the 'hardest to reach' young people has been maintained but has largely been achieved through referrals from its large network of partner agents. Despite the project's high profile institutionally there remains little evidence of grassroots, street based outreach work of the type advocated by PF. At another project, where staff at the YOT which leads it have been made aware of the PF 'ethos' through documentation, visits from Home Office staff and attendance at PF conferences, regional meetings and training, this awareness does not extend to the key

delivery agency. This relates to their more insular culture and the accordance of their own approach with that of the YOT which is reflected in the words of one member of staff that 'My ideology works…I know what I'm on about.' Such a firm belief in one's personal outlook and working style, and a similar belief at the organisational level, is not necessarily a negative. Indeed PF encourages organisations that are bold and innovative. However if, as is the case here, the approach remains tied to a formulaic targeted system which runs contrary to the wider programme strategy, the flexibility which is a key component of PF will be undermined.

4.2 It's good to talk: Communicating strategic programme messages

Partly in response to the national team's awareness of the diversity of delivery styles and interpretations of PF considerable effort has gone into improving both internal and external communications in accordance with the commitments made in *Cul-de-sacs and gateways*. Soon after the launch of this document a communications strategy was developed and The Forster Company were appointed to deliver it. At the heart of this strategy was the need to communicate the programme's messages to a series of audiences including opinion formers, funders, partners, local residents and participants. As such agreed messages based on the level of detail each of these audiences might require to understand the programme's goals were developed.

The first challenge then was to move individual projects' thinking from describing Positive Futures as a diversionary programme aimed at keeping young people 'off the streets' or involved in sport, to communicating Positive Futures as an attempt to broaden young people' horizons and provide vocational opportunities. A 'Communicating Positive Futures' document was produced to highlight these messages and media relations activity used case studies of young people, volunteers and project workers in publications targeting potential front-line partners such as the police, youth workers and teachers.

Nevertheless, for all this activity, there are still those projects that choose to hold onto different approaches, whether this is because they have not engaged with the support materials, do not understand or hold contrasting views. This point is well illustrated by the contrast between two of our case studies, one of which is eager to 'learn', the other which feels it 'knows'. The coordinator of the project which appears to have achieved the steepest learning curve describes how she developed her understanding of the PF ethos:

> They are pretty good at publicising themselves and I got to know that literature in order to help me when I was starting out. And through speaking to [the national team] regularly. And we have got quite good networks with [a neighbouring project] and one of the most helpful things was we as a team we went to visit [the phase one project] and that helped us see where they were

going and that was quite inspirational and aspirational so we got to know that it is not necessarily about huge numbers, it's about quality provision. So one of the long term things is to focus more on outcomes but not outcomes for outcomes sake but for actually moving the young people forward. And I think that is backed up by the literature that comes out including the accreditation manual, and the other policy and research stuff. (29.09.05)

By contrast a neighbouring project has continued to interpret the PF approach as being concerned with referral based work with young people 'at risk of substance misuse and anti-social behaviour'. When asked how they have arrived at this mission and their more rigidly targeted methodology there is a misplaced confidence that they are pioneering an approach which PF is only just catching up with nationally:

I am not saying we haven't looked at the documents, but a lot of what is in the documents we have come up with in our office, just by talking and through our experiences. [It's] very good, but it's nothing different to what we were doing anyway. (Project Manager 23.09.05)

At another new project the pace of learning has been slow due to problems within the delivery partnership which have led to distractions and a lack of strategic focus. In this context models of working have begun to evolve through the co-operation between the two front-line delivery workers who have been effective in building relations with a wide range of local partners but less able to drive forward the particular styles of working advocated by PF. However, if they are constrained by a *lack* of institutional back up then it is the *surfeit* of institutional baggage that has constrained the coordinator at a new local authority led project. Whilst the coordinator is very familiar with the ethos of PF through an engagement with programme documents and a background working with young people this was initially less evident at more strategic levels. In part this is due to the departure of the driving force behind the original funding application but is also tied to the original perception of PF as a sport development tool which complements rather than contrasting with wider aspects of local authority practice and the skills base of local authority staff.

The majority of frontline staff at this project were transferred from the existing sport development team and have generally shown little interest in PF policy documents. From their perspective, the work is out in the field, delivering activities. As such *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* is not a familiar document amongst the staff and on occasion those who attend regional meetings can appear ill equipped in discussions regarding national policy documents. The aims and objectives of PF are communicated to new staff and are reinforced at staff meetings and reviews but this is not reflected in either the understanding demonstrated by staff or, in some cases, their approach to the work. In this sense there is still a misunderstanding as to whether some frontline staff see

themselves as project workers involved in youth work or merely as sports coaches.

'I'm not a youth worker'

Only one of the football lads has turned up and Frank informs us that he is not going to Football World with just the one participant. He wants to go back and pack the van. His colleagues plead with him not to but to go to the park instead to play football with the young lad. Frank seems unimpressed by all this attention being given to just one boy. He is ready to abandon the session for the day. Nevertheless Burt eventually convinces him to drive to the park which is just two minutes away from the café. He bows down to pressure and jumps into the driver's seat and drives us to the park in silence. At the park when Burt suggests,
'Let's make teams, and have a game,'
Frank responds,
'I ain't playing with one lad, I'm not a youth worker but a sports coach.'
He sits on the bus on his own while we play.

Here the project worker defies the emphasis in *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* on the role of the community sports 'coach' as working together with other delivery agencies in the role of a cultural intermediary. Successful projects are those that have key frontline staff operating as facilitators of a broad package of community development measures focused on building relationships with participants. Whilst Frank is liked by the participants, who identify with his social background and his ability on the sports field his perspective towards his work stands in contradiction to the emphasis in *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* on engagement through sport and the building of mutual respect and trust as a means of providing cultural 'gateways' to alternative lifestyles. However, in light of recommendations made in the first interim case study research report (Crabbe, 2005) greater efforts have now been made to embrace the approach advocated in *Cul-de-sacs and gateways*.

At other PF projects, there is a stronger determination to ensure that staff embrace the key principles of the PF approach. They distribute literature to workers at other agencies which does not label or target particular young people, but promotes the PF project's approach. The A4 flyer explains that the project seeks to have 'a positive influence on young people's lives by widening horizons and providing access to new opportunities within a culturally familiar environment'. Trying to debunk the myth that PF is a sports diversionary project, the literature continues:

> 'Sport is only a catalyst to encourage project participation. It is through the trust and mutual respect built up between young people and project staff that alternative lifestyles can be introduced. Steering young people towards education, training and employment is at the heart of all our work.' (Project flyer)

4.3 Learning the ropes: Recruitment, training and staff development

In terms of front line staff, as we revealed in our last report, a range of skills are required for the delivery of an effective PF project. In terms of the development of these skills all staff have benefited or will have the opportunity to benefit from the PF Workforce Quality Initiative designed to ensure that individuals working on projects have the knowledge, skills and personal qualities across 16 core competencies to perform their roles effectively. Now in its third year the WQI builds on the existing skills of Positive Futures workers and helps them to develop the practical competence they need to work safely and effectively in their local environments. WQI's objectives are to:

- Identify the National Occupational Standards (NOS) Positive Futures staff should be working to
- Assess staff performance, knowledge and skills to identify any training and development needs
- Provide relevant and targeted training and activities
- Evaluate the development of Positive Futures staff
- Record and recognise the achievements of Positive Futures staff.

For individual staff this process begins with a half-day workshop where they create and refine their 'role profile' – the units of National Occupational Standards relevant to their work roles. Staff are then asked to prioritise up to four units that are particularly important to their work but about which they are not 100% confident. They assess themselves against their prioritised units to confirm their strengths and identify any gaps in their knowledge and skills, or ways in which they need to adapt their performance to bring it into line with the benchmarks of good practice as described in the National Occupational Standards.

During 2004/5 WQI provided a series of workshops focused on developing the following core competences:

- Engaging with, working with, supporting and protecting young people
- Preparing, leading, concluding and reviewing sports and activity sessions
- Raising awareness of substances and their effects and helping young people address their substance misuse
- Dealing with abusive and aggressive behaviour
- Managing projects and delivering quality to stakeholders' requirements.

All these workshops have been available both to Positive Futures workers and staff working on other similar sport based initiatives and observations suggest that the sessions have been generally well received and have undoubtedly had an impact in terms of the levels of staff expertise and confidence.

There remains an issue of the lasting value attached to the training by staff which may be related to the initial lack of any accreditation or certificates associated with attendance which some delegates have complained about. In response there have since been two significant developments for staff who wish to have their learning accredited. Firstly Positive Futures, in partnership with SkillsActive, have developed two accredited training courses which are now being delivered across the country by Chartstage Training and the London Community Sports Network focused on delivering sport and physical activity within deprived communities:

- NVQ Level 3 Award in Community Sports Work
- NVQ Level 3 Award in Managing Community Sport.

Such training does not of itself guarantee an effective workforce however and projects have shown some imagination in their efforts to recruit the right kind of staff. In one instance, after teaming up with another part of its organisation, which also had a number of posts to fill, a project held an 'event' which those interested in the advertised posts were invited to come along to. Here, the work of PF was outlined, but there were also presentations about the lead agency's wider work, the DAAT and the local area. Applicants then took part in observed group work and made a 'presentation' in a 'Big Brother' style diary room as part of an evening for short listed candidates, in order to identify people who 'came across in person as if they can do the job, rather than people who are good at filling in application forms'. The approach certainly stood out from conventional recruitment procedures and illustrated the distinct culture of the lead agency. This was deliberate and designed to identify who could hit the ground running, in terms of having an appreciation of the flexibility of the PF approach and engagement with young people.

4.4 Spreading the word: Communicating project work

The kind of work that PF delivers has long been threatened by the external perception that it is a reward for bad behaviour. As such projects have had to become adept at communicating the work that they do, both with a view to attracting participants, but also in order to protect the reputation of the work in the eyes of partners, residents and local interest. Accordingly, as part of the national team's communications strategy one-to-one support has been offered to all projects nationally to help them develop their own communications skills and media strategies. For those projects who have acknowledged that they have particular difficulties in communicating with the media and project partners additional specialist support has been provided with projects being 'buddied' with those who are more confident and experienced at dealing with communications.

However at one of our case studies, in the midst of concerns about the ways in which the project might be portrayed, a negative approach has been retained. The YOT manager stresses that PF was part funded by asset confiscation,

particularly when he talks to residents, feeling that this will go some way to countering the charge that PF is about providing treats for undeserving offenders. The YOT's own literature also takes this populist 'tough' stance, with the headline 'No More Excuses: Preventing Offending, Punishing Offenders, Protecting The Public.'

However this negative psychology is not always typical. Indeed even this project is planning an event to showcase its work to other agencies and, in line with the PF document *Raising The Bar* (Home Office, 2005) will run an awards evening celebrating the achievements of young people who have participated in PF. Elsewhere a wide variety of approaches towards developing effective communication have now been adopted. One project, partly in response to criticism by some local groups for not communicating fully enough, has since been particularly active in distributing flyers, posters, doing presentations in schools and outreach work in residential settings as well as recognising the importance of 'word of mouth' amongst friendship groups in terms of getting the message to potential participants. Recently they produced a series of area-based newsletters, which contain details of activities that have been taking place in the areas and their future plans. The coordinator has also developed a report which contains details of the whole project's activities to date and a three year business plan which has been circulated to partners. They have also recently appointed an external agency to build them a company website which will provide them with the opportunity to communicate and publicise what they do and also receive feedback and comments from young people and partners. Within the publicity a specific typeface and cartoon characters are used in order to build up an identifiable 'brand' which young people can relate to.

However it is instructive to compare this approach with that of another more established project who do not produce publicity around sessions or activities per se since they are reliant upon referrals and therefore do not feel that they need to post flyers to attract young people. Rather they focus their communication on informing their institutional stakeholders and partners though presentations, reports and meetings. In turn this difference is reflected in the ways in which success in securing media coverage is assessed. Whereas the project who focus their publicity around young people have attracted media attention relating to the success of one of their young footballers, the project concentrating on informing their project partners have attracted attention regarding the securing of further funding. In this sense a contrast can be drawn on the one hand between the measurements of success in terms of the organisation of PF, and on the other in terms of the achievements of participants which fits more readily with the perspectives outlined in the PF strategy document. In the main press coverage of PF projects emerges in an opportunistic fashion but it is inevitably influenced by the kind of work being done and existing documentation of it.

In terms of securing a wider audience and understanding of PF it is also significant that on the whole Steering Groups do not feature community

representatives, participants or councillors as members, with the appropriateness of such membership never having even been debated. Indeed there is often no attempt to make participants aware of the fact that the project is funded by PF via logos or other livery. However in at least two cases this is a consequence of a deliberate decision not to draw attention to the project as a state sponsored intervention with 'difficult' young people. Rather in these contexts there is a preference for the activities to stand on their own feet and develop their own identity rather than suffer the *negative* associations of an external 'brand'. Elsewhere projects have sought to trade off the Positive Futures identity and have produced staff clothing with logos as well as drawing upon the cache of the equipment provided by recognisable partners such as professional football clubs.

Part Five: Monitoring, Evaluation and Training

5.1 The problem with 'measurements'

One of the things that marks Positive Futures out from other sports based social inclusion initiatives is its commitment to the development of a comprehensive programme of research, monitoring and evaluation. This is borne out of recognition of the failure of a succession of related programmes to demonstrate their achievements. A number of North American studies have, over the years, provided some empirical support for the notion that participation in sport serves as a deterrence to delinquency and 'deviance' (Schafer, 1969; Buhrmann, 1977; Hastad et al, 1984). However, there remains little definitive evidence of a direct causal relationship between involvement in sports, moral outlook and criminal or deviant behaviour (Long & Sanderson, 2001; Collins et al, 1999; Snydor, 1994; Robins, 1990; Coalter, 1989). What evidence is available tends to come from internal assessment or isolated independent evaluation and generally does not clarify what causes measured reductions in crime (see Collins 2002).

Part of the reason for this is precisely because programmes have focused on trying to *establish* a direct causal relationship between involvement in sport and reductions in offending behaviour. This is a flawed approach, the shortcomings of which are increasingly being recognised across academic, practitioner and policy making circles. At its best it can produce a numerical record of, for example, how many participants have not been arrested over a given period. However, the incomplete nature of this 'data' renders its usefulness limited. Criminal statistics are notoriously unreliable as they ignore unreported crimes whilst the 'fact' that somebody has not been arrested gives no indication as to whether that person has actually been involved in crime or not.

Furthermore the focus on point in time crime statistics itself misinterprets the role of initiatives such as PF. For whilst one of the principal reasons why sport is used in crime prevention and diversionary interventions is because many young people enjoy it, this is often for much the same reason that they might also choose to use illicit drugs, become involved in criminal activity or even sport related violence (Crabbe, 2000). Indeed it could be argued that whilst formal images of sport may be policed through societal expectations, which stress its wholesome and socially cohesive nature, at the level of experience it is precisely sport's legitimation of 'deviance', which is often most compelling (Blackshaw & Crabbe, 2004).

As such, rather than focusing on sport itself as the prime variable or crime statistics as the key outcome indicator, PF has been concerned to gain a more complete picture which relates to the ways in which *projects* (rather than sport) influence participants' attitudes, engagement, activities, education, employment, peer groups and relationships. Furthermore, the programme's commitment to monitoring is informed not only by a determination to generate evidence of its

achievements but also by its desire to identify ways of learning from the diverse range of agencies, staff and contexts in which the work is delivered. In some respects the diversity of lead agencies and activities associated with PF has itself given the programme the status of an action research project guided, but not bound, by a strategic framework which provides a benchmark against which to make assessments and draw conclusions.

The launch of *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* in 2003, which emphasised PF's role as an early intervention 'relationship strategy', was associated with a recognition of the need for new means of capturing the nature of the work and the journeys made by participants. PF has used more conventional 'measurements' of 'inputs', 'outputs', 'performance indicators' and 'outcomes' through periodic surveys conducted by MORI, namely the Key Elements document and the Survey of Partner Agencies. However, whilst these surveys have been able to represent the breadth and reach of the programme's work, on their own they have not reflected the complex, multi-faceted and evolutionary nature of the work with disadvantaged young people or captured the stories of the participants who provide the focus for that work.

5.2 Project level monitoring and evaluation

Amongst project staff there is a feeling that the Key Elements document is not a particularly arduous one to complete compared to those required by other funders, as it relies upon relatively basic information such as the number of young people engaged; their age, gender and ethnic profile; the number of sports sessions run; and the personal developments achieved by participants although one coordinator working on the latest return joked:

> 'You see these bags under my eyes, that's not from working with young people, that's from writing reports and the stress that caused from them!'

The real concern is though that it does not fully capture the work of projects although the surveys do provide spaces for limited case studies to reflect the ways that projects have assisted young people. However *Cul-de-sacs and gateways* encouraged individual projects to undertake their own monitoring and evaluation as an integral part of their work and this has been reflected in a variety of ways.

One of the more established case studies realised the importance of having good internal monitoring and evaluation systems early on and they currently employ two dedicated members of staff to manage the input of data and production of analysis to meet the requirements of all their funders. The information serves internal purposes as well as external ones in terms of ongoing reviews of particular sessions through to the strategic direction of the organisation as a whole. Within this culture project staff vocalise success in terms of the quality of their work with young people and adopt a self critical approach which involves

the use of feedback to help shape future delivery plans. Rather than relying on the project's successes and 'sitting back', staff are encouraged to adopt a self-reflective approach which involves the setting of new challenges and goals.

A third wave project which has taken its inspiration from this organisation has utilised innovative 'action' oriented monitoring and evaluation techniques in order to assess young peoples views on their sessions and contact with them. For example, staff frequently take photos and tape-record their sessions, allowing participants to be involved with this process rather than allowing these forms of evaluation to be separated from the wider patterns of working. A project worker described the rationale for using this approach:

> Just to see how it went really, because you miss things when you do it cos there's so much going on. But I'll just look at them and then be able to re-organise how I do things if it hasn't worked too well.' (12.07.05).

In addition to other more formal forms of funding related monitoring such as PAYP forms and the Key Elements document the project also employs its own 'young persons evaluation' form which seeks information from the young people on individual sessions. However there is hostility to the more arduous evaluation forms such as those associated with PAYP which appear to collect information for its own sake without having any real benefit to participants. Their own more informal monitoring may not generate the information that some funders demand but it is regarded as more valuable to the team in terms of organisational and participant development.

By contrast another wave three project has a less embedded approach which is driven primarily by their perception of what PF requires of them. Monitoring activity appears to be more basic, focusing on the numbers of participants, sessions run, and host venues, which is not always collected in a consistent manner. Similarly the project's progress is reviewed and annual reports produced by each of the delivery partners, although this again appears to be related to a perception of expectation rather than a belief in the intrinsic benefits of self reflective practice. Nevertheless the research has revealed some responsiveness over time, most noticeably in a move from working with the maximum number of young people possible, to taking on board the message that sustained work with smaller numbers is preferable. This may itself be related to the messages emanating from the case study research team although it seems that the direction of the work with young people has generated a deepening understanding of how to achieve the implementation of the PF approach.

In other cases the organisational contexts in which PF is delivered has helped to shape the approach to monitoring and evaluation. In one context, despite the fact that there is no national target setting for PF, the lead agency's Service Level Agreements with its delivery agents cite 'approximately 100' as the target for young people coming through the project each year. In contradiction with the new

emphasis associated with the national PF approach but reflecting its own parent organisation's agenda the project also identifies its own aims and outcome measures such that:

> The project aims to use sport to reduce the anti-social behaviour, crime and drug misuse among 10-19 year olds…The success of the project will be measured by achieving: A reduction in youth offending, a reduction in drug use amongst young people on the project, an increase in the regular participation in physical activity by 10 to 19 year olds. (Lead agency website)

The concern here is that whilst there is an additional desire to 'support young people back into education or training and therefore help them secure employment,' these aims are portrayed as peripheral to the desire to reduce crime and the official image is one of addressing young people as problematic rather than vulnerable.

Elsewhere, rather than more ideologically informed demands, it is the bureaucratic pressures within the host organisation associated with 'audit society' (Power, 1997), that can bring additional and sometimes unhelpful pressures. One of our local authority based projects contributes to both Leisure Services and Sports and Recreation's Key Performance Indicators (KPI). They also have a joint KPI with the local DAT to 'disseminate drugs awareness information to 1700 young people per year'. Whilst meeting this target is easy, achieved through distribution of the Government's FRANK drug education leaflets to participants, it is not clear how it contributes towards the PF strategy. The ability to prove that 1700 leaflets were distributed does not demonstrate whether the information was absorbed by the young people and more importantly, whether it was deemed relevant or of benefit to them.

Beyond the conflicting demands of lead agencies' parent bodies, additional problems are presented by the requirements of other funding partners who work with PF. How 'success' is understood within an organisation is partly driven by, and also feeds into, its style of working. Although YIPs and YOTs might legitimately claim that the 'welfare' of the young person is central to what they do, their services appear to be more process driven than PF's more user driven approach. YOTs must work to the YJB's performance targets around the following: prevention, recidivism, final warnings, use of secure facilities, use of restorative processes, victim satisfaction, parental satisfaction, completion of ASSET (a risk assessment tool), pre sentence reports, detention and training orders, education, training and employment, accommodation and mental health. This long list of performance areas against which YOT business is measured influences their ways of working and also who they can most profitably work with if targets are to be attained. By way of illustration, in one meeting, a YOT worker demonstrated a fundamental difference between how agencies 'measure' and, indeed, what they view as 'success', by asking a PF coordinator how many case

files they had closed over the past year, a question that should be anathema to the PF way of working.

In the context of some of these difficulties and the new demands presented by the introduction of the *Every Child Matters Outcomes Framework* staff across our case study projects have begun to identify a desire for new models of evaluation which address both the needs of participants and the full range of partner agencies. For some organisations, or, more specifically, for some front line workers, 'success' may be much more qualitatively focused, even at odds with the simplistic and immeasurable 'reduction/increase in' measures of success which are sometimes used by, say, YOTs. A senior Youth Service worker bemoans the fact that some of the 'softer work', because it is harder to monitor/represent, is under valued by funders and partners, adding that the overbearing demands of performance indicators, make it hard to do more intensive, outreach style youth work.

In line with social network studies that have revealed the 'strength of weak ties' (Granovetter, 1973) one project cites their relationship with a local school, which provides a venue for activities and employs a worker who has also worked for PF but with whom there is no Service Level Agreement merely a kind of recognition of mutual need and benefit. Talking about some of the benefits derived from the work with the school the project coordinator elucidates how:

> People don't *see* the benefits [of this sort of work]. [Some services] are so critical of the way we work because there's no instant sort of results, but the results that you see through sort of a hard end person coming through the door and building a relationship… with them and then they're the leaders with other kids. And if they're not doing that sort of thing [anti social behaviour] then there's a massive impact on a small area. And that's really pleasing, to see that sort of thing. That's what's really pleasing about this type of work in Positive Futures and this money that the government's giving. It gets used in a way that you can see some tangible, meaningful, meaty results. (Project Coordinator, 2.8.05)

5.3 New national monitoring and evaluation framework

It is in this context that PF has sought to develop a new national monitoring and evaluation framework which seeks to achieve new ways of assessing and learning that are more inclusive, and better reflect both the process of change associated with PF and the views and aspirations of those most directly affected by it. This new framework is currently being piloted at nine PF projects across England and Wales, two of which are amongst our seven case studies.

Ultimately this new framework will facilitate the creation of pre-structured individual Annual Reports by each PF project which will enable a range of information and media to be presented which reflects both the individuality of projects whilst also generating programme wide aggregate data.

The proposed new framework embraces three tiers of reporting which acknowledge projects' differing capacities to mobilise the full range of monitoring tools introduced. The new reporting framework has also been designed to ensure its compatibility with project partner's information needs through an embracement of the *Every Child Matters Outcomes Framework*, DAT/DAAT targets and wider youth work oriented models of assessing participant progress.

The first tier revolves around a session register which will provide both a means to record basic session and attendance data as well as a method of tracking participant progress and significant incidents and events. In addition to this first level of information, more critical secondary observations are to be made on the level or stage of participants' engagement. Based upon learning from Youth Work progression models and the engagement matrix developed by *darts*, a community arts project in Doncaster (Hirst & Robertshaw, 2003), this record is intended to provide a basis for tracking participants' engagement and progression. Whilst it is recognised that participants do not necessarily 'progress' in a linear fashion a number of 'levels' of engagement and achievement, characterised by a range of behaviours, which will help to establish the kinds of pathways that participants follow have been identified. These various levels of engagement and indicative associated behaviours are outlined in Table 4 below. This record provides a means of representing the nature of participants' engagement beyond mere attendance or length of engagement.

Table 4: Engagement and progression matrix

Level 1 Disengagement	Level 2 Curiosity	Level 3 Involvement	Level 4 Achievement	Level 5 Autonomy
Sit out and ignore activity	Watch activity	Join in with others	Complete tasks	Initiate ideas
Encourage disputes	Dip in and out	Respond to instruction	Communicate with staff outside of activity	Help plan and run activities
Distract others	Ask questions	Talk about experiences	Make positive statements about work	Advise and educate peers
Walk out	Listen to staff and peers	Enjoy good relations with others	Celebrate work publicly	Praise work of others
Make negative comments	Comment on activity	Share facilities	Make connections	Manage conflict

			beyond the project	between others
Destroy/damage facilities	Talk to others about activity	Handle conflict and confrontation with maturity	Receive accreditation and gain qualifications	Volunteer
	Try activity on own	Attend regularly		Make 'career' choices
				Gain employment
Other				

Further contextualisation and verification of participants' progress will require more imaginative and participative approaches which can help to generate qualitative case stories and multi-media representations of projects' work in action. Good project evaluation should actively contribute to developing responsive, effective projects rather than being seen as an added extra or a burdensome activity associated with the regulatory frameworks of commissioning agents. It should provide a basis for self-reflection and a window into the working of a project from which others can benefit.

The need for such an approach is particularly pertinent in the context of the Government's vision for children's services, *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*, published in December 2004. This proposed a better integrated delivery of children's services to improve outcomes for children and young people against these five headings:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

The third tier of monitoring and evaluation, which is supported by a Participative Monitoring Toolkit tied to the *Every Child Matters Outcomes Framework* provides a framework within which to develop evaluative tools which involve and have meaning for those at the heart of the intervention whilst generating a clear picture of achievements at the programme level.

In order to develop a truly longitudinal picture of the achievements of PF on the ground the case study research which is currently focused on seven projects and which is due to conclude in the summer of 2006 will continue at two projects. This continuing study will build upon the existing body of knowledge and personal relationships established at these projects to generate a comprehensive picture of the long term impact of PF on the local areas and participants. The findings

from this research will also be used to identify important developmental themes which can be fed into the wider monitoring and evaluation framework.

The Annual Programme Report which will be derived from this activity and the individual Annual Project Reports will present aggregate programme performance and impact data as well as a detailed qualitative picture of the nature of the work being conducted which will be used to inform future programme developments. Further consolidation of the relationship between the new management agency and the local PF projects will be provided by the team's Project Visits.

Whilst primarily focused on gaining first hand experience of programme delivery, representatives from the national programme management team, project steering group members and partners will review projects practice against a set of guidance criteria identified in Appendix 1. On the basis of these assessments projects will be rated as 'low', 'medium' or 'high' risk against any one or more of the criteria. Feedback and advice will be provided to all projects and those identified as 'high' risk may receive further visits by representatives of the national programme management team or the regional government office at short to nil notice with a view to observing particular aspects of project practice identified as problematic.

Part Six: Conclusions

Throughout this report we have attempted to assess the extent to which our case study projects have fitted with the organisational framework for PF articulated in *Cul-de-sacs and gateways*. In addressing this task we have also been conscious of the research's role in helping to clarify and refine that framework with a view to identifying the ideal structural arrangements for the delivery of the programme.

In terms of **organising PF** we would emphasise the importance of *Cul-de-sacs and gateways'* identification of the need for projects to be independent and innovative. As such we make no apology for the extent to which we have celebrated the achievements of voluntary sector led projects in freer terms than those located within statutory sector structures. For as the eminent social commentator Stuart Hall, echoing Hambleton & Hoggett's concerns with the 'bureacratic paternalist' (1987) model of state service provision, reflected at the close of the 1980s when the progressive voluntary sector seemed most under threat:

> Hasn't the voluntary sector always believed that state led welfare was too bureaucratic, too inflexible, too top downwards, too over-staffed, too dominated by the public sector unions, too bottled up in internecine party political warfare, too entrammelled in electoral calculations, too bothered by local council shenanigans? (1989: 11)

He also recognised though that 'It does not follow from this that because one makes a critique of the forms of statist provision which the welfare state has provided that therefore [the voluntary sector] ought to turn back to the regime of private patronage' (*Ibid*.16). Rather, what he was espousing was a new, more radical role for the voluntary sector in fighting for a more participatory, inclusionary and some might argue, communitarian, notion of citizenship as a new constituting public philosophy, grounded in the empowerment of the disadvantaged to be *involved* rather than *dependent*. In this sense rather than calling for market led consumerist reforms he was reflecting Hambleton & Hogget's emphasis on public service reform centred on a notion of cultural pluralism involving devolved power and control and characterised by greater access, flexibility and sensitivity. As such he identified the voluntary sector as having the contacts and networks in local neighbourhoods which provide them with a key advantage in becoming the pioneers of new forms of local engagement, regeneration and redevelopment.

Over the last decade and in the face of a relatively progressive and significant attempt to revamp the nature of social regeneration and welfare provision in Britain, this theme has gathered momentum. Increasingly the voluntary sector itself has developed the confidence to demand a central role in the provision of public services (Aldridge, 2005) whilst the Government is now acknowledging the voluntary sector and community organisations' special capacity to engage with

individual and social groups who have become alienated by mainstream state service providers (DH, 2004: 79).

In line with this perspective our research findings suggest that many community based voluntary sector groups have organisational structures which would more easily accommodate the preferred characteristics of PF lead agencies identified in Table 2 of this report. Voluntary sector status does not, of itself, provide any guarantee that a project will be successful but, other things being equal, it can provide a structural framework and degree of autonomy which enables projects to generate forms of working which are: small scale; locally based; well resourced and dynamic; with no single area of work dominating; thereby allowing design and approach to develop organically. This is not to say that other types of organisation cannot take on the role of a lead agency and we are aware of a number of local authority led projects which have taken on 'flagship' status and helped to define PF within the wider programme. However in these situations this has often been as a result of the determination of individual personnel to eschew the host agency's existing procedures and ways of working in order to forge an independent identity for the project.

As such we would highlight the need for local authority projects and others led by larger more institutional bodies to be conscious of the ways in which PF requires an approach which is distinct from more conventional patterns of statutory sector public service delivery. If such organisations are to continue delivering PF there will be a need for the projects they host to have greater autonomy from formal institutional policies and procedures which can act as a barrier to work with the disadvantaged young people at the heart of PF's work.

In this sense, and drawing on the learning from wider research focused on the delivery of sports based social initiatives (Brown, Crabbe & Mellor, 2006), the kind of independence required can be characterised in the following ways:

1. Greater organisational and financial autonomy from wider institutional structures.
2. Alternative 'branding' to generate a locally acknowledged sense of 'cool' and kudos around projects which avoids the labelling and stigmatisation that can go with 'state' branded services.
3. Locally constituted strategic plans which outline *projects* priority themes and geographical focus rather than the strategic orientation of parent organisations.
4. Flexible work plans which are adaptable in order to appeal to a wider array of funders.
5. Flexible employment policies enabling the employment of both youth work and sports delivery staff, alongside partnership with other specialist agencies who can deliver on the projects behalf.

6. A bottom up approach to secure meaningful and effective 'community' support which can be tainted by too close a tie in with statutory service providers.
7. Trustees and/or steering group members drawn from a wide range of stakeholders.

In terms of the need for strong and effective **partnerships**, beyond the features identified in section 3.3 of this report, the research has revealed the importance of a focus on developing partnerships which make a tangible contribution rather than those which are driven by procedural protocol. It is clear from our case studies that there is no viable 'model' for partnership working to follow. Indeed, in our experience where forms of partnership working are imposed this is more likely to contribute to organisational tension and the emergence of counter productive competing styles of working.

Accordingly, whilst steering groups can be important they should not be regarded as the organisational heart of a project or necessarily provide confidence in what is happening at the 'frontline'. Rather, if there is confidence in the lead agency to deliver, their primary role should be to support that agency in its aspirations with delivery partnerships 'emerging organically on the basis of what engages effectively'.

Such delivery partnerships should be open and responsive and seek to accommodate and shape the different values and cultures of participating groups. In the spirit of openness, they should be innovative, flexible and prepared to take risks since this work should by its very nature be difficult, challenging and innovative.

In terms of the attempts to ensure an **understanding of PF**, in the context of the prolific expansion and development of activity that the programme has supported since the three year strategy commenced in 2003, it is perhaps not surprising that some key messages have not always been received by projects entirely consistently. Although every effort has been made to communicate the PF approach and the attempt to shift away from more heavily targeted delivery models it is important to recognise that these efforts do not occur in a communicative vacuum. A whole range of perspectives tied to different funding streams are continually being presented to the agencies leading PF projects which they have to balance according to their own local needs and partner demands.

As the programme develops, more consistent understandings of the PF approach should be easier to achieve through smaller scale incremental expansion rather than the launch of fresh 'waves' of projects. On the basis of PF's regional networks and project partners' local knowledge, appropriate lead agencies embodying the characteristics identified in this report might be identified and commissioned in preference to larger scale, systematised competitive

assessments which can favour those agencies better equipped to submit funding proposals.

The roll out of the new **monitoring and evaluation** framework over the course of the next year will increasingly flag up those agencies which are not embracing the core delivery principles of the PF approach, whilst the third and final case study research report will make the first attempt to assess the impact of each of the case study projects and their delivery styles.

Bibliography

Aldridge, N. (2005) *Communities in Control: The new third sector agenda for public service reform*, London: SMF/ACEVO

Aimer, J. (2000) Using Participatory Action Research in a Local Government Setting. *Action Research E Reports, 11* www.fhs.usyd.edu.au/arow/arer/011.htm.#

Avison, D. et al Controlling Action Research Projects in Information, *Technology and People*, Vol. 14, No.1, 2001, pp28-45

Becker, H. S. (1967). Whose side are we on? *Social Problems*, 14, 239-247

Blackshaw, T. & Crabbe, T. (2004) *New perspectives on sport and deviance: Consumption, performativity and social control*, London: Routledge

Brown, A. Crabbe, T. & Mellor, G. (2006) *Football and its Communities: Final Report*, unpublished at time of press

Buhrmann, H. (1977) Athletics and deviance: An examination of the relationship between athletic participation and deviant behaviour of high school girls, *Review of Sport and Leisure*, 2, 17-35

Coalter, F. (1989) *Sport and Anti-Social Behaviour: A Literature Review*, Edinburgh: Scottish Sports Council

Collins, M., Henry, I., Houlihan, B. & Butler, J. (1999) *Sport and Social Exclusion*. Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy, Loughborough University

Collins, M. (2002) Sport and Social Exclusion, London: Routledge

Crabbe, T. (2000) 'A Sporting Chance?: using sport to tackle drug use and crime, *Drugs: education, prevention and policy*, 7, 4, pp.381-391

Crabbe, T. (2005) Getting To Know You: Engagement and Relationship Building. First Interim National Positive Futures Case Study Report.

DCMS (2000) *A Sporting Future for All*, London: HMSO

DH (2004) *Choosing Health: Making healthy choices easier*, Department of Health, London: HMSO

Delanty, G. (2003) *Community,* London: Routledge

Geertz, C. (1973) 'Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight pt 2', http://webhome. idirect.com/~boweevil/BaliCockGeertz2.html

Granovetter, M. (1973) 'The Strength of Weak Ties', *American Journal of Sociology*, 78: 1360-80

Hall, S. (1989) *The voluntary sector under ATTACK..?*, London: IVAC

Harrison, R., Mann, G., Murphy, M., Taylor, A. & Thompson, N. (2003) *Partnerships Made Painless*, Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing

Hastad, D., Segrave, J., Pangrazi, R. & Peterson, G. (1984) Youth sport participation and deviant behaviour, *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 1: 366-373

Hirst, E. & Robertshaw, D. (2003) *Breaking the cycle of failure – examining the impact of arts activity on attending Pupil Referral Units in Doncaster*, Doncaster: Darts

Hambleton, R. & Hoggett, P. (1987) *Decentralisation and Democracy*, Bristol: Advanced School of Urban Studies

Hoggett, P. (Ed.) (1997) *Contested Communities: Experiences, struggles, policies*, Bristol: The Policy Press

Home Office (2003) *Cul-de-sacs and gateways: Understanding the positive futures approach*, London: HMSO

Home Office (2005), *Raising The Bar*, Positive Futures guide to accreditation, London: HMSO

Home Office (2005) *Evaluation of Positive Futures Year 3: Survey of Positive Futures Partner Agencies*, http://www.drugs.gov.uk/publication-search/183400/PA-survey-year-3.pdf?view=Standard&pubID=250226

Long, J. & Sanderson, I. (2001) The social benefits of sport: where's the proof?, in C. Gratton & I. Henry (eds) *Sport in the City: the role of sport in economic and social regeneration*, London: Routledge

National Audit Office (2004) National Audit Office, In *Guide to the Scrutiny of Public Expenditure*, Treasury of Accountant, HM Treasury, London: HMSO

Power, M. (1997), 'The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification, London: Oxford University Press

Robins, D. (1990) *Sport as prevention, the role of sport in crime prevention programmes aimed at young people*. Centre for Criminological Research, Oxford University

Schafer, W. (1969) Some sources and consequences of interscholastic athletics: the case of participation and delinquency, *International Review of Sport Sociology*, 4, 63-79

Snydor, E. (1994) Interpretations and Explanations of Deviance Among College Athletes: A Case Study, *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 11, 231-248

Williamson, G. Action research: politics, ethics and participation, *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 40 (5)587-593, 2002

Appendix 1: Project Visit Assessment Criteria	
Criteria	**Relevant evidence**
Staff	
Delivery	Project staff involvement; range of staff skills
Rapport	Familiarity with participants – recognition, knowledge of names, circumstances, peers and aspirations
Management	Degree of autonomy given to staff; avoidance of bureaucratic structures
Training and support	Degree of engagement with WQI and use of training
Accommodation	
Facilities	Accessibility to participants; safety of facilities
Location	Accessibility to participants
Office culture	Co-operative, flexible and open styles of working
Programme	
Progression pathways	Access to exit routes, training, volunteering and employment opportunities
Timing and duration	Preference for open ended over fixed term programmes and year round provision
Targeting and accessibility	Appropriate social background of participants; over reliance on formal referral mechanisms
Engagement strategies and style of delivery	Use of outreach approaches, home visits, cold contact with young people
Breadth	Over extension of geographic focus of work
Development and sustainability	Expansion of provision both in terms of delivery and creation of progression pathways
Partnerships	
Commissioning agents	Range of funding sources
Referral agencies	Mix of formal and informal referral pathways
Host organisations	Range of appropriate and welcoming venues
Delivery agents	Informal delivery partnerships
Strategic partners	Effective steering groups with regular attendance
Exit partners	Well used participant progression routes
M & E	
Evidence collection	Use of different tiers of monitoring framework
Interpretation and internal reflection	Reviews of participant progress and engagement levels
Reporting and dissemination	Completion and standard of Annual Report; sharing of information with partners
Communication	
Participants	Participant influence on and awareness of activities
Residents	Involvement in and awareness of programme
Partners	Distribution of materials; invitation to AGM, open days and events; transparency of project
Opinion Formers	Local networks and use of media