

Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities

July 2007



HM TREASURY

department for
children, schools and families



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A VISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 In the context of ongoing education and youth service reforms, this document sets out a strategy to transform leisure-time opportunities, activities and support services for young people in England.

1.2 The development of this Strategy – the last strand of the Government’s Policy Review of Children and Young People to be published – has informed the outcomes of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). It sets out aspirations for what services should achieve over the next 10 years and identifies priorities for spending unclaimed assets – funds in dormant bank accounts which, as proposed in the recent consultation document, are to be released for investment in services for young people, in addition to supporting financial inclusion and supporting financial capability.

1.3 Delivering this Strategy, and wider reform of services and support for young people, will depend on the commitment of Local Authorities and the full range of local partners, including the third sector, parents and young people themselves. At national level, implementation of this Strategy will be led by the new Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), which will provide strong and more strategic leadership across Government to improve youth outcomes.

ADOLESCENCE – A TIME OF OPPORTUNITY AND CHALLENGE

1.4 Adolescence is an exciting time of life, characterised by new opportunities and significant change. It is a distinct developmental stage in which dramatic neurological changes affect brain function and behaviour. It is also a crucial transition period in which young people take increasing responsibility for themselves, their relationships and the decisions about their lives that shape their future prospects.

1.5 Young people’s experiences shape their personal characteristics, attitudes and aspirations, which can determine how they respond to the choices, opportunities and challenges they face both in adolescence and adulthood.

1.6 A wide range of factors influence young people’s transition to adulthood. They include:

- their experience of the education system and labour market;
- the society and culture in which they grow up;
- their relationships with parents and families; and
- their experiences with their peers and in their leisure time.

Labour market and the education system

1.7 The last 30 years have seen major changes in the nature and demands of employment. Globalisation has changed the types of work available and the skills needed to succeed. Higher level qualifications and education beyond the age of 16 are becoming increasingly important to gaining reward in the workplace and instrumental in maximising the full potential of the UK economy. Teenagers recognise this and overwhelmingly view doing well at school or college as important to them¹. In one study,² 88 per cent of students agreed that it was now more important than ever that students get higher level qualifications such as A Levels.

“Knowing how to kick a ball around isn’t going to get you a job.” Young person³

1.8 In addition to academic and technical skills, increasingly employers are also looking for evidence of the ability to work in a team or to manage relationships with others⁴ – skills which also help protect against wider social exclusion. Today’s education system offers unprecedented levels of choice and diversity to prepare young people for these demands.

Society & Culture

1.9 Today’s young people are growing up in a society and culture characterised by consumerism and the increasing use of technology. Their identity, confidence and social acceptability is often strongly linked to their consumer behaviour, with brands increasingly shaping the aspirations, values and possessions they believe are important and acceptable⁵.

‘I feel real pressure to have all the best brands and labels, not just from my mates but from adverts and the way things are sold to us.’ Young person⁶

1.10 In addition, mobile and internet technology have revolutionised their social interactions, bringing independence to, and empowering, their communications.

1.11 Young people are also faced with the challenge of growing up in a culture that has widespread negative perceptions of youth. Adults and the media commonly associate young people with problems such as anti-social behaviour – 71 per cent of media stories about young people are negative, a third of articles about young people are about crime⁷, and almost a third of adults think that ‘young people hanging around’ is a major problem in their neighbourhood. Young people are keenly aware of their reputation in the community, with 98 per cent of them feeling that the media portrays them as anti-social.⁸

¹ 2005 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey, Home Office, DfES Internal Analysis, 2007 (unpublished)

² GCSE and A Level, The Experience of Teachers, Students, Parents and the General Public, Ipsos Mori, 2006

³ Government’s Policy Review of Children & Young People, Dialogue with Young People, 2006

⁴ National Employers Skills Survey, Learning & Skills Council, 2005

⁵ Bringing Children (and Parents) into the Sociology of Consumption, Martens, L., Southerton, D., Scott S. Journal of Consumer Culture, 4, 155-182, 2004

⁶ Youth Report 2005, Superbrands, Phatgnat

⁷ Young People and the Media, Mori/Young People Now, 2005

⁸ Respect? The Voice Behind the Hood. YouthNet and the British Youth Council, 2006

“Young people are portrayed as violent and lazy, and adults have a negative image, but realistically most teens are not like this.”

“Of all the young people in newspapers, TV and radio, none of them represent any of my friends, or any younger person I know.”

“The media should focus more on the majority of children who work hard at school and do achieve their potential.”
Young people⁹

1.12 Sometimes, these views have been an unintended consequence of Government policies to tackle some serious problems affecting the lives of some teenagers. Rather than presenting a positive vision for youth development, national priorities and local services have been organised and targeted around avoiding and addressing problems, such as crime, substance misuse, or teenage pregnancy. While it is right to continue to focus on addressing these issues, and to deal firmly with young people who are causing harm to their neighbourhoods and themselves, it is also important to be aware of the influence this has on popular perceptions.

Parents and families **1.13** Parents and families are the strongest influence in young people’s lives, significantly shaping their values and aspirations¹⁰. Importantly, parents’ aspirations for their children tend to be influenced and limited by their own experiences. For example, parents from lower socio-economic groups or with lower level qualifications are more likely to think their children will ‘peak’ at GCSEs than parents from higher social classes or with higher qualifications.¹¹

1.14 The last 30 years has seen major changes in the timing and rates of family separation and reformation in Britain, with people marrying later in life and more couples separating. In 2001 nearly a third of children lived in either lone parent or step parent families – higher than in any other EU country. As a consequence, 40 per cent of mothers spend some time as a lone parent¹². Family breakdown can also lead to other unsettling changes in young people’s lives, for example in housing, financial circumstances and schools.¹³

Peers and leisure time **1.15** Friends and peers naturally become increasingly important during the teenage years, peaking in influence at around the age of 15.¹⁴ Within their peer groups, young people experiment with, and develop, their sense of self-identity,¹⁵ mirroring their friends’ behaviours and attitudes, both positive and negative. Peers can also have a small influence on academic attainment, particularly for boys and those from poorer backgrounds. Despite the heightening need for peer approval, parents’ behaviour and values continue to be a strong influence on teenagers’ interests and goals, and their choice of friends who share their values and reinforce them.

⁹ *Implementing Youth Matters, Continuing the Dialogue with Young People*, DfES (unpublished), 2007

¹⁰ *Changing Youth Transitions in the 21st Century: A synthesis of findings from the ESRC research programme*, Catan, L, 2004

¹¹ *Omnibus for the Sutton Trust*, IPSOS MORI 2006,

¹² Ermisch, J. & Francesconi, M., *The Increasing Complexity of Family Relationships: Lifetime Experience of Lone Motherhood and Stepfamilies in Great Britain*. *European Journal of Population*, 16, 235-249, 2000

¹³ *Family Change and Child Well Being*. Smith, M, ESRC/DfES Public Policy Seminar, London, 2007

¹⁴ *Supporting Parents of Teenagers*, Cole et al, 2001, cited in Asmussen et al, DfES, 2007

¹⁵ *Socialization and Self-development. Channelling, Selection, Adjustment and Reflection*. Nurmi, J E, In Lerner, R and Steinberg L. *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology*, 2004

“You can’t have a good childhood without friends, every child needs friends”

Young Person¹⁶

1.16 Young people are increasingly spending time in social, rather than family situations. British teenagers spend more time with their peers and less time with parents than young people in many other European countries.¹⁷

1.17 Evidence shows that how young people spend their leisure-time really matters. Participation in constructive leisure-time activities, particularly those that are sustained through the teenage years, can have a significant impact on young people’s resilience and outcomes in later life.¹⁸ International evidence demonstrates that participation in positive activities can: help to improve attitudes to, and engagement with, school; build social and communication skills; help young people avoid taking risks such as experimenting with drugs or being involved in anti-social behaviour or crime; and improve their self-confidence and self-esteem.¹⁹ Participation can also help increase the resilience of young people who are trying to rebuild their lives – for example young offenders who are trying to change their behaviours and lifestyles.

1.18 Participation in positive activities also provides opportunities for building relationships with positive role models, and for mixing with, and bridging gaps between, young people from different ethnic and faith groups as well as different generations – thereby building community cohesion. They can also act as a gateway to support services, which can provide additional help if and when things start to go wrong.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RESILIENCE & SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

1.19 The influences described above are reshaping the nature of adolescence and the transition to adulthood, creating greater, and more varied, opportunities and risks. It is becoming increasingly important that young people develop the skills which will enable them to take advantage of these opportunities, and to manage and respond to risks and challenges as they emerge.

“Most young people don’t know what to aspire to. They need to be given the personal skills and confidence to go out and be what they want to be.” Young person²⁰

1.20 These skills are known as social and emotional skills. They describe a wide range of attitudes, beliefs and levels of understanding, including young people’s self-awareness; their ability to manage their feelings; their motivations; their level of empathy with others; and their social skills. They help to shape young people’s self-esteem, how they feel about themselves, how they feel about others from different backgrounds, and the extent to which they take control of their own lives.

¹⁶ *Good Childhood: What You Told Us About Friends*, the Children’s Society, 2007

¹⁷ *Freedom’s Orphans – Raising Youth in a Changing World*, Dixon, Margo, Pearce and Reed, Institute for Public Policy Research, 2006

¹⁸ *Leisure Contexts in Adolescence and their Effects on Adult Outcomes: A More Complete Picture*, Feinstein, L and Robson, K, May 2007

¹⁹ *List of all Out-of-School Time Program Evaluations*, Harvard Family Research Project, published at www.harvard.edu, 2007

²⁰ *Government’s Policy Review of Children & Young People*, Dialogue with Young People, op cit.

Box 1.1 Social and emotional skills help young people to:

- become more resilient, rising to challenges when things get tough;
- learn to manage their impulses, settle and concentrate;
- build warm relationships, empathise and care what others think;
- begin to take control of their own health;
- manage strong and uncomfortable emotions such as anger and frustration;
- learn to feel good about themselves – reducing the likelihood of disruptive behaviour or behaviour that could damage their health;
- manage anxiety and stress, including around tests and exams;
- reflect on longer term goals, raise their aspirations and become more able to resist negative pressure from others; and
- feel optimistic about themselves and their ability to learn, improving motivation and participation.

1.21 *Aiming high for children: supporting families*, set out compelling evidence that these skills directly influence not only how young people learn and achieve, but also their success in the labour market and the likelihood of them experiencing poorer outcomes such as becoming a teenage parent or being involved in crime. For example:

- thinking and learning are inhibited by stress; feeling secure and valued promotes learning, whilst anger and unhappiness obstruct it;²¹
- among students with the same IQ, those with problematic classroom behaviours, such as inattention, demonstrate lower academic achievement;²²
- children with behavioural problems at age 11 are less likely to be employed, or earn a lower wage, at age 42;²³ and
- the risk of teenage pregnancy is increased for girls with lower self-esteem than their peers.²⁴

1.22 While most young people are thriving, evidence is clear that disproportionately it is young people from poorer backgrounds and communities who lack the circumstances through which they develop these skills, and so are at greater risk of poor outcomes. Those who do not have a supportive family environment, who are struggling at school, or who do not participate regularly in constructive activities in their leisure time are also at risk. Growing up with a combination of these circumstances can, for a minority of young people, lead to disaffection and at the most extreme, marginalisation from society.

²¹ *Emotional Growth and Learning*. Greenhaigh, P, London, Canada & USA, Routledge. Quoted in *Fade Or Flourish; How Primary Schools Can Build On Children's Early Progress*. Wood, C and Caulier-Grice, J. 2006 Social Market Foundation, 1994

²² *Clarifying The Relationship Between Academic Success and Overt Classroom Behaviour' in Exceptional Children 1969* Swift, M.S., and Spivack, G, Oct; 36(2):99-104, 1969

²³ *Which Skills Matter* Carneiro P, Crawford C, Goodman A, CEE Paper No CEEDP0059, 2006

²⁴ *Self-Esteem: The Costs and Causes of Low Self-Worth*, Emler, Jn., York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2001

1.23 In combination, these factors have contributed to the comparatively low level of social mobility in this country. Despite early signs that the decline in social mobility has plateaued for younger generations, it still suggests young people's outcomes are determined largely by their backgrounds.²⁵

THE GOVERNMENT'S VISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

1.24 The Government's vision is for all young people to enjoy happy, healthy and safe teenage years that prepare them well for adult life and enable them to reach their full potential – in short, to achieve the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes and be on the path to success. Young people should be valued members of society, whose achievements and contributions are welcomed and celebrated. This means society viewing young people positively, not seeing them as a problem to be solved.

1.25 All young people should have access to the support and opportunities they want and need to:

- succeed in education and continue participating in learning until the age of 18;
- take part in activities that develop their resilience and the social and emotional skills they need for life, and enjoy their leisure time;
- make a real contribution to society, using their energy and dynamism to bring about change;
- be emotionally and physically healthy and able to cope with the demands of adolescence and becoming an adult; and
- grow up in a safe and supportive environment.

1.26 While this vision applies to all young people, action to deliver it should be focused on providing support and opportunities to those for whom this vision will be hardest to achieve.

Progress so far

1.27 Considerable progress has already been made:

- attainment and participation in learning are at their highest rates ever – the proportion of young people leaving school with five or more good GCSEs has risen from 46 per cent in 1997 to 59 per cent in 2006, with the biggest improvements in the most deprived schools;²⁶
- record numbers of 16-year-olds, close to 9 out of 10, were in some form of further learning²⁷ in 2006 and 71 per cent of 19-year-olds had a level 2 qualification, exceeding the Government's target by 2.1 per cent;²⁸

²⁵ Feinstein. op cit

²⁶ *National Curriculum Assessments, GCSE and Equivalent Attainment and Post-16 Attainment by Pupil Characteristics, England, 2005/06*, DfES, 2007

²⁷ *Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 year olds in England:2005 and 2006*, DfES, 2007

²⁸ *Level 2 and 3 Attainment by Young People in England Measured Using Matched Administrative Data: Attainment by Age 19 in 2006*, Statistical First Release 06/2007, DfES,2007

- more young people are volunteering than any other age group and making a positive contribution in their communities – in 2005 around half of 16-19s were providing informal help within their communities, while a third were formal volunteers;²⁹
- rates of teenage pregnancy are at their lowest for twenty years – with conception rates for both under 16s and under 18s falling;³⁰ and
- the use of ‘any drug’ in the past year among those aged 16 to 24 has decreased from over 30 per cent in 1998 to 26 per cent in 2004/05.³¹

1.28 These successes are due in large part to *Every Child Matters* reforms, and the work and commitment of Local Authorities, schools, local partners and third sector organisations in implementing them. The foundations have also been laid for improving provision in and outside school over the next ten years through the implementation of 14-19 and *Youth Matters* reforms.

Success in school **1.29** The Government set out its long-term vision for the education and training system, particularly for increasing participation and achievement post-16, in *14-19 Education and Skills*. Through the implementation of 14-19 curriculum and qualifications reform and a continued emphasis on personalisation, young people will experience more engaging and relevant education and training. From 2008, 14 new diplomas will bring together the best of learning in the workplace with learning in school and college; all young people will be achieving a recognised level of functional English and Maths; and there will be an expansion in apprenticeships, with a place for all those who want one by 2013. This will provide all young people with more choice and influence over their learning, raising participation and achievement – which are key factors in breaking the cycle of deprivation.

²⁹2005 Citizenship Survey: Active Communities Topic Report, DCLG, 2006

³⁰Health Statistics Quarterly, National Statistic s2007

³¹ British Crime Survey: Battling Crime for 25 years, Jansson, K, 2006

Box 1.3 14-19 Reforms

Over time, 14-19 reforms will affect all young people going through secondary education.

Changes to the curriculum at Key Stage 3 and beyond are being introduced gradually from September 2008. These include: the introduction of the new Diploma qualifications for 14-19 year olds which will provide a mix of traditional and work-based learning; new functional skills qualifications, which will act as a guarantee that all students have the basic skills in English, maths and ICT; changes to GCSE coursework and content in some subjects, and changes to A level including the introduction of the A* grade. More young people will be doing Apprenticeships, and some will study the International Baccalaureate.

The new Diplomas are central to the reforms, as they fill a gap in the current qualifications available for young people, and widen the choice of learning routes, and learning styles from 14 onwards. Diplomas offer a new curriculum, based around broad occupational sectors that combine essential skills and knowledge, hands-on experience and employer focussed-learning.

Young people of all abilities will be able to study for a Diploma and there will be a national entitlement from 2013 in 14 lines of learning at Foundation, Diploma and Advanced level. They will sit alongside, and may incorporate, A levels, GCSEs and other qualifications. From 2008 they will be available in selected areas of the country in 5 subject lines: Engineering; Construction and the Built Environment; Information Technology; Society, Health and Development; and Creative and Media.

1.30 However, there is more to do to ensure that all young people benefit from these opportunities, given that participation in learning and attainment are vital to young people's later life chances. For this reason, the Government has set out its intention to legislate to raise the age to which young people will be required to stay in learning to 17 by 2013 and 18 by 2015.

**Success
outside school**

1.31 Securing all young people's success cannot be achieved through the education and training system in isolation. Schools, colleges and wider services need to work together closely to remove barriers to learning, promote young people's personal development and support participation in activities beyond the school day. *Youth Matters* put young people's aspirations and needs at the heart of services. It set out reform of local youth support services to ensure that they receive a more coordinated, more responsive offer of support when they start to experience difficulties, and renewed the commitment to teenagers facing disadvantage. For the first time, it gave young people real influence and power over their services and set out a clear offer of the activities and opportunities they can expect.

1.32 All local areas are in the process of integrating their youth support services to improve local responsiveness to young people's needs and support their participation in learning. By 2008, local integrated youth support services will be:

- working to prevent problems occurring, rather than simply intervening when they do;
- working together more effectively to support the positive development of all young people, but with a clear focus on those experiencing disadvantage;
- providing improved information, advice and guidance to young people to support them to make better choices both in and outside learning;

- offering a comprehensive range of positive leisure-time activities and opportunities for young people, including those offered by extended schools, underpinned by a new duty on Local Authorities to secure young people's access to them; and
- providing targeted support for the most vulnerable teenagers involving tailored packages of education, informal learning opportunities, and personal support to help address more complex problems.

1.33 The roll-out of extended schools is central to this, increasingly enabling youth support services and schools to combine effectively to meet the aspirations and needs of teenagers in their communities. Over 1000 secondary schools are currently offering young people access to a range of extended services, including activities before and after school and in the holidays, and specialist support from services such as health and social care. All schools are expected to become extended schools by 2010, working with a wide range of local agencies and community organisations.

More to do

1.34 Despite the progress and reforms above, there remain some significant and stubborn challenges that largely relate to the continuing impact of disadvantage on young people's life chances. Compared to other similar countries, some of our teenagers fare poorly. For example:

- only 33 per cent of teenagers from disadvantaged backgrounds achieved 5A*-Cs at 16 in 2006: this compares to 57 per cent of all pupils achieving the same level;³²
- the rates of 16 – 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) have remained largely the same;³³
- high risk behaviours are more prevalent than in other EU countries – young people are more likely to misuse substances, have sex early, and drink alcohol under age;³⁴
- rates of youth offending and anti-social behaviour are static;³⁵
- levels of poor mental health are relatively high. In 2004, 10 per cent of those aged 5 – 16 had a clinically diagnosable mental disorder. The incidence increases with disadvantage: 18 per cent of boys and 13 per cent of girls aged 5 – 16 years living in households with a gross weekly income of under £100 had a mental disorder;³⁶

³² *National Curriculum Assessments, GCSE and Equivalent Attainment and Post-16 Attainment by Pupil Characteristics in England, Revised National Statistics SFR 04/2007*

³³ *Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 year olds in England: 2005 and 2006, DfES, 2007*

³⁴ *An Overview of Child Well-being in Rich Countries, Innocenti Report Card 7, UNICEF 2007*

³⁵ *Young People and Crime: Findings from the Offending, Crime and Justice Survey, Home Office Report 17/06, 2006*

³⁶ *Mental Health of Children and Young People in Great Britain Green, H., McGinnity, A., Meltzer, H., Ford, T. and Goodman, R, 2005*

- levels of obesity have increased rapidly over the past ten years and the incidence of sexually transmitted infections, including chlamydia and gonorrhoea have also risen substantially, impacting on health and fertility³⁷; and
- Black boys and young Black men are less likely to do well at school, more likely to be unemployed, and much more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system than their peers.³⁸

1.35 This does not mean teenagers are in crisis. Most, in fact, are doing better than ever before. But new pressures and influences are making progress more unstable, particularly for those without supportive families. And there remains a small but significant group of young people who are not benefiting from the opportunities that Government has created in the last decade and who need further support to build their resilience against risk. For these young people, entrenched personal problems and social exclusion have meant that they have often been beyond the reach of the public services designed to help them.

1.36 While current reforms in education and youth support services outside school will greatly increase the chances of meeting these challenges, they may not be enough. To respond to the continually changing world, there is a need to do more to help teenagers develop the skills they need for life.

Social and emotional skills

1.37 As set out earlier in this chapter, improved social and emotional skills are essential to building young people's resilience and allowing them to fulfil their potential. These skills help to shape how young people view themselves, their level of self-esteem and aspiration and the extent to which they can take control of their own lives. They are essential for learning, better health, and developing the resilience and capability to manage more complex transitions to adulthood. A lack of these skills may also be one of the root causes of the poor behaviour of a minority of teenagers, as well as behaviour that damages their health. The key challenge is that the most disadvantaged young people are less likely to acquire these skills, leaving them at greater risk of developing poor outcomes.³⁹

1.38 There are three environments in which young people learn and develop these skills:

- at home;
- through their education; and
- through what they do in their leisure time.

1.39 *Aiming high for children: supporting families* set out measures to increase the support teenagers receive to develop their social and emotional skills. This included proposals to roll out the successful⁴⁰ Social and Emotional Aspect of Learning (SEAL) programme in secondary schools and increase disadvantaged young people's access to

³⁷ *Statistics on Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet: England; Source: Annual Report (2006) HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Infections in the UK*, Health Protection Agency, DH, 2006

³⁸ *Differences or Discrimination? Youth Justice Board*, Feilzer, M and Hood, R, 2004

³⁹ *The Cost of Exclusion: Counting the Cost of Youth Disadvantage in the UK*, Henally, S and Shgipanja, T, Princes Trust, 2007

⁴⁰ *Developing Social, Emotional and Behavioural Skills in Secondary Schools, a Five Term Longitudinal Evaluation of the Secondary National Strategy Pilot* OFSTED, Ref 070048, 2007

positive activities through extended schools. It also set out how plans to enhance support for parents to provide the environment in which their children can thrive.

Focus on positive activities **I.40** Recent evidence confirms that participation in positive activities, and support and guidance from trusted professionals and adults, play an important role in enabling young people to gain these skills.⁴¹ It also shows that disadvantaged young people are significantly less likely to participate and to have the same range of diverse opportunities that many other young people get through parents who value, and can afford, such activities. As a consequence, young people without these skills may be further disadvantaged.

I.41 The reforms put in place by *Youth Matters* to increase young people's participation in positive activities provide the foundation for this Strategy. But the increasing importance of the quality of young people's experience in their leisure time means that there is more to do. Roughly a quarter of young people do not participate in positive activities. Young people have made it clear how important having rich and diverse experiences out of school are to them and told the Review what they want to see from services. Over the next ten years, the London Olympic and Paralympic Games will provide a unique opportunity to engage more young people in sport and other positive activities. This, and other opportunities, are discussed further in Chapter 4.

Building community cohesion **I.42** There is also a clear need to dispel negative perceptions of young people by building better relations between the generations, as well as between different ethnic and faith groups, fostering better community cohesion, and generating a stronger sense of collective responsibility for our children and young people. Poor perceptions of young people are not new. However, the level of fear and mistrust at play today undermines community cohesion and corrodes the stake young people need to feel they have in society.

I.43 As set out in *Our Shared Future*,⁴² work with young people is a critical starting point for tackling the tensions between different groups in the community. Positive activities, particularly through volunteering and inter-generational activities, can help to build better relations across the generations and between different groups of young people.

Focus of this strategy **I.44** This Strategy therefore sets out a series of new commitments to transform opportunities for young people and strengthen the reform of youth support services. It aims to:

- foster a more positive approach to young people across society and in particular within communities;
- increase their participation in high quality positive activities, which build resilience and social and emotional skills; and
- empower young people to have greater influence over services for them, with parents and communities playing their part.

⁴¹ Feinstein, op cit,

⁴² *The Final Report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007*

Box 1.3: A vision for opportunities and support for young people

By 2018:

- all young people will have access to a diverse and attractive local offer of purposeful, engaging and exciting positive activities and places to go that responds to their needs and supports their personal development, including providing routes into more dedicated support and guidance for those who need it;
- disadvantage will no longer be a barrier to accessing local opportunities and activities will be popular with young people from a wide range of different backgrounds, faiths and ethnicities, actively bringing them together;
- parents will be fully informed about the available opportunities and have confidence in their ability to support their teenagers' personal development; and
- communities will play their part in providing opportunities and support for young people, building stronger and more trusting relationships across the generations.

THEMES AND PRINCIPLES FOR REFORM

1.45 This Strategy sets out reforms to achieve this vision, drawing on the evidence collected for the Policy Review of Children and Young People.⁴³ This evidence suggested three themes for reform:

- **Empowerment** – when young people have the opportunity to influence services they are more likely to find them attractive and to access and benefit from them. More marginalised young people can find formal processes unappealing and will need additional support to influence provision. Communities can also play a powerful role in improving and raising the priority of youth support services in their area;
- **Access** – young people often face barriers to accessing activities and support services. These can be practical, such as lack of information, cost, transport or safety issues; or personal, for instance a lack of confidence or low aspirations. Supporting young people to overcome these barriers is crucial to engaging and supporting all, particularly those facing disadvantage; and
- **Quality** – only high quality services have a real impact on young people's outcomes. Research and front-line experience are revealing more about the key features of high quality youth support services and face-to-face work with young people.

⁴³ Government's Policy Review of Children and Young People: a Discussion Paper HMT/DfES, 2007

Box 1.4 The evidence underpinning this Strategy

The development of this Strategy has been informed by the views of young people, including:

- the 19,000 young people who responded to the *Youth Matters* consultation;
- almost 3,000 young people whose views were gathered through the recent consultation: *Implementing Youth Matters, Continuing the Dialogue with Young People*; and
- the young people who took part in six regional dialogues as part of the Policy Review of Children and Young People.

This Strategy also builds on the wider evidence base that was gathered to inform the Policy Review of Children and Young People including:

- consultation events with parents, practitioners, commissioners of services from public agencies or the third sector, academics and others with relevant expertise;
- workshops, meetings and field visits with experts and relevant projects;
- research studies and evaluations of interventions to support young people; and
- around 100 responses to the Review's public Call for Evidence.

1.46 These themes reinforce one another. Empowering young people and communities to influence provision will help to drive up quality and ensure that local barriers to access are identified and addressed. Similarly, raising the quality of provision is crucial if all services are to reach out to and support all young people, including the most disaffected, to access the opportunities and services available.

1.47 The development of this Strategy has also been informed by the Government's three core principles for public service reform:

- **Progressive universalism** – to ensure that all young people benefit, with more support for those who need it. It is essential that, within universal services, efforts are focused on the most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people and on intervening early to prevent problems escalating;
- **Prevention** – to build the resilience of all young people before they get into difficulties, and help them cope if they do. This recognises that while many young people will need support at some point, services cannot always predict who or when this will be; and
- An emphasis on **rights and responsibilities** – that makes clear that while young people, parents and communities have the right to excellent quality youth support services, in return, they have a responsibility to get involved in addressing the issues faced by young people and help improve what is on offer.

DELIVERING THE VISION

1.48 Delivering this vision and achieving successful reform depends on the drive and cooperation of local partners to improve outcomes for young people. It is Local Authorities that will take the lead, through Children's Trust arrangements, to deliver the vision as part of their ongoing Every Child Matters: Change for Children programmes. This is consistent with the principle underpinning the Local Government White Paper –

that it is Local Authorities' role to take strategic leadership to bring together partners to improve local services and the quality of citizens' lives.

1.49 At national level, the implementation of this Strategy will be led by the new Department for Children, Schools and Families, which will bring together all key aspects of policy focusing on children and young people.

1.50 This new department will create a stronger and more strategic focus on youth outcomes at the heart of Government, bringing together more closely work on the reform of youth support services, 14-19 reforms, Respect and preventing youth offending. It will take the lead across Government to ensure that all young people are on the path to success, steering and supporting efforts at the front line.

2

POSITIVE ACTIVITIES: IMPROVING OUTCOMES

INTRODUCTION

2.1 Young people’s experiences influence their outcomes not only throughout adolescence but also in later life. Experiences in adolescence will be both positive and negative, and specific factors in young people’s lives can protect them from risks they may face. Importantly, their experiences during the teenage years combine to shape their character, their personal attributes, and their level of resilience.

2.2 Young people who grow up in stable and supportive families and achieve at school are likely to be more successful as adults than those who do not. Those who grow up in low-income families, experience poor parenting, suffer negative peer or community effects, or struggle at school are more at risk of experiencing negative outcomes. These outcomes are often life-changing, such as getting involved in crime or anti-social behaviour, dropping out of education or becoming a teenage parent.

2.3 This chapter outlines the evidence for how, and in what ways, young people’s leisure time experiences and the activities in which they participate, impact on their outcomes. It looks at specific types of activity, the effects of how and where they are delivered, and the key characteristics of successful provision.

RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS – THE IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

2.4. Understanding the impact of risk on children and young people’s lives, and the protective influences which counteract them, has been a key priority for the Government in recent years.

2.5 The evidence set out in *Aiming high for children: supporting families* sets out why this understanding is important. All children and young people are exposed to risk as they grow up. Where multiple risks combine – for example poor housing, lack of parental interest, irregular school attendance, or poor physical or mental health – there is an increased likelihood of poor outcomes. While the term ‘risk’ implies the possibility of a negative outcome, young people experiencing risk factors are not inevitably on a pathway to exclusion later in life.¹ This is because young people can develop resilience to risk through exposure to protective factors. These risk and protective factors vary over time and in different circumstances.

2.6 Protective influences exist in various spheres of young people’s lives – at home, at school, in the community – and in the personal characteristics which they inherit or acquire, such as intelligence, language skills, behaviour and attitudes. The more protective influences that are in place – such as loving parents who provide consistent discipline, attentive teachers, or a supportive community – the greater the chance of young people developing the resilience they need to avoid negative outcomes in later life.²

¹ *Offenders of the Future? Assessing the Risk of Children and Young People Becoming Involved in Criminal or Antisocial Behaviour*, McCarthy, P, Laing, K and Walker, DfES RR 545. J, 2004,

² McCarthy, P et al , 2004, *op cit*

2.7 In the context of the changing nature of transitions discussed in Chapter 1, it is more important than ever that young people develop resilience to cope with the challenges they face. *Aiming high for children; supporting families* identified three key factors that help to build resilience:

- academic attainment;
- positive parenting; and
- social and emotional skills.

2.8 The Government has already made significant progress in supporting attainment and is doing more to promote positive parenting. However, as the evidence set out in Chapter 1 showed, social and emotional skills are increasingly important to young people's outcomes and there is more to do to promote young people's development of these skills, particularly for those at risk of poor outcomes.

The benefits of positive activities

Personal benefits

2.9 What young people do in their leisure time can influence their future outcomes. Evidence shows that young people's participation in positive leisure time activities, as well as offering enjoyable and exciting opportunities, also supports the development of resilience through building social and emotional skills. Good quality youth activities help build important characteristics that are increasingly necessary for capitalising on the opportunities available to young people and for overcoming disadvantage.³ This includes the capacity to plan for the future, moral maturity, and levels of self-control.

2.10 Participation in positive activities also protects against poor outcomes and helps counteract negative influences. It helps young people to feel good about themselves and their chances in life by developing their confidence and self-esteem, their motivation and aspirations. These characteristics can impact on their attitudes at school, the company they keep outside of school, and whether they take risks with their health or get involved in anti-social and criminal behaviour.

2.11 Crucially, in the context of the Government's drive to raise educational attainment, positive activities can support young people's participation in learning – particularly for those disaffected from school.

2.12 Organised activities are a common feature of the lives of more affluent young people. But for those from less affluent homes, a lack of the same opportunities reinforces the disadvantages they already face as a result of their parents' lower levels of education and lack of influential networks.⁴

Community cohesion

2.13 As well as benefiting young people individually, positive activities have an important role in developing community cohesion, particularly in bridging the gaps between young people from different ethnic and faith groups as well as improving relationships across different generations.

³ *Freedoms's Orphans, Raising youth in a changing world*, Margo, J et al, Institute for Public Policy Research, 2006.

⁴ *Unequal Chances: Class, Race and Family Life*, Lareau, A, University of California Press, 2003

2.14 Despite the negative portrayal of young people in the media, parents, carers and wider communities say that improving activities for young people is a priority above all other local services.⁵ When young people have somewhere to go and something positive to do in their free time, communities see the benefits. This is about more than reduced concerns over anti-social behaviour; it is also about adults seeing young people making a positive contribution to society.

2.15 Access to safe places to go and positive activities also reduces the likelihood of involvement in anti-social behaviour or crime.

“When I go out with my friends we are just hanging around the streets. Just like all the other young people here. Because there is nothing to do, young people decide to commit crime. Providing something to do would keep the kids off the street in a safe place and help stop crime.” Young person⁶

2.16 In areas where there are patterns of residential and educational separation between young people from different ethnic and faith backgrounds, activities can provide opportunities for them to mix, help them learn about each other and dispel prejudice.

Box 2.1: Bradford Youth Development Partnership

Bradford Youth Development Partnership’s (BYDP) mission is to work with children and young people across the city to innovate, develop and manage youth initiatives and programmes that will have a positive impact on young people. The organisation adopts partnership approaches to help young people to participate in civic life. BYDP’s projects create opportunities for young people to go outside their neighbourhoods and cultures, bringing them closer to others through activities that require co-operation and working together with a specific purpose.

Activities have been located in areas that have experienced challenges to cohesion, such as far right extremism, lack of support for minority ethnic groups and disengaged white communities. Through creating the opportunity for interaction with residents from other communities, BYDP is implementing a strategy which promotes integration and counteracts opportunities for extremism. All activities are cross-cultural, cross faith and are aimed at bringing young people together. Principles of equality, diversity and community cohesion are mainstreamed rather than distinctive themes.

Access to wider support

2.17 For most young people, their parents or other adults in the family will support them to take part and benefit from opportunities. But for those facing disadvantage, the support and motivation they receive from other adults – professional youth workers and volunteers alike – can be life changing, by providing new role models who raise aspirations. Participation in positive activities can also provide a route for wider youth support services to reach out to disaffected or vulnerable young people. But to achieve this, young people want access to support in places where they feel comfortable and from people they can trust.

⁵ *Physical Capital, Liveability in 2005*, MORI Research Institute

⁶ *Implementing Youth Matters, Continuing the Dialogue with Young People*, DfES (unpublished), 2007

“Youth workers are really important to us to get us to do activities, to get us places, to give us support and help.”
Young person⁷

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL PROVISION

2.18 New British research confirms the importance of participation in positive activities for future outcomes.⁸ This explored survey participants’ leisure time activities during their youth, and looked at who went on to become socially excluded as adults. Participation was recorded in four types of activities: sports and community centres; youth clubs; uniformed youth clubs; and church based activities.

2.19 The most striking finding is that, even after accounting for the effects of low income or difficult family background, the activities young people engaged in had a significant additional association with their chances of later adult social exclusion. For example, while 20 per cent of individuals in the study did not have a level 2 qualification at age 30, this virtually halved, to only 11 per cent, for those who regularly attended sports clubs and went to church as teenagers. Those who had attended a sports club and church-based activities more than once a week were also significantly less likely than peers who otherwise shared the same characteristics to have become teenage parents or to be single, separated or divorced. Finally, and importantly, the research shows that participation in a combination of different activities generally supports better outcomes.

2.20 A substantial body of US research supports these findings.⁹ The Harvard Family Research Project (2003), for example, found out-of-school activities to be linked to a wide range of positive outcomes, including improved attitudes to drug and alcohol use; decreases in delinquency and violent behaviour; increased knowledge and practice of safe sex; and increased skills for coping with peer pressure. There was also evidence of decreased behavioural problems and improved social and communication skills, self-confidence and self-esteem. Clearly what young people do in their leisure time, and with whom they do it, matters.

⁷ *Cutting the Cake Consultation*, National Youth Agency, 2007

⁸ *Leisure Contexts in Adolescence and their Effects on Adult Outcomes: a More Complete Picture*, Feinstein, L and Robson, K, 2007

⁹ *A Review of ‘Out-of-School Time’ Program Quasi-Experimental and Experimental Evaluation Results*, Harvard Family Research Project, 2003; Catalano et al, *Positive Youth Development in the US: research findings on evaluations of Positive Youth development Programs*, 2004

Box 2.2 How positive activities can improve outcomes

While the characteristics of the activity matter more than the actual activity itself, the evidence shows different kinds can give rise to different emphasis in outcomes.

Sport - offers a way of helping young people to build their confidence and self-esteem, overcome behavioural issues and acquire life skills in a context more likely to appeal to those who are disenchanting with, or disengaged from school. It can also reduce involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour and improve attainment, particularly when combined with learning. Evaluation of the Playing for Success initiative demonstrated an increase in both self confidence and learning of participants.¹⁰

The Arts - participating in art, music, drama and dance can build confidence, self-esteem and self-discipline and help develop social and team-working skills. It can also help young people to be more open-minded, better able to make friends and to deal with difficult experiences, and be more creative in their thinking. An evaluation of the Actup youth theatre group found that 'this positive experience, combined with the support of workshop leaders in which references, advice and practical support ...was available, had encouraged the young people towards learning to the point where access to and participation in FE became a real possibility.¹¹

Volunteering – making a difference to the community can alter young people's aspirations and the way they see themselves. Evidence from the Young Volunteer Challenge (YVC) Pilot Programme¹², demonstrated the impact of volunteering on different groups of young people. After nine months, those with few or no qualifications experienced an increase in confidence and their ability to handle work situations; better qualified young people had higher aspirations about future education and employment.

2.21 A growing body of research from the US and the UK shows that it is the characteristics and nature of the activities, rather than the particular kind of activity, which has the most significant impact on outcomes and the development of social and emotional skills. Sports, the arts, environmental projects, uniformed activities, volunteering and centre-based and detached youth work all have the potential to improve outcomes, providing that they embody certain characteristics.

Structured activities **2.22** New evidence confirms that it is the level of 'structure' in the delivery of activities which is most important.¹³ This means that the activity has a goal and a purpose, and some level of organisation and facilitation by a trusted adult or older peer. It can still be spontaneous and enjoyable, but there is an underlying purpose and goal. The evidence shows that where individuals attended more structured youth clubs – with activities involving a degree of organisation by supervising adults - they experienced better outcomes than those who participated in unstructured provision. Young people who had joined clubs offering highly structured activities did better in later life – they were more likely to be happy, in a stable relationship, have good qualifications and be earning a decent income, even after accounting for their class

¹⁰ Sharp, C. et al Playing for Success: an evaluation of the fourth year, NFER, 2003, DfES Research Report 402

¹¹ James, N. Actup! Theatre as Education and its impact on Young People's Learning, 2006, Centre for labour Market Studies, University of Leicester

¹² Evaluation of the Young Volunteer Challenge Pilot Programme, GHK Consulting, 2006

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

background.¹⁴ Involvement in purposeful activities as part of a group with shared goals enables young people to develop a strong sense of identity.¹⁵

2.23 The same evidence also shows that individuals who attended unstructured youth clubs, and no other activities, were the most at risk of negative outcomes in later life. It also showed that unstructured provision attracted the more disadvantaged young people. The real challenge therefore in working with disadvantaged young people is to introduce structure and greater organisation and supervision into the unstructured provision to which they are naturally more likely to be drawn. Other evidence shows that youth work has a crucial role to play in supporting and challenging young people to try different things.

Box 2.3 SLAMBassadors - How poetry slams can build young people's skills

London's city-wide slam poetry team, the SLAMBassadors, combines opportunities for personal development with political activism, and the chance for young people to develop a real skill. Run by the Poetry Society with funding from the Big Lottery Fund, the team is made up of young people who are interested in slam, rap and beatboxing and have come through the Rise Youth Slam Championships. Participants in the championships, many of whom are from challenging backgrounds, receive support from professional slam poets to develop their work, as well as their personal skills such as sticking to a task, and coping with setbacks. One previous participant was entered in the competition by his English teacher in his Pupil Referral Unit; after going on to win the competition, he was able to use his poetry as coursework to gain a GCSE in English.

Winners of the competition go on to make up the core SLAMBassadors team who hold poetry slam workshops for other young people all around the country and bring their message to a wide range of audiences, such as Human Rights Watch at the Globe Theatre, and the July 7 bombings memorial event in Trafalgar Square.

2.24 Within the context of such provision, evidence identifies a number of further important characteristics:

2.25 Successful activities are attractive to young people and inclusive: Studies repeatedly show that programmes that 'lecture' young people are ineffective.¹⁶ Successful provision encourages participation by offering structured, non-academic activities, such as sport and arts. Activities are enjoyable, challenging and demand concentration; they promote learning and enable young people to form bonds with adults outside the family and with positive peer groups.¹⁷ They also involve young people from across cultural and ethnic communities.¹⁸ Where possible, participation is voluntary. Where it is not, youth workers can overcome initial resistance through negotiation.¹⁹

¹⁴ *Leisure contexts in Adolescence and their Effects on Adult Outcomes*, Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, Feinstein, L, Bynner, J and Duckworth, K, 2005,

¹⁵ *Raising Youth in a Changing World, 2006*, Institute for Public Policy Research Margo, J et al, Freedom's Orphans

¹⁶ *Promoting Well-being Among America's Teens*, Zaff et al, Knight Foundation, 2002,

¹⁷ *Extracurricular Activities and Adolescent Development*, in *Journal of Social Issues*, Eccles, JS et al, V59, No 4, 2003

¹⁸ *Positive Youth Development in the United States: Research Findings on Evaluations of Positive Youth Development Programs*, Catalano, RF, et al, *Annals of the AAPSS*, 591, 98-124, 2004,

¹⁹ *An Evaluation of the Impact of Youth Work in England*, Merton, et al, DfES RR606

2.26 They do not treat teenagers as ‘problems’: The tendency to date has often been to view teenagers as potential problems, or problems to be ‘fixed’.²⁰ However, focusing on developing the skills they already have instead of addressing deficits – in other words taking a positive approach – appears to be more likely to result in young people realising their potential.

2.27 They involve young people, and their parents, in design and delivery: Successful provision includes young people in its design and development, its running and its decision-making processes.²¹ This gives them a sense of empowerment and ensures that the leisure pursuits that they want are on offer. Successful programmes recognise the continuing influence of parents on their teenage sons and daughters, especially when it comes to encouraging them to take part in positive activities, and therefore involve parents in design and delivery.²²

2.28 They provide appropriate supervision in a safe environment: It is important that young people are able to take part in activities in places where they feel safe, physically and emotionally. As well as the right physical environment, therefore, successful provision also involves a context in which there is ‘firm-enough’ adult supervision, age appropriate monitoring and clear and consistent rules, expectations and boundaries.²³

2.29 They offer ease of access: Access refers not just to young people’s ability to physically get to activities and be able to afford entry to them, but also to their readiness to participate. Although availability, affordability and transport are the most basic factors affecting participation, a young person’s attitudes, competence, age, and level of development can also be a factor. Given the influence of parents and other role models on young people’s choices, being accessible also involves parents and the community understanding what is available.^{24 25} Young people who are socially excluded, including those with behaviour problems and those who are involved in the youth justice system, are likely to need particular support.

2.30 They address young people’s needs in the round: Evidence shows that programmes which aim to address young people’s needs in the round are more effective than those more narrowly focused.²⁶ For at risk young people, this means creating holistic, tailored packages of help and support which respond to the needs of the individual, rather than multiple sets of interventions each focused on a particular problem.^{27 28} The focus is not only on the issues that young people present on their initial contact but also on tackling the underlying causes or the barriers to them developing the kind of skills, knowledge and understanding they need to move into education, employment and training. Where necessary, youth workers advocate for young people and provide a bridge to other services. The discretion and autonomy of front-line youth

²⁰ *Promoting Youth Development: Strengthening the Role of Youth Serving Community Organizations*, Pittman, K, Washington, CD: Academy for Educational Development, Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, 1991

²¹ Zaff *et al*, 2002, *op.cit*.

²² Zaff *et al*, 2002, *op.cit*.

²³ JS, *Organized Activities as Contexts of Development, Extracurricular Activities, After-School and Community Programs*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Eccles and Appleton Goodman, 2002, *op.cit*, and Mahoney, JL, Larson, RW and Eccles, 2005,

²⁴ *Becoming Adult: Changing Youth Transitions in the 21st century: A synthesis of Findings from the ESRC Research Programme*, Catan, L,

²⁵ *Supporting Parents of Teenagers*, Malmberg (1996) and Ryan (2001) cited in Asmussen, K *et al*, DfES, 2007

²⁶ Mahoney *et al*, 2005, and Zaff and Moore, 2002, *op.cit*.

²⁷ *Understanding the Impact of Connexions on Young People at Risk*, Hoggarth, L and Smith, D, DfES607

²⁸ *Breaking the Cycle: Taking Stock of Progress and Priorities for the Future* Social Exclusion Unit, ODPM, 2004

workers in tailoring support in this way is therefore a key factor – one which has considerable implications for resources and management practice.²⁹

2.31 Fear of discrimination or being misunderstood can be a barrier for young people from different ethnic minority and faith groups which can be overcome by ensuring that activities are faith and culturally sensitive.

2.32 For young people with multiple needs, providing services via ‘one-stop shops’, or as specialised, targeted services offered within a framework of universal provision – such as extended schools – helps reduce the risk of stigmatisation.³⁰

2.33 **They encourage sustained participation and retain young people as they mature:** Greater benefits are evident for young people who show consistent participation in organised and long-term activities.³¹ Regular participation throughout the teenage years is particularly important for the most disengaged and hard-to-reach young people for whom interventions need to be planned as medium or long-term. The evidence suggests that those programmes which are successful in retaining older adolescents, offer increasing opportunities to develop leadership and decision-making skills.³²

2.34 **They are creative:** For disadvantaged young people in particular, successful provision is free from bureaucratic management structures, so that frontline staff have substantial autonomy to innovate.³³ Provision for these young people takes account of their peer groups and their cultures, and responds to young people’s own ideas.³⁴

2.35 **They are supported by adequate financial, human and material resources:** The extent to which organised activities are beneficial depends on their quality and content which in turn depend on the available financial, human and material resources. A recent Ofsted report identifies a clear link between the level of resources allocated to a service and the quality of its work – though some services do appear to have performed well, despite shortcomings in resources.³⁵ It found that ‘young people achieved high standards when workers had a good blend of qualifications and experience, the work was planned well and balanced effectively between recreational and educational aims’. Young people participating in activities where resources are poor may either fail to benefit or may develop increased rates of problem behaviours compared to those in well-resourced, high-quality activities. The availability of well-trained, high-quality, committed staff – youth workers who stay in post long enough to build the trusting relationships which young people value – is therefore key to success.³⁶ So too is funding which is sustained over time^{37,38} and not linked to arbitrary age boundaries.^{39,40}

²⁹ *Supporting Young People to Achieve, Towards a New Deal for Skills*, HMT, 2004

³⁰ *Breaking The Cycle: Taking Stock of Progress and Priorities for the Future*, Social Exclusion Unit, ODPM, 2004

³¹ Mahoney et al, 2005, op.cit.

³² *Organized Activities as Contexts of Development, Extracurricular Activities, After-School and Community Programs*, Mahoney, JL, Larson, RW and Eccles, JS, Lawrence Earlbaum Associates, 2005

³³ *Youth Work Practice, Positive Activities and the Development of Non-Cognitive Skills – Evidence From Some Recent Programmes for Disadvantaged Young People*, Davies, B, unpublished paper prepared for DfES 2007

³⁴ Davies, B, 2007, op.cit.

³⁵ *Effective Youth Services. Good practice*, Ofsted, HMI2445, 2005

³⁶ *An Evaluation of the Impact of Youth Work in England* Merton, et al, DfES RR6062004,

³⁷ Merton, et al, 2004, op.cit.

³⁸ *Reaching Socially Excluded Young People: A National Study Of Street-Based Youth Work*, Crimmens, D et al, Joseph Rowntree Foundation published by the National Youth Agency, 2005

2.36 They support youth workers through good strategic and operational management: The role of the youth worker and other professionals depends on having strong management support and a co-ordinated and clear set of rules around partnerships involving multi-disciplinary working across professions, and multi-agency working with statutory bodies and the voluntary sector.⁴¹

Ways of delivering positive activities

2.37 As set out earlier, activities that embody these characteristics can build young people's social and emotional skills. There are of course a range of different contexts in which these activities can be delivered – some of which can emphasise different outcomes - and Government is already supporting many of them.

2.38 Extended schools provide a context in which structured provision, which goes beyond the 'core' business of teaching the curriculum during the normal school day, can be offered to pupils, families and communities. Evaluation of 'full service' extended schools (FSES) found positive impacts on: pupils' engagement with learning, attainment and life chances; and on wider family stability.⁴² Pupils also experienced positive personal, social and health outcomes. Overall, the impact was strongest for children, young people and adults facing difficulties.

Box 2.4: Writhlington Business and Enterprise School

Writhlington Business and Enterprise School in Bath provides a wide range of after-school activities for its pupils and for 14 local primary schools. It has state-of-the-art sports facilities on-site that are open for private and community use and which are run by Writhlington Trust, a registered charity. The sports centre has a large hall, covered outdoor tennis courts and a well-equipped fitness suite, which is very popular with local users and now has 900 members. The aim is to encourage healthy lifestyles, with the emphasis on providing a choice of sports that pupils cannot access in their schools, such as trampolines, and tennis courts.

The partnership provides transport to bring them from the primary school to the sports centre - parent volunteers that escort the children and young people are given free access to the fitness suite at the sports centre. The centre was created as a community facility, a project that involves a number of sporting partners: Somerset County Cricket Club, The Lawn Tennis Association, Radstock FC and other local football clubs.

In taking on a role at the centre of the community and developing a wide range of extended services over the last seven years, the school has seen the numbers on roll double to 1,200 and the proportion of pupils achieving 5 A*-C grades at GCSE rise from 22 per cent to 62 per cent.

2.39 Since 1997, Government has invested heavily in targeted programmes aimed at vulnerable young people. These have included the Neighbourhood Support Fund (NSF) which targets hard-to-reach young people, and Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP), aimed at those at risk of social exclusion. These have achieved real, measurable success:

³⁹ *The Impact of Government Policy on Social Exclusion Among Young People, A Review Of The Literature for the Social Exclusion Unit in the Breaking the Cycle Series*, Bynner, J and Londra, M, ODPM, 2004,

⁴⁰ *Understanding the Impact of Connexions on Children at Risk*, Hoggarth, L and Smith, D, DfES RR607, 2004,

⁴¹ *Building Better Connections: Interagency work and the Connexions Service* Coles, B et al, Policy Press, JRF, 2004

⁴² *Evaluation of the Full Service Extended Schools Initiative: Final Report 2007*, Cummings, C et al, DfES RR852

- The NSF used a variety of activities to help 13 to 19 year olds who had ‘disengaged’ from education move back into learning via school, training or to employment. Designed to boost their confidence, self-esteem, skills and knowledge, the programme successfully engaged with young people and involved them in decisions about, and running of the programme. Nearly seven in ten participants (68 per cent) went on to a positive outcome.⁴³
- PAYP involves school holiday and year round out-of-school activities and key worker support, offering a number of activities of which sports and arts were most popular. Among young people taking part: over half (53 per cent) said they were less likely to get into trouble; nearly eight out of ten (78 per cent) attended school more often; three-quarters had learnt new skills; and around three in five had developed ‘new interests’ (63 per cent) and felt better about themselves (59 per cent).⁴⁴

2.40 Targeted provision including activities such as sports and art can also improve health outcomes. The Young People’s Development Programme (YPDP), for example, uses education, training and employment opportunities, life skills, arts and sports to pilot a distinctive approach to tackling risk-taking behaviour – in particular underage sex and substance misuse – among ‘at risk’ 13 to 15 year olds. As an intensive intervention requiring young people’s participation for a minimum of 6 hours each week over 48 weeks for one year, YPDP is based on US programmes which have been rigorously evaluated and found to be effective.⁴⁵ Early evaluation evidence shows that at nine months after first joining the programme participating young people said they felt ‘healthier’.

2.41 There are a wide range of other contexts in which young people take part in positive activities – youth clubs, arts groups, leisure centres, voluntary groups such as Scouts and Guides, and opportunities for volunteering and community engagement. All play an important role in making up the wider youth offer.

Box 2.5: Positive Futures

Positive Futures is a national social inclusion programme using sport and leisure activities to engage with young people from socially and economically deprived communities.

There are 120 projects around the country. The programme is supported by the Home Office with national and local partners, notably the Football Foundation which funds 24 of the projects. Projects are delivered locally by a range of agencies including Local Authorities, charities, sports clubs and crime reduction agencies. Well over 100,000 young people have been involved in regular project activity since 2002.

The Programme tackles the risk factors, such as vulnerability and social exclusion, which increase the likelihood that a young person will later go on to develop problems with drugs or crime. This approach not only helps reduce problematic drug use and anti-social behaviour, it also has wider benefits for young people and the communities they live in. Positive Futures aims to have a positive influence on young people’s lives by widening horizons and providing access to new opportunities using a wide range of sport and leisure activities as a catalyst to encourage project participation and steering thousands of young people towards education, training and employment.

⁴³ *Supporting the Hardest-to-Reach Young People: the Contribution of the Neighbourhood Support Fund*, NfER, 2004

⁴⁴ *Positive Activities for Young People National Evaluation*, CRG

⁴⁵ For example the Children’s Aid Society Carrera programme

2.42 The Government is committed to transforming opportunities and services for young people. Drawing on the messages emerging from the evidence set out above, this Strategy includes three themes for reform: Empowerment, Access and Quality.

3

EMPOWERMENT: GIVING YOUNG PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES REAL INFLUENCE

SUMMARY

3.1 Giving young people genuine influence over local services is the most effective way of ensuring better access and increasing participation. All young people should feel able to make a positive contribution in their communities and to have their achievements celebrated, sending a strong signal about their rightful place in society.

3.2 Communities have a responsibility to help expand and improve opportunities and services for young people. Where they prioritise things to do and places to go for young people, Local Authorities respond, demonstrating the power of local accountability. Community organisations can also play a vital role in delivering positive activities for young people. When young people and communities come together to address common issues it helps to build better understanding between the generations.

3.3 Young people should be supported to take the lead in making decisions about the activities and services in their neighbourhoods. However, Government, Local Authorities and providers have a responsibility to ensure that provision is of high quality.

3.4 The Government will expand significantly young people's direct influence and control on the design, commissioning, and delivery of local services. This applies to all young people, but particularly those who are least likely to feel empowered to demand more of services.

3.5 To **support young people to take their place as valued members of society**, the Government will:

- establish a number of pilots to explore how young people can design and organise events to celebrate their transition to adulthood; and
- explore the potential of a 'Youth Week', in celebration of young people's achievements.

3.6 To increase participation by **putting more resources and responsibility in young people's hands** the Government will:

- extend the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds until at least 2011, with additional resources for projects in the most disadvantaged communities;
- encourage Local Authorities to build on the success of the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds by giving young people greater influence over resources – 25 per cent of spending on youth activities and facilities by 2018;
- invest in supporting young people to set up sustainable projects delivering positive activities to other disadvantaged young people; and
- invest in a National Institute of Youth Leadership to support young people's ability to bring about change more widely.

3.7 To **empower more marginalised young people to have influence**, the Government will:

- expect all Local Authorities to adopt good practice in engaging young people; and
- invest over the next three years to see more young people from deprived neighbourhoods trained and supported to champion the views and needs of young people.

3.8 To **empower communities to improve services** for young people, the Government will:

- expect ward councillors to be responsive to young people's needs;
- expect Local Authorities to ensure that young people, parents and communities know how to mobilise and use the Community Call for Action to improve youth services; and
- encourage Local Authorities to bring young people and adults together to address common issues.

3.9 These reforms will contribute to the vision for young people's empowerment, described in Box 3.1.

Box 3.1: A vision for empowerment

By 2018...

- society will have a more positive view of young people and do more to help them take their place in society;
- services for young people will be sensitive and responsive to their needs, offering them the support they need to make their voice heard and working actively to empower the most marginalised and disaffected;
- young people will have increasing control over local spending on positive activities and more support to take on local leadership roles; and
- young people, parents and communities will increasingly make use of effective mechanisms for holding local providers and commissioners to account for prioritising youth provision. Adults in the community will also increasingly get involved to provide activities and support directly to young people.

INCREASING YOUNG PEOPLE'S INFLUENCE

3.10 Young people have ideas, energy and dynamism and should have the influence and opportunity to drive change. However, they are less likely than adults to feel they can – research shows that although many think they can influence decisions affecting their school (64 per cent), far fewer young people feel they are able to influence decisions affecting their local area (33 per cent), and even fewer decisions affecting Britain (15 per cent). Young people want more influence over the opportunities available to them locally and over decisions taken about services in their communities. There are strong arguments for giving it to them.

“It’s about adults listening to young people instead of always telling us what to do. Young people are responsible and can make decisions. We can do what adults do and should be taken seriously” Young person¹

Increased participation

3.11 It is clear from the evidence considered by the Review and consultation with young people, that giving them genuine influence is a crucial first step to increasing participation in activities and access to wider public services. This is true for all young people, including those from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, or those facing specific challenges, such as young people with disabilities.

3.12 Successful services and programmes involve young people in their design at the outset and make a genuine effort to be sensitive and responsive to the needs and views they express. Public services should actively engage all the young people they aim to serve.

“We need to be involved in things first hand” Young person²

New skills

3.13 Being involved in local decision making helps young people to develop important new skills. Those involved in Youth Opportunity Funds say they are learning team work, problem solving and communication skills that make them feel more confident about themselves and more involved in their communities. Evidence also shows that being involved in projects that encourage leadership and management skills sustains the interest of older teenagers who otherwise are less likely to participate.

“I enjoy making a difference” Young person³

Better relationships

3.14 It is essential to empower all young people in order to create services that are truly inclusive and help to bridge the divide between those from different backgrounds. While compared to those in other age groups young people are more likely to have friends from another ethnic group.⁴ Some, in common with some adults, do not mix with others from different backgrounds. Youth support services have an increasingly prominent role to play in promoting inclusion and encouraging shared experiences of designing and running projects.

“The only thing within my area seems to be stereotyped for a particular group of people. I feel that there should be something for everyone” Young person⁵

3.15 While some young people proactively engage in local decision-making, many will need help from adults and older teenagers, including professionals and volunteers, to develop the confidence and motivation to take part. For young people facing social exclusion this means sustained and structured support from highly skilled workers, often from the third sector.

¹ Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund: Evaluation Findings from Initial Case Study Visits, NFER, Forthcoming, 2007,

² Youth Matters Consultation with Young People, DfES (unpublished), 2005

³ Implementing Youth Matters, Continuing the Dialogue with Young People, DfES (unpublished), 2007

⁴ 2005 Citizenship Survey Community Cohesion Topic Report, DCLG, 2006

⁵ Implementing Youth Matters, op cit.

Progress so far

3.16 With the support of Local Authorities and the third sector, this Government has done more than any other to empower young people and give them a voice.

Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds

3.17 The Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds are changing the nature of public services for all young people by giving them real spending power – worth £115 million over two years. This demonstrates that giving young people more responsibility can address barriers to participation by developing services that are more relevant and attractive to them. So far over 8,000 young people have participated as decision makers or grant givers, over 73,000 in developing and submitting bids, and over 569,000 have been beneficiaries of activities or facilities funded by the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds. The sheer variety of projects young people have chosen to fund demonstrates how innovative and creative they have been in purchasing new provision. Many Local Authorities, some in partnership with the third sector, have used the funds to develop effective and innovative ways of engaging with young people and are working towards mainstreaming those approaches.

“It’s the first time that I have felt that I really have been able to make a difference. Not tokenism.” Young person⁶

Young people’s representation

3.18 Local Authorities are also making use of a wide range of methods to increase young people’s representation. Some are creating a role for Young Mayors, where a young person is elected by their peers to represent their interests in local democratic structures and may have a budget of their own, as well as direct access to adult elected members. Others are establishing Youth Councils and Forums, which enable young people to get involved in decision-making and promote the voice of young people at council level and in wider services. The *Hear by Right* standards and *Act By Right* accredited workbook are also being used to plan and support the involvement of young people in local service design and delivery.

3.19 There has also been a focus on extending more influence to young people living in deprived communities. Building on the success of a pilot scheme in four New Deal for Communities areas, 20 areas have now appointed Young Advisors. The Young Advisors Charity was established in April 2007 to support future development of the scheme. Young Advisors show community leaders and decision makers how to engage young people in community life, regeneration and renewal. Aged between 15 and 21, and trained and paid for their work, Young Advisors work directly with young people to encourage them to get involved. Their role includes:

- ‘youth proofing’ policies and practices to ensure they take account of the aspirations and needs of young people, and to check that they are not excluded or put at risk by local decisions and budget allocations. They can also train adults to youth proof;
- working with elected members to ensure that young people get more involved in local democracy; and
- promoting the inclusion, engagement and voice of young people within their communities and nationally.

⁶ Youth Opportunity Fund Participant, Barnsley

Box 3.2 Young Advisor Case study

In 2006, East Manchester NDC built on their experience in empowering young people to initiate a more coherent area-wide approach to youth participation. Six Young Advisors were recruited using funding from Communities and Local Government, and East Manchester New Deal for Communities (NDC). The Young Advisors are involved in:

- Developing, reviewing, and re-designing youth services;
- Serving as members of area steering groups and local action teams;
- Participating in the recruitment of staff; and
- Supporting the coordination of the Youth Capital and Opportunity Fund.

Following a successful bid to the Youth Capital Fund, Young Advisors worked with members of the Bang of the Voice Youth Forum to design three offices that would be dedicated to youth participation and Young Advisors in their local Youth Centre. The space is used by a wide variety of young people for forum meetings, magazine meetings, young resident meetings, young people's councillor surgeries and of course the Young Advisors office. They have also welcomed adult residents from local resident associations to demonstrate what the Youth Capital Fund has enabled them to do.

Having an office base and resources has enabled the Young Advisors to take the programme to the next level. The Young Advisor scheme has since become more integral to the development of youth participation across all of Manchester, and the East Manchester Young Advisors are now developing the training, support and monitoring arrangements to implement Young Advisors across the city.

The Manchester Young Advisors have been empowered to support and shape the future development of services for young people, and to support their peers and colleagues to participate in this process. The success of the scheme is in large part due to their energy and enthusiasm for this task.

3.20 The third sector continues to play an important role in supporting statutory services to engage more effectively with young people, as well as directly supporting individuals to be more demanding of public services. They are often well placed to reach marginalised young people, often because they know their communities and have already established trust. For these reasons they are important partners in changing the culture of services. Some third sector organisations also inspire and help young people to become involved in wider social issues, for example, the youth programmes of Amnesty International or Oxfam.

Box 3.3 Participation Works

Participation Works is a consortium of organisations led by the National Children's Bureau that aims to help embed a culture of participation in the working practices of organisations and services that work with children and young people.

The consortium provides a comprehensive range of tools, resources and practical support and advice on how young people can influence decisions which affect their lives and be actively involved in the design and delivery of services. Support and information includes participation standards, training, bespoke consultancy, self-assessment tools, best practice guides and an online gateway.

A national participation network involving 1,300 participation workers and professionals - from teachers to architects to health staff - enables the sharing of good practice and the building of the knowledge, skills and confidence of workers to improve young people's outcomes. In describing the impact of the network members reported that "The network ensures that our work is connected up to the bigger picture and you can always find someone who has encountered similar barriers and share information on possible solutions".

At Doxford Youth Project staff worked to ensure that a diverse group of young people were able to influence local service provision. With support, young people made a video to highlight a lack of facilities in their area and gain the support of the local community. Following the video's public screening, nine community members volunteered to help run a youth club and a local welfare hall was offered rent free. Young people now have a youth club in the village, and have successfully bid for a multi-use games area that is under construction. One young person said "It's mint that the adults are actually listening to us and we are getting to help design things that we will use".

More to do

3.21 There remains more to do to create a whole system designed and led by young people – only 14 per cent of 15 and 16-year-olds think they have enough say in decisions that affect them.⁷ Among the teenagers consulted for the Review, only 37 per cent thought that the people who run services in their community (for example transport or leisure facilities) listen to young people, and over half had not heard of the Youth Opportunity or Youth Capital Funds.⁸

"We need to be given responsibilities" Young person⁹

"Young people here never speak up to know if they would be listened to or not. I wouldn't know who to tell or where to find them myself. Besides, in an area like this I would say they wouldn't take two seconds to listen to me anyway."
Young person¹⁰

⁷ MORI/Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2006, www.childrenscommissioner.org

⁸ *Implementing Youth Matters*, op cit.

⁹ *Youth Matters Consultation, with Young People*, op cit.

¹⁰ *Implementing Youth Matters*, op cit.

3.22 Many Local Authorities know that participation and engagement are crucial. The best Local Authorities and third sector organisations set high standards, using innovative methods to increase the number of young people taking decisions locally. Building on good practice to increase further the influence of young people, particularly among minority, disadvantaged and marginalised groups, is a clear priority for the next ten years.

3.23 Those experiencing social exclusion, including homeless and unemployed young people, who took part in the Review said that they often find formal participative structures, such as youth forums, unattractive. They want and need more support to feel confident about influencing what is available in their local area.

3.24 Empowering young people will also mean reversing the negative perceptions and reactions they can face from adults when they do try and get involved. Young people say that these can be a barrier to getting more involved and participating in services and activities, causing frustration that they are not being listened to.

“There have been 3 occasions when my friends and I have written to Local Authorities to raise an issue with regards a school bus service, once to raise concerns over dangerous driving, once over an increase in ticket prices without warning which left several students unable to afford the bus journey to school, and once over a specific instance of misconduct by the driver. On each occasion we received a patronising reply that completely dismissed our concerns and I had the impression that they were refusing to take us seriously on account of our age. I therefore asked an adult to write the same letter. This received a prompt and polite response and appropriate action was taken. It seems ridiculous that the people directly affected are ignored, whereas an adult indirectly affected is taken seriously just because they are older.”¹¹

3.25 While this is often a consequence of concerns over anti-social behaviour, there is a clear challenge for communities to respond differently and to take a more positive and balanced approach, as well as for young people to take responsibility for their actions and how they impact on others.

“We offered an old lady our seats on the bus but she refused, giving us evils because one of the boys was wearing a hoodie, the hood wasn't even up.” Young person¹²

Young people's place in society

3.26 Demonstrating trust in young people's ability to make a valuable contribution and take part in decisions affecting them will send a clear signal about their place in society. It is in the interests of all to take a more positive view of young people and do more to help them take their equal place as citizens. This requires concerted action at local and national level.

¹¹ *Implementing Youth Matters*, op cit.

¹² *Implementing Youth Matters*, op cit

3.27 The Government believes that every young person should have the opportunity to celebrate their achievements as they enter adulthood. This would enable parents and communities to recognise young people's contribution and place in society, giving them a sense of belonging and reinforcing important values. Building on the experience of the Youth Opportunity Fund, **the Government will establish a number of pilots to explore how young people can be empowered to design and organise events to celebrate their transition to adulthood**, working with schools, colleges, youth organisations, local businesses and the wider community.

3.28 At national level, learning from the successful model in Australia, **the Government will also explore in the longer term the potential of a 'Youth Week' in celebration of young people to foster more positive perceptions in their communities and society more widely.**

Active Citizens 3.29 All young people should also understand what it means to be a British citizen. The Youth Citizenship Commission announced in *The Governance of Britain* will build on the significant progress that has already been made following the introduction of citizenship education in schools in 2002. It will examine ways to invigorate further young people's understanding of their role and responsibility in society, including looking at how citizenship education can be connected to a possible citizenship ceremony when young people reach adulthood. It will also look at whether reducing the voting age would increase participation in the political process.

3.30 Empowering young people to play a full role as active citizens is essential to improving their relationship with adults in their communities. Concerns about anti-social behaviour are lower where young people are engaging positively in their local communities, for example through volunteering.¹³

3.31 Over the next 3 years, v, the independent charity launched to implement the recommendations of the Russell Commission, will be investing over £70 million in a new framework for youth action and engagement through its recently announced National Youth Volunteering Programme (NYVP). This programme will not only fund new opportunities, but it will also create a v presence in every local authority area in England, working with local organisations to deliver high quality volunteering placements. It will also establish a framework for the recognition and accreditation of youth volunteering opportunities, so that young people who give up their time for the benefit of their communities will have their achievements acknowledged and celebrated.

¹³ *Community Merit Award Programme*, YJB, 2005

Box 3.4 v – the national volunteering charity

Volunteering offers young people opportunities for personal development while also making a contribution and bringing about wider change in society. v is the independent charity launched in May 2006 to implement the recommendations of the Russell Commission on youth action and engagement. It aims to inspire a million more young volunteers aged 16-25 years. v is guided by the cares, interests, passions and beliefs of young people, through its v20 youth advisory board.

In 2005, the Government pledged investment of up to £100 million to support v, including a £50 million fund available to match contributions from business. To date, v has secured pledges worth £21 million from over 65 private sector organisations.

In its first year, v has commissioned 120,000 volunteering opportunities. It has put funding directly in the hands of young people through the first round of its own youth fund and developed the vashpoint project to give young volunteers the chance to apply for up to £2,500 to run community projects.

The charity has recently launched its innovative new youth volunteering portal, vinspired.com to help young people find volunteering opportunities in their area which match their interests, passions and lifestyle and has published research on the barriers preventing young people from volunteering and acting on their concerns.

Putting more resources and responsibility in young people's hands

3.32 As the striking success of the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds has demonstrated, the most effective way to increase young people's influence over services is to give them direct control over funding. The Government wants to build on the progress made by the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds to increase young people's influence further and improve the way services respond to their needs.

3.33 **The Government will therefore extend the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds until at least 2011.** This will enable Local Authorities and their partners to build on the good practice developing in local areas, and continue to lay a strong foundation for greater devolution of resources to young people.

3.34 **In addition, the Government will provide extra resources for the Youth Opportunity Fund in the most deprived areas to increase the involvement of young people facing disadvantage.**

3.35 The Government's longer term ambition is for a significant increase in the direct influence that young people have over wider spending on youth activities and facilities – not just Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital budgets. Core staff costs and funding for targeted and specialist services may not be suitable for devolution to young people's influence, but a proportion of funding for activities across youth support, sports, arts and recreation budgets could and should be devolved. **The Government will expect Local Authorities to build on the progress made through the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds and reward the decision making ability young people have shown so far by devolving an increasing proportion of Local Authority funding for positive activities to young people's influence.**

Box 3.6: Participatory budgeting with young people

Newcastle City Council are working to mainstream participatory budgeting approaches following the success of their U-Decide Children and Young People's pilots.

The pilots gave young people control over £75,000 of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, which they allocated to bidding projects according to four priorities identified from a pre-existing review of children and young people's views of their needs.

A small group of young people, 'The Wikkid Planners', worked with a council officer to design and develop the process in which youth groups across the city were informed about U-Decide and invited to propose bids by completing a simple pro-forma. Having checked the bids for legality, each group was invited to send four young people to an event.

At the event youth groups were given materials to make a creative display about their project and asked to make a short presentation to the other groups bidding for money. Participants prioritised projects and selected 18 successful bids using e-voting. Four bids were unsuccessful, but were given on the spot and follow up funding advice.

After the event, funding was allocated to the successful projects and monitoring and support arrangements were put in place to help them deliver.

3.36 As a first step towards this ambition, the Government will work with Government Offices to support Local Authorities to learn the lessons from Youth Opportunity Fund spending in 2008. This will lay the groundwork for Local Authorities to be able to devolve up to 5 per cent of their budget for youth services to young people's influence in 2010 and 2011. The Government's long term aspiration is that, by 2018, young people could **actively shape decisions on 25 per cent of Local Authorities' budget for positive activities**. Applying this approach to youth service spending alone would amount to over £100 million across England being devolved to young people's control. Spending from wider sports, arts and recreation budgets could be increasingly shaped through a wide range of approaches to community empowerment that might include involving young people in local action planning and participatory budgeting. This double devolution is in line with the Government's broader intention to give more power to citizens and encourage local flexibility to respond to local issues.

3.37 These measures will increase significantly young people's influence over local services. In return, the Government expects young people to take this responsibility seriously and respond to the increased trust placed in them.

Putting young people in the lead

3.38 The Government is committed to empowering young people to establish their own local activities. The Youth Opportunity and Capital Funds have already given many young people the opportunity to turn their ideas for new activities into a reality. There is more scope to harness young people's ideas and enterprise.

3.39 There is powerful evidence that services and programmes led by young people can influence positively those who might otherwise not try different activities. Young people who get involved in this way can act as inspiring role models, bringing a deeper understanding of the issues facing teenagers, and a greater ability to navigate youth culture. Supporting those who have insight and vision about what activities their peers want by helping them develop their entrepreneurial skills and ensure the long term sustainability of their projects will increase participation further.

3.40 Starting from 2008, the Government will invest to build the capacity of third sector organisations able to support young people who have ideas for establishing projects to provide positive activities to other young people. Initially, this will fund ventures in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and communities to increase both the supply of activities and the number of young people acting as positive role models. Being run by young people for young people, the aspiration is that such enterprises will be successful in attracting all young people, but particularly those who may not be engaged by mainstream services.

Leadership 3.41 Young people’s influence can and does go beyond the provision of local services and positive activities. While it is easy to paint young people as apathetic because of their relative lack of interest in national politics, many of them are intensely concerned with issues at a global and local level. Young people make an enormous contribution to the Make Poverty History campaign, for example, and often take the lead in initiatives to combat climate change and protect the environment. Demonstrating leadership and working to bring about social change are important development opportunities in themselves, as well as signalling young people’s place in society.

3.42 The Government is committed to supporting this potential and over the next decade wants to increase significantly the number of young people benefiting from opportunities to build their leadership skills. **As a first step towards this, the Government will invest over the next three years in a Youth Leadership Fund which will support the creation of a National Institute for Youth Leadership.** This arrangement will be geared towards building the capacity of third sector organisations that have a track record in providing effective leadership development opportunities to young people. These organisations will be able to share best practice on approaches to supporting young people’s leadership and to increase the number of young people who benefit from these opportunities.

Supporting more marginalised young people’s influence

3.43 The circumstances of young people who are marginalised must not exclude them further because local structures are inflexible; they have much to contribute and much to benefit from being involved. The Government is committed to improving these young people’s influence as a crucial first step in making the local offer of positive activities more attractive to them.

3.44 In their place-shaping role, all local areas should respond to the specific needs of disadvantaged and marginalised young people, recognising the need to innovate if these groups are to be reached successfully.

“To make a big meeting with everyone on the local offer work...we might have to have smaller meetings to feed into the big one – then people can have time to gain the skills to take part.” Young person.¹⁴

3.45 The Government will invest over the next three years in building the capacity of third sector organisations with a proven ability to work in partnership with Local Authorities to support marginalised young people to influence services. Building on successful existing models, providers will place particular emphasis on helping marginalised young people to engage their peers in influencing local policies and services across a wide range of issues including locality, health, neighbourhood renewal, transport, and community safety. By representing and feeding back their

¹⁴ 3D Dialogue, NYA, 2007

peers' views to Local Authorities and other service providers, these young people will effectively act as young inspectors.

Box 3.5: Young Travellers influencing services in Nottingham

A group of young Travellers worked with the youth engagement organisation Changemakers to find ways to influence local decision makers. They initially worked on writing and filming a short video to depict "a day in the life" of a young Traveller. It was something the group felt quite passionate about because they wanted to dispel some of the myths about their community and alleviate the discrimination they sometimes experience:

"we want them to understand where we are coming from!"

The film was shown at a local cinema, to an audience of local decision makers. The group subsequently secured funding from the Y SPEAK Consultation Fund and organised a consultation event that identified strategies to improve the relationships between young Travellers and non-Travellers in Nottingham.

ENABLING COMMUNITIES TO INFLUENCE YOUTH PROVISION

3.46 Transforming opportunities for young people cannot solely be the responsibility of public services – communities have a collective responsibility to support their young people on the path to success.

3.47 Communities have an important role to play in holding Local Authorities to account for ensuring that activities and places to go for young people are a priority. The Review's evidence showed that when communities organise themselves effectively, gain access to local decision making structures, and encourage Local Authorities to provide more and better youth services, this all helped improve services. Third sector organisations often facilitate this, acting as a mediator between the community and the statutory sector.

3.48 Often, communities may not know where to go or what to do if they feel that services for young people do not meet the standard they expect. The Local Government White Paper put in place mechanisms that will help to tackle this, by improving community accountability and ensuring that local services better reflect community priorities. The Community Call for Action in particular provides a valuable opportunity for communities to influence elected members, and through them to influence local services for young people.

3.49 The Government expects Local Authorities to ensure that young people, parents and communities know how to mobilise and use their councillors, once councillors have the power to launch community calls for action through local scrutiny procedures. This will be complemented by a new duty on best value Local Authorities, requiring them to inform, consult and involve representatives of the community, including young people, in the exercise of their functions. Statutory guidance will be published early in 2008, setting this out in more detail.

3.50 The Local Government White Paper also describes changes to support the role of non-executive councillors as democratic champions for their local areas, able to speak out on local issues and have real influence over local services. By working with the Local Government Association (LGA) and IDeA and through regional improvement partnerships, the Government will promote a clearly defined role for such councillors in championing the interests of their communities. In addition, these changes will be geared towards improving councillors' diversity, making them more representative of

their communities and increasing the capacity of and support for councillors to take on their enhanced role. Through this strategy, the Government expects ward councillors, in their strengthened role to:

- **act as a channel to Local Authorities for communities' priorities, more effectively representing the public's demand for better services for young people; and**
- **engage with young people's representatives in their area.**

Transparent data **3.51** Communities need to be equipped with the right information to be able to hold Local Authorities to account. Making information such as Local Authorities' performance data and their level of spending on services more readily available can help with this. The publication of the indicators underpinning the new performance management framework that will be agreed at the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), discussed further in Chapter 5, will make their performance on services for young people more transparent. Where a local authority is performing badly, communities will therefore have ready access to the relevant information and will be able to press for change.

Young people and adults tackling common issues **3.52** The involvement of local people in youth programmes and projects helps to create better relationships and mutual understanding. Evidence gathered by the HM Treasury and Cabinet Office review of the future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration suggests that participation in community organisations can help to build reciprocity, increasing a sense of belonging to neighbourhoods and trust in other people.¹⁵ Promoting better relations across the generations will help adults gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the issues and challenges young people face. In turn, young people develop a better understanding of the concerns of the wider community.

3.53 There are a wide range of issues such as safer neighbourhoods or the local environment that are of concern to both young people and the wider community. But currently there is a lack of connection between participation mechanisms for young people and those for the wider community, such as tenants' and residents' associations. **The Government expects Local Authorities to show strategic leadership by bringing together young people's and adults' participation forums to develop common solutions for common problems.** Establishing such Community-Youth Forums will not only strengthen relationships between young people and adults in the community, but will make a significant contribution to improving public services. Local Authorities should consider bringing together youth and adult forums at both community level, for example tackling problems on an estate or in a particular neighbourhood, and at a strategic level when developing Local Area Agreements. Such forums will also be a way of encouraging more adults to volunteer to work with young people, as discussed in Chapter 5.

3.54 Underpinning the Government's commitment to build better relationships across generations, the third sector review's interim report in December 2006 stated that it recognised the importance of voluntary activity in building trust in communities and promoting community cohesion and would in addition **make available funding to build capacity in intergenerational volunteering.** The final report expands on this.¹⁶

¹⁵ *The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration: interim report*, HM Treasury/Cabinet Office, December 2006

¹⁶ *The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration: final report*, HM Treasury/Cabinet Office, July 2007

4

ACCESS: ATTRACTING AND ENGAGING EVERY YOUNG PERSON

Summary

4.1 All young people should be able to benefit from high quality opportunities in their leisure time. While more are participating than ever before, it is still the most disadvantaged and marginalised young people who are missing out on enjoyable activities that offer the chance to mix with others and gain a sense of achievement. The challenge is to make services available that are both attractive to all young people and effective in reaching out to engage those who may not otherwise access them.

4.2 Many continue to face barriers such as cost, transport and safety – held back by where they live, how much money they have, or how good their local services are. Others lack the aspiration, confidence and motivation to try something different. The low level of investment and priority given to young people’s facilities in their neighbourhoods, particularly in the poorest areas, is another major barrier to greater participation in positive activities.

4.3 To **improve youth facilities** the Government will:

- launch a new programme, based on funding from unclaimed assets, and £60 million new investment from DCSF over the next three years, to improve youth facilities by investing in a place for young people to go in every constituency;
- encourage all Local Authorities and their partners to develop integrated capital strategies to make the most of existing community assets in creating more places to go for young people; and
- invest to support a range of pathfinders in the most deprived areas to develop leading practice in the delivery of local integrated capital strategies.

4.4 To help **address other common practical barriers** that young people face to accessing services and opportunities, the Government will:

- continue to fund Local Authorities to promote local opportunities to young people and publish guidance on how they can harness technology and peer effects in doing so;
- invest between now and 2009 to test ways of giving disadvantaged young people spending power to increase levels of participation in positive activities;
- improve guidance, support and challenge to Children’s Trusts and transport planners to encourage joined up planning and commissioning of transport for young people; and
- expect Local Authorities, working through Local Strategic Partnerships, to address the issue of young people’s safety and reflect action in Children and Young People’s Plans.

4.5 To **support the most disadvantaged and marginalised young people** to overcome significant barriers to access, the Government will reprioritise and add to existing resources to:

- invest in the expansion of third sector providers with a track record of successfully engaging the hardest to reach young people;
- build on the success of Positive Activities for Young People to enable Local Authorities to commission year-round intensively supported provision for the most disaffected young people; and
- build on the success of the Do it 4 Real programme to offer more young people from deprived neighbourhoods access to residential opportunities.

Box 4.1: A vision for access

By 2018:

- all young people will have access to a wide range of attractive, structured, positive activities and integrated multi-agency support services delivered from places where they feel comfortable;
- a wide range of local service providers will work together with young people to overcome the practical barriers they face in accessing opportunities and support services; and
- parents, communities and local services will work together to reach out to and support the most disaffected and marginalised young people, drawing heavily on the experience of successful third sector providers.

ATTRACTIVE AND ACCESSIBLE SERVICES FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

4.6 Delivering the Government's vision means working to ensure that all young people have the opportunities and support they need as they make the transition to adulthood. This is about doing more than simply making opportunities and services available. It means ensuring that they are attractive, accessible and appropriate for their needs.

4.7 While Local Authorities, in consultation with young people, take decisions on particular access issues locally, some common themes have emerged. They are:

- a clear demand for better places to go;
- ways to tackle practical barriers to participation; and
- extra support for young people who have additional needs.

4.8 Government is committed to supporting Local Authorities to find solutions to these issues, and, through this Ten Year Strategy, will put in place mechanisms to enable them to do so.

CLEAR DEMAND FROM YOUNG PEOPLE, PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES

4.9 Having a 'place to go' is important to young people – over two thirds of those who responded to the Youth Matters consultation said more facilities were the most important things which would improve their lives. They made it clear what kind of places they want to go to:

- places where they feel safe;

- places they can call their own¹, but in which they can also socialise with a wide range of peers and adults, including those facing similar issues and experiences, such as those relating to gender and ethnicity; and
- places where they can access a wide range of activities and, when they need them, different services such as information, advice and guidance.

4.10 Recent research shows that young people want the choice of accessing a wide range of services in venues where they feel comfortable and not stigmatised, with the support of adults, professionals and volunteers, drawn from their communities.²

4.11 Yet the evidence informing this strategy raises many questions about how seriously that demand is taken and shows the consequences of not providing areas where young people can socialise without feeling threatened, resented, or bored.

“There is nowhere in my town to meet friends, apart from the park. The problem is, people complain about gangs of teenagers, but there is nowhere else to go.”

Young person³

4.12 Of course, there are already a wide variety of places that young people can go – although this varies significantly between neighbourhoods. In England there are approximately 12,000 youth clubs, 20,000 sports facilities; and around 3,000 public libraries.

4.13 However, young people still say that they do not like the facilities that are available in their area. For too many, ‘hanging around’ shopping malls and streets is not something they choose to do; it is because there are no attractive alternatives. Among nearly 1,000 young people consulted during the Review, only 37 per cent felt that there was a good choice of things for them to do in their local area.⁴ Reasons include:

- facilities may be unattractive, often run-down buildings, particularly youth clubs, in need of refurbishment.
- opening times may not suit young people’s lifestyles and in particular the need to fit around school hours, for instance, libraries or youth clubs might be closed on weekends, or in the summer holidays;
- facilities may be unwelcoming, in particular young people may not feel welcome in some places that are primarily available to adults;
- some facilities are in areas in which young people do not feel safe, or cannot access using public transport; and
- in some neighbourhoods, there are simply are not enough places to go.

¹ *Passing Time: A Report About Young People and Communities* Edwards, L and Hatch, B. London: Institute of Public Policy Research. 2003

² *The Role of Integrated Provision in Delivering Outcomes for Young People: A Summary*, Institute of Education, Annik Sorhaindo and Leon Feinstein University of London. 2007

³ *Implementing Youth Matters*, Continuing the Dialogue with Young People, DfES (unpublished), 2007

⁴ *Implementing Youth Matters*, op cit

“We have one youth club that puts on activities such as dance, drama, snooker, and chill out, however these events only happen for two hours every two weeks. The youth club opens during the day for other events and adult activities, but we are at school.”⁵

“There are no clubs, and no leisure activities unless you want to travel into town where it is unsafe to be by yourself, and sometimes hard to get home from in the evenings.”⁶

“Why don’t you have one big building that has everything in one place?”⁷

“It should be really good at responding to our needs, at a place we like, to help us get over our problems and move us on.” Young people⁸

4.14 Parents too want better youth facilities. They want to know that there are places where their children can mix safely with friends with reliable adult supervision.

4.15 Communities also feel that an offer of youth facilities is needed to address concerns about young people hanging around. In one study, over two fifths of all adults cited activities for teenagers as most in need of improving locally, ahead of crime and decent housing⁹. Failing to respond to this demand could further erode trust between young people and adults.

“We have to hang around town most of the time and the adults don’t really like it. It would be nice to have a place to go.” Young person¹⁰

4.16 Creating safe spaces for young people where they can build better relationships with adults and peers, and where they can feel valued and more positive about where they live, is an important element of encouraging stronger communities, particularly in the most disadvantaged areas.

PROGRESS SO FAR

4.17 The Government is already making progress in supporting Local Authorities to both address under-investment and ensure young people are involved in creating more places to go. Since 2006, the Youth Capital Fund has provided £56m to improve and develop new facilities. Last year alone it supported over 3,000 capital projects ranging in size from a few hundred pounds up to £250,000. Some Local Authorities have forged closer links with other partners, including those in the third sector, and in many instances have levered in co-financing from other public and private sources to fund more ambitious projects.

⁵ *Implementing Youth Matters*, op cit.

⁶ *Implementing Youth Matters*, op cit.

⁷ *Youth Matters Consultation with Young People*, DFES (unpublished), 2005

⁸ *Government’s Policy Review of Children & Young People*, Dialogue with Young People, 2006

⁹ *Physical capital: Liveability in 2005*, MORI

¹⁰ *Implementing Youth Matters*, op cit.

Box 4.2: Youth Capital Fund

- £250,000 from the YCF formed part of an £800,000 budget to build a new purpose-built youth centre in Herne Bay, Kent. Funding was also secured from a local developer, as well as local authority capital funding.
- A £1,000 grant enabled a group of disaffected young people in Wokingham to purchase cricket equipment, and pay for a venue, transport and coaching. The 20 young men and five women involved have developed a greater sense of purpose and self-esteem.
- A female ex-drug addict, aged 16, secured £7,600 to create a sexual health room offering pregnancy tests and tests for sexually transmitted infections within XTRAX Young People's Centre, which provides help, advice, and support to disadvantaged young people in Hastings.
- £25,000 enabled 8 young people from a rural area of County Durham to establish a mobile youth project that provides access to a range of activities leading to accredited outcomes, as well as health workshops.

4.18 The Government has also built flexibility and local leadership into schools capital programmes, including Building Schools for the Future, to allow Local Authorities and schools to determine how their capital investment will support other local priorities. While the focus of this investment is on improving the school estate, it can contribute to extended school activities and other youth provision.

4.19 Some Local Authorities are taking a strategic approach to places for young people to go – taking stock of what is available, identifying young people's needs and working with partners to change provision so that it suits young people better. Other areas employ flexible resources, using mobile youth centres to bring the places to go directly to young people.

4.20 A variety of partners are also working to provide more and better places for young people to go, including making community facilities more accessible. The Big Lottery Fund are funding the Book Bar scheme which aims to make libraries more attractive to young people by setting up youth areas within them and training young people as Book Waiters to serve coffee to young visitors and recommend books they might enjoy.

Box 4.3: Starbucks Youth Café

Friday night is youth café night at the Starbucks in the Ashley Centre in Epsom. The café is open just for young people from 7pm to 10pm, offering live acoustic music performed by emerging young musicians, games, and themed nights, such as quizzes and karaoke. Youth workers are on hand, but all activities are led and decided by young people themselves.

A partnership venture between YELL (the Epsom and Ewell Youth Forum), Surrey County Council's youth development service, and Starbucks, the youth café has been running since 2004 with funding from the Council's local committee, and support from Epsom police. There is a small entry fee, which includes a free drink from the Starbucks menu. The project has continued to attract large numbers of young people, and has top billing on YELL's website of things to do and places to go in Epsom (www.yell-epsomandewell.org.uk).

4.21 But there is still more to do. Only 39 per cent of the young people consulted for the Review felt that there had been any improvement in the number or type of activities for young people over the past year.¹¹

A new programme of capital investment

Once in a generation opportunity

4.22 Improving the offer of places to go for young people is central to delivering the Government's vision. The investment of unclaimed assets from dormant bank accounts offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to stimulate more visionary and ambitious thinking about what can be achieved through partnership, co-funding and putting young people in the lead. The Government wants to see a network of high-quality, dynamic and attractive places for young people to go that reflects local circumstances and uses existing provision such as community buildings, libraries, and arts centres.

Box 4.4: Unclaimed assets and investment in youth facilities

- The 2005 Pre-Budget Report (PBR)¹² announced the commitment of the Government and the bank and building society sector to develop a scheme to access genuinely unclaimed assets¹³ lying dormant in accounts and reinvest them to the benefit of society, while retaining a right for customers to reclaim their assets at any time.
- The PBR stated the Government's intention that "where owners and their assets cannot be reunited, the money should be invested in the community...with a focus on youth services that are responsive to the needs of young people, and also on financial capability and inclusion". These funds are community resources and are not a substitute for Government spending. As such, it is right that they are invested in community priorities, one of which is clearly places for young people to go.
- The Government has published two consultation documents in relation to the development of this scheme. These include the proposal for using the Big Lottery Fund infrastructure to distribute unclaimed assets on a UK-wide basis, with the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland able to determine their own priorities for distribution which meet the needs of their own countries.
- There is, of course, uncertainty surrounding the level of unclaimed assets funding that will be available. This will depend on the success of the proposed pre-launch reuniting exercise, and the need to hold back a proportion of the funds to cover anticipated reclaim requests.

4.23 This strategy signals the launch of a new programme of capital investment based on a more strategic approach to improving facilities for young people. Over the next 10 years the re-investment of unclaimed assets and new investment by the DCSF will lead to new and improved youth facilities in every constituency.

¹¹ *Implementing Youth Matters*, op cit.

¹² *Pre-Budget Report, Britain Meeting the Global Challenge: Enterprise, Fairness and Responsibility*, HM Treasury, December 2005

¹³ Defined as those accounts where there has been no customer-initiated activity for a period of at least 15 years

4.24 The Government expects to see this programme supported by the development of integrated capital strategies in every area, setting out plans for maximising the potential of existing assets and available new investment to improve local youth facilities. This should be within the broader context of integrated capital strategies which Local Authorities and their partners should be developing in the light of the recommendations of the Quirk Review of Community Management and Ownership of Public Assets.¹⁴

Diverse provision

4.25 The consultation document on the distribution of unclaimed assets set out the expectation, as described in Box 4.5, that investment will be focused on a combination of new provision such as:

- purpose-built integrated youth centres;
- refurbished existing provision; and
- smaller scale, more flexible places to go such as mobile youth centres, skate parks or music rehearsal spaces.

4.26 It will be for local providers, together with young people and communities to determine how best to respond to local needs.

Box 4.5: How young people and communities could benefit from unclaimed assets in England

For illustration purposes, if £100 million were available for distribution in England, it could be split between investment in:

- newly built youth centres (30 per cent);
- refurbishment of existing youth centres (40 per cent); and
- smaller scale flexible amenities such as skate parks or mobile youth centres (30 per cent).

Unit costs for this kind of investment vary widely, but using available estimates, this could mean 10 newly built centres, refurbishment of 110 existing youth clubs, and 350 smaller amenities, making a total of 470 places to go. To ensure that provision is integrated with the wider offer for young people and has local commitment, Government is attracted to the idea of requiring matched funding. If parties bidding for unclaimed assets investment secured match funding of 50 per cent, the total number of places to go could rise to 700. This is more than one for every constituency, or an average of 77 per region. These amenities would be real and lasting assets to the community and young people, reaping benefits for the young people of today and tomorrow.

4.27 Final decisions on investment will be subject to the decision-making arrangements set out in the proposed legislation. Within the resources available however, the Government will give priority to young people living in the most deprived communities. The Government will work with the Big Lottery Fund to determine the criteria against which these assets should be distributed. It is anticipated that they will include requirements that new projects:

- are youth-led, to ensure that investment genuinely meets the needs and aspirations of all young people;
- bring together young people from different backgrounds;

¹⁴ *Making Assets Work*, CLG 2007

- help achieve the *Every Child Matters* Outcomes;
- respond to local needs;
- demonstrate partnership working, bringing together Local Authorities and their Third Sector partners (via Children's trusts and Local Strategic Partnerships) to support and work with young people; and
- can demonstrate that they are viable developments and are sustainable after the initial investment is complete.

4.28 To ensure that provision is integrated with the wider offer for young people and has local commitment, the Government is attracted to the idea of requiring matched funding from partners. This funding could come from private sources, or from the various funding streams that already support activities for young people.

4.29 Before unclaimed assets funding becomes available, the Government will invest £60 million over the next three years in projects that contribute to the ambition of new and improved youth facilities in every constituency. These projects will follow similar criteria to that set out above, including being youth led and demonstrating partnership across Local Authorities and their third sector partners.

4.30 The Government expects that unclaimed assets and new DCSF funding will enhance existing and planned investment in young people's facilities and stimulate the development of local integrated capital strategies for youth facilities that are ambitious and innovative in leveraging existing funding and facilities, opportunities for co-funding, and the views of young people. These strategies will support the delivery of an offer to young people that includes:

- a wide range of attractive, structured, positive activities available throughout the week at times that suit young people;
- co-located multi-agency services delivered from within places that young people want to go to, and on an outreach basis;
- opportunities for young people to build relationships with, and learn along side, others from different backgrounds, as well as adults from the wider community;
- mobile resources to reach out to areas without dedicated youth facilities; and
- access to activities, opportunities and services through extended schools.

4.31 Local Authorities' place shaping role means that they will have a leading role, working together partners in Children's trusts and Local Strategic Partnerships, in improving the overall offer of youth facilities. Bids for unclaimed assets funding will be expected to be made by a partnership between the Local Authority and the third sector, who will benefit significantly from this new investment. Capital strategies will also offer a way for many more local partners to get behind the vision of developing a rich and vibrant network of places to go.

4.32 The best Local Authorities already involve a wide range of community partners in developing a high-quality local offer. The Government expects others to follow in order to maximise the potential of existing assets – this can include schools, local sports clubs, leisure providers, arts and the creative industries, Connexions one stop shops, third and private sector youth centres and facilities, and new facilities funded through

neighbourhood regeneration. If this approach is to be truly responsive to young people, communities and elected members will need to be prepared for the de-commissioning of some provision and reinvesting in more successful and popular facilities. Local Authorities are already expected to work with their LSP partners to develop a more corporate and strategic approach to the management and deployment of local assets, supported by guidance on all aspects of local authority asset management.

4.33 Working towards the delivery of this offer will be a catalyst for further integration of youth support services – locating services either in, or close to, youth facilities. How this is achieved will differ area by area. The most important aspect is that young people’s experience is one of joined up and responsive support services.

4.34 The Government believes that the greater emphasis on ‘place’ for young people should include using more use of neighbourhood facilities, including those owned and managed by community organisations. Bringing redundant or underused buildings and spaces back to use should also be part of local strategies. Box 4.6 sets out how wider changes to community assets could support these aims.

Box 4.6: Using community assets to create more places to go

- Bringing redundant or underused buildings and spaces back to use, as well as building new facilities, can have a very positive impact on communities.
- Making Assets Work, the final report of the Quirk Review of community management and ownership of public assets, found that the benefits of transferring assets to communities can outweigh risks and costs, particularly where supported by strong partnership.
- The Government is committed to implementing the Quirk Review in full.
- The investment in underused public buildings through the £30 million Community Assets Fund to facilitate their transfer to community ownership and management could also be used to develop more spaces for young people, sending a signal about their place in local communities.

4.35 Above all, the Government wants to attract greater innovation in the development of young people’s facilities. As Box 4.7 shows, many of the existing examples of leading edge youth facilities such as Bolton Lads and Girls Club, The Salmon Youth Centre in Bermondsey and Open in Norwich are driven by the inspiration and innovation of third and private sector providers working in partnership with Local Authorities. The Government believes there is much more potential for Local Authorities to work closely with such providers. They are often well placed to gain access to additional financing, to involve volunteers from communities, and to understand and deliver the services that teenagers want.

Box 4.7: Bolton Lads and Girls Club

By the late 1990s the Bolton Lads & Girls club – established in 1889 – was in need of new premises. Following extensive consultation and through the immense efforts of many local people, new premises were opened in 2002 funded by £1.1 million raised from staff, patrons, members and businesses on top of £4 million from Sport England.

Built on a brown-field site in the town centre, the club is thriving with over 3,000 members, including many from minority groups, the majority of whom are aged 9-19 years old. Over 70 per cent are from disadvantaged areas within a four to five mile radius and the average nightly attendance for the general youth club session is 250+.

The facility was built and fitted out to a high standard. Facilities include:

- large sports hall, fully equipped gym, indoor climbing walls, an all weather football pitch and a boxing gym managed by qualified sports coaches; A performing arts studio, cyber café and chill out area with TVs and pool tables, overseen by youth workers;
- A tuck shop and a café offering affordable hot meals; and
- A Connexions room for advice and guidance on a range of issues and a variety of flexible spaces used for mentoring.

The club also runs outreach and residential opportunities and offers specific activities for Black and Minority Ethnic groups; younger children; disabled young people; girls; and families – some of whom are referred to the club by Local Authority services. It also operates an award winning Mentoring Project which links over 130 vulnerable young people with a volunteer mentor.

The club is open seven nights a week and from 8.00am-10.00pm during every school holiday; it also loans out its facilities to schools to maximise usage and enhance the extended schools offer.

The club employs around 40 full-time and 20 part-time employees including specialist substance misuse and Connexions workers, supported by a further 300 volunteers trained by the club. There is a dedicated fundraising team which is essential in generating the funds required to meet the club's ongoing costs – in excess of £1.5 million annually. Young people are charged for using the facilities, but prices are kept affordable and some subsidies are available to the more economically disadvantaged.

"I have changed since I've been coming to the Club, I do loads now, the staff relate to us, they aren't bossy... they believe in us"

4.36 To lay the groundwork for the availability of unclaimed assets and new DCSF capital investment, the Government wants to explore innovative approaches to improving youth facilities and how better collaboration among local partners can lead to the creation of better places to go, including improved access to a wider range of services. **This year, Government will invest in a range of pathfinders in the most deprived areas that develop leading practice in the delivery of local integrated capital strategies.**

Improving access to sports

4.37 Sport has the power to transform young people's prospects – giving them skills and experiences for life, such as leadership, discipline, teamwork and self-esteem. It is a key part of engaging and motivating young people in the education system.

4.38 Over the last 10 years the Government has transformed PE and school sport for all young people with an unprecedented £2.4 billion investment. Building on this progress, through the National School Sport Strategy, 85 per cent of young people will participate in at least two hours of sport a week at school by 2008. The Government is investing a further £100 million so that by 2010 children aged 5 to 19 will be offered the chance to participate in five hours of sport, which will be available through school and community providers.

4.39 The London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games will inspire and encourage young people to take part in volunteering, cultural, sporting and physical activity. 2012 is a chance to create a lasting legacy for participation amongst young people from every part of the UK. The Government is exploring ways to make the most of this opportunity, including through:

- a four year Cultural Olympiad to bring a huge range of cultural and creative activities to places across the UK, including giving young people an opportunity to experience the best of British and world cultures and new chances to get involved;
- recruiting 'Young Ambassadors' from School Sport Partnerships throughout England to work with other young people in a variety of ways to inspire them to get involved with the London Games; and
- staging an annual UK School Games to give talented young people an opportunity to compete in a 2012-style event.

Box 4.8: South Hams - Youth Leisure Nights

Devon County Council's Youth Service has teamed up with local leisure centres in the towns of Dartmouth, Totnes, Kingsbridge and Ivybridge to provide regular youth leisure nights. For just £2, young people can participate in a wide range of positive activities at the centres, ranging from dance workshops to a lifeguard course. The sessions not only provide young people with a choice of affordable things to do, but are benefiting the young people and the wider community in a number of ways.

The scheme has been a great success at all four centres in the year since its inception. Up to 80 young people attend each leisure night, with special events attracting over 100. Figures for Dartmouth show that youth related offences have dropped by 27 per cent in the last year since the scheme started and youth related criminal damage has fallen by 42 per cent. An informal survey carried out among young people about smoking habits showed that a third had given up smoking since attending the youth nights and over 90 per cent said that the youth nights had contributed to them being healthy.

Numbers of young people attending the youth nights have risen steadily including those not previously attracted to any youth service. The project has not only increased usage of the leisure centres on a Friday evening, traditionally a quiet time, but also encourages young people to take up other new sports activities at other times during the week.

BARRIERS TO ACCESS

4.40 Delivering the Government’s vision for young people means working to ensure that they have the opportunities and support they need, including:

- access to regular positive activities that can help them gain new perspectives and skills, mix with other young people from different backgrounds, and build links with their community; and
- access to additional support, as and when they need it, with problems being identified early to prevent problems getting worse and helping young people get their lives back on track.

4.41 It is not enough to make opportunities and services available to young people. They also need to be attractive, accessible and appropriate for their needs. As discussed in Chapter 2, many young people may also need help to develop the skills, attitudes and motivation they need to make the most of them.

4.42 All young people can experience barriers. They can face practical issues, for example, a lack of awareness of what is on offer, not being able to afford it, or sometimes simply not being able to get there. They can also face personal barriers such as a lack of motivation, inspiration or confidence to take part. Young people from all backgrounds can experience these difficulties, but often they are experienced most by disadvantaged young people, who are the ones who could actually benefit most from the opportunities and services on offer. This means a universal approach to ensure accessibility for all young people is needed, with more support for those who have greater difficulties.

4.43 Evidence from the Review showed that consulting with young people and giving them greater influence over services is the most effective way to understand and tackle the particular barriers to access they are facing. For example, the issues facing young people in rural areas may be very different from those in inner city neighbourhoods. Similarly, certain groups have particular needs and expectations of services arising from their disability, their ethnic or faith background, their sexual orientation or because of their role in caring for others.

“Asian young women are not accessing open access youth provision – they are often not allowed out in the evenings.”
Local authority¹⁵

“We struggle to reach BME groups because they are less likely to look for help and support from a youth club and also because of language and cultural barriers.”
Voluntary Sector provider¹⁶

“I need to be around the house as I’m the oldest of three and we don’t live with our parents.” Young person¹⁷

¹⁵ DfES Children’s Services: *The Market for Provision of Positive Activities for Young People*, DfES/PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (2006)

¹⁶ DfES Children’s Services, op cit. DfES 2006

¹⁷ DfES Children’s Services, op cit. DfES 2006

4.44 Excellent Local Authorities and their partners already consult on, and take account of, the particular barriers young people face locally when planning youth support services.

4.45 Local Authorities and young people should take the lead on decisions to address particular access issues locally. The Government is committed to supporting them to find solutions to these issues, and through this Strategy will put in place further arrangements to enable them to do so.

Addressing practical barriers

INFORMATION

4.46 All young people need good information about the opportunities and services available in their area. The Government has already placed a statutory duty on Local Authorities to provide and keep up-to-date information about the local offer of positive activities. Statutory guidance will make clear that the information provided should be comprehensive, accurate and accessible. But consultation with young people shows there is still more to do.

"I don't have enough information about what's available, where would you go?"

Young person¹⁸

"I would like to join an art club but I don't know where to go to look for it."

Young person¹⁹

"We don't get told about anything." Young person²⁰

"No, I've never heard of the Youth Opportunity Fund...sounds interesting though...it seems everyone except us gets the help." Young person²¹

4.47 Many submissions to the Review's Call for Evidence also suggested that there was more to do to harness the power of new technology and peer-to-peer marketing approaches to share information more effectively and drive up young people's participation. Such approaches should build on the Youth Media Fund, which is providing funding to local projects to engage the most disadvantaged young people in developing media skills.

¹⁸ DfES Children's Services, op cit. DfES 2006

¹⁹ DfES Children's Services, op cit. DfES 2006

²⁰ Implementing Youth Matters, op cit.

²¹ Implementing Youth Matters, op cit.

Box 4.8: Mediabox

Mediabox (the brand name for the Youth Media Fund) is being delivered, on behalf of Government, by a consortium comprising First Light Movies, Media Trust, Skillset and UK Film Council. It aims to engage the most disengaged 13-19 year olds in hands-on media projects. It not only provides young people with opportunities for learning new skills, and thereby improving their future learning and work options, but also enables them to publicise what is going on in their communities, and to give their perspectives on the issues most important to them. Mediabox projects can highlight innovative ways of communicating not just to young people, but between young people.

An early example of a Mediabox initiative is the Heads Together project in Leeds which aims to provide leadership skills and educational opportunities for a mixed group of disadvantaged young people including those at risk of being excluded from school, young people from refugee and asylum seeker families and BME communities. The 40 participants will have opportunities to learn new skills and engage in a wider understanding of their peers and their community through the use of Community Radio Broadcasting. The project will also focus on improving communication between people of different ages in the community. The young people will explore personal identity, active citizenship, peer communication, community cohesion and racial justice and will learn technical and creative media skills in radio production, web design, interviewing and research. The aim is for the participants to be able to showcase their learning through two broadcasts during the year on FM radio, and continuously on the internet.

4.48 The Government will continue to provide funding to support Local Authorities to make available information about local opportunities to young people. Drawing on the lessons from Mediabox, the Government will also publish guidance on how Local Authorities can use technology, and harness the effects of peer influence, to market and support young people's access. This will be supported by work to explore the potential of using technology at national level to enable young people to showcase successful and popular positive activities, including those funded by the Youth Opportunity and Capital Funds.

"The big problem for young people is finding out what is available. We have lots of good positive activities on offer...we need to pull it all together by identifying the youth offer and communicating it to young people." Local Authority²²

4.49 Young people want to be more in control of and have more information about other aspects of their lives, including their health. The Government is currently piloting Teen Life Check – an online quiz-style health behaviour questionnaire for 11-14 year olds. This tool has been designed to empower young people to take greater control of their health – an important prerequisite for participation in positive activities – by raising awareness of risk-taking behaviour and signposting them onto further sources of information and support. Subject to positive evaluation findings, the Government will explore making this tool available more widely.

Information for Parents **4.50** It is often through parents that teenagers are encouraged to try new things and are supported to sustain their participation. However, while more affluent families often pave the way for their children's ambitions, those in poverty are less likely to do so. It is therefore vital that parents, particularly those facing disadvantage, are fully informed about the opportunities available in the local area.

²² DfES Children's Services, op cit. DfES (2006)

4.51 The Government will therefore encourage providers of parenting support, funded through the Parent Know-How programme, to **make available clear information on the importance and benefits to young people of participating in positive activities**. The Government will also expect Local Authorities to make available, as required in the Childcare Act 2006, full and comprehensive information on services and opportunities that are available for young people and include this in their Parents' Charter. The Parents' Charter will be developed over the next year and will require Local Authorities to set out clearly the 'core offer' of support from public services, to which all parents are already entitled.

4.52 Parents also say that they want more information and advice about supporting their children through the teenage years. Often they feel isolated or unsure about how to talk to them about sensitive issues such as sex and relationships. Yet when they do have this confidence to talk openly, their teenagers are far more likely to make better choices about their health and lifestyle. More information about the physical and psychological changes during adolescence, and how they affect their child's behaviour and disposition, could also help parents to manage the changing relationship with their teenage children.

4.53 Increasingly, parents will be able to access parenting support and advice through extended services in schools and other community settings. **The Government will encourage local areas to incorporate into their parenting strategies the good practice and materials available from successful programmes** such as Time to Talk and Speak Easy – which help parents gain the confidence to talk to their children about relationships and sexual health. This will give parents better information, the opportunity to share experiences with other parents, and professionals they can talk to in a familiar environment.

Cost

4.54 Research shows that the cost of attending activities is a key factor in the lack of participation in out-of-school opportunities by low-income young people.²³ While schools, local authority youth services and many voluntary organisations provide activities that are free or nearly free at the point of access, there is often a far wider range of provision available to those able to afford it. Socio-economic background and income have an impact on young people's access to different leisure activities, their opportunities to travel, and their ability to form new networks.²⁴

"There are a lot of things to do but most are too expensive to actually do them."

Young person²⁵

"The Government are saying that kids are getting fat but the gym is too expensive."

Young person²⁶

"You can't keep asking your parents for money every night, even if it's only a couple of pounds, it mounts up. It's not nice when you know you can't go to something regularly because your parents can't afford it and your friends are going and asking you why not." Young person²⁷

²³ *Childhood Poverty and Social Exclusion: from a Child's Perspective*. Bristol: Policy Press Ridge, T. 2002

²⁴ *Young People, Social Capital, and the Navigation of Life Transitions*, Boeck, 2007

4.55 The Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds are already helping to overcome cost barriers by putting purchasing power directly in the hands of young people. Chapter 3 set out how the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds will be extended at least until 2011.

4.56 *Aiming high for children: support for families* announced **an investment building up to £217m in 2010/11 to fund access to activities offered through extended schools for disadvantaged young people.** By 2010-11, these resources will enable an offer of two hours of free extended activities a week during term time, and two weeks a year of part-time holiday provision to children eligible for free school meals. Young people should be involved in deciding how to use this subsidy, which should support access not only to activities on school sites, but to those available more widely in the local area.

4.57 **The Government is investing to explore further the impact that giving disadvantaged young people spending power has on reducing financial barriers and increasing their participation in positive activities.** Up to nine Local Authorities will pilot a range of different approaches between now and 2009.

TRANSPORT

4.58 Many young people have difficulty getting to the opportunities or services they want to access. Those who are reliant on public transport, particularly those who are disadvantaged or from rural areas, are often let down by an inadequate service or prohibited by its high cost.

“It cost me £4 and took me two hours to get here...there’s no point having support unless people can get to it.”
Young person²⁸

4.59 Some Local Authorities are developing innovative ways to work more effectively with transport providers to improve young people’s ability to travel safely to activities and services. Despite this, transport remains a persistent concern for young people.

4.60 These are very local problems that demand local solutions. Some Local Authorities, in partnership with others, are already addressing them successfully. **Local Authorities, in fulfilling their statutory duty to ensure young people’s access to positive activities, will want to exploit the full range of options open to them to improve young people’s access to transport.** For instance some successful Local Authorities choose to:

- **subsidise** young people’s travel;
- enter into **partnerships** with local transport providers to develop ways to better serve the needs of young people; or
- broker and commission **community transport** to make the most of any unused capacity.

²⁵ *Implementing Youth Matters*, op cit.

²⁶ *DfES Children’s Services*, op cit. DfES 2006

²⁷ *DfES Children’s Services*, op cit. DfES 2006

²⁸ *Government’s Children & Young People’s Policy Review*, Dialogue with Young People, 2006

4.61 The Government is committed to supporting Local Authorities to assess if these or any other options will help to improve local transport for young people. For example, DCSF fund Regional Transport Advisors to support school travel advisors in each local authority by quality assuring school travel plans, including proposals for ensuring access to extended services. In addition, the Department for Transport provides free technology that Local Authorities can use as part of their place-shaping role, as a firm basis for better joint transport planning with partners. It enables them to assess travel times from any particular location to services using different modes of transport. Once overlaid with area deprivation data and the location of positive activities, this can offer a powerful picture of how accessible the local offer is to young people in different wards.

4.62 As with all other aspects of the youth offer, consultation with young people should influence local transport plans. In the long term the Government wants to see, as part of wider reforms aimed at making transport more responsive to the needs of the community, **greater involvement of young people with local transport planning bodies across the country.**

Box 4.9: Bus Buddies

In 2005 the Bus Buddies, a group of 15 young people from across the North East, volunteered to travel the length and breadth of the region on public transport over a two day period, speaking to others and producing a DVD recording their views on how services could be improved for young people.

They found that teenagers in rural areas felt relatively safe on buses, but that provision was poor and expensive; whereas in urban areas while there were more services, young people felt less safe. They also felt that the attitude of some bus drivers was intimidating and unwelcoming, while recognising that this worked both ways and that young people have a responsibility to behave properly.

In January 2006, the Bus Buddies presented their findings to the Regional Bus Forum. As well as agreeing to consider the Bus Buddies' findings, members stated their intention to set up a "mini bus forum" for young people to work with the Regional Youth Work Unit, in order to ensure that the topics of most concern to young people, namely school transport, concessionary fares, anti-social behaviour and drivers' attitudes were addressed.

As a direct result of the Buddies' findings, two of the three regional operators were encouraged to consider further training for their drivers and one of the companies agreed to pay for the group to produce a second DVD for use as a training aid.

4.63 Local Authorities can find it difficult to influence private sector transport providers to meet the transport needs of particular groups of people, even when communities make their views known. The Department for Transport's recently published draft Local Transport Bill recognises this and **proposes giving Local Authorities greater opportunities to control or influence bus companies locally in order to make transport more responsive to the needs of communities. In doing so, the Government expects them to give sufficient recognition to young people's needs.** The arrangements set out in Chapter 3 will provide a focus for improved engagement of young people in local transport planning. In return, the Government expects young people to use transport responsibly.

4.64 Additionally, **DCSF will work with the Department for Transport to improve guidance, support and challenge to Children Trusts and transport planners to encourage joined up planning and commissioning.** In particular this will focus on:

- identifying and harnessing capacity of the third and private sectors;

- giving young people a role in drawing up Local Transport Plans; and
- encouraging the spread of best practice.

SAFETY

4.65 Some young people find it difficult to access youth facilities and support services because of concerns about their own safety. While young people in general tend to feel safer than adults walking alone after dark, nearly two thirds of 16-19 year olds do not²⁹. Those living in some inner-city areas, and young women more than young men, can be prevented from accessing opportunities by such fears.

4.66 The factors that combine to make young people feel unsafe or at risk of being a victim of crime are complex and wide-ranging. While they affect their ability to access youth facilities and support services, they go wider than this and need concerted action from a range of agencies, with the support of the community, to tackle them. Some of these concerns are due to the fear of crime that many members of the community experience. Others are more specific to young people, in particular, the problem of ‘territorialism’, which can make certain places – the route to a youth club, for example – effectively ‘no go’ areas.

“I don’t tend to travel on my own, I don’t feel comfortable with it, especially at night... you don’t know who you’re going to bump into,” Young person ³⁰

4.67 **The Government expects local partners, including Local Safeguarding Children Boards, Local Strategic Partnerships and children’s trusts to work together to address young people’s safety and reflect actions in local planning processes.** Partners may embed this work in Local Area Agreements. Children and Young People’s Plans should therefore include the actions that each partner will take to make communities safer for young people – including the key elements of local police strategies and planning.

4.68 Consultation with young people will be critical to ensure that their safety concerns are understood by service planners. Local Authorities should also consider drawing on the expertise of third sector organisations that specialise in tackling conflict. Such organisations could be commissioned to intervene directly to address problems in a particular area, or they could share their expertise in order to help understanding of the issues.

4.69 The Government has recently launched *Staying Safe*, a major consultation on children and young people’s safety, which seeks to raise awareness of the importance of safety for young people and ensure that safeguarding work is coherent and effectively co-ordinated across Government³¹. *Staying Safe* also sets out proposals to extend bullying policies and training used in schools to other settings, including children’s homes, extended school services, Further Education colleges and youth provision.

²⁹ *Citizenship Survey: Community Cohesion Topic Report*, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2005

³⁰ *Talking Heads, Travelling on Public Transport is safe?*, Connexions Direct website,

³¹ www.ecm.gov.uk/stayingsafe

4.70 Efforts to improve young people’s safety will also be supported by a forthcoming youth crime strategy and good practice guidance for local partners. This will be produced jointly by Government, the Association of Chief Police Officers, and the Youth Justice Board. Among others things, this will specifically address support for young people who are victims of crime or anti-social behaviour, recognising that a proportion of these young people may also already be offenders or at risk of becoming offenders unless an intervention takes place.

REACHING OUT

4.71 For some young people, merely making opportunities available and tackling practical barriers to access will not be enough. Some may simply need extra encouragement or help with the organisational skills necessary to find their way to local opportunities. Others, particularly those living in deprived communities or without a supportive family environment, may need a greater level of support. Some young people may need help to manage their behaviours, or need support to raise their aspirations and level of motivation. Reaching out to support and engage these young people is crucial, given that they are the ones who have the most to gain from the opportunities and support services available.

“Confidence is important. People miss out on a lot of activities because of a lack of confidence.” Young person³²

“A key barrier is the ‘Billy Elliot phenomenon’ – many kids simply would never think of engaging in many activities – how do we make more of these kids want to have a go?” Local authority³³

Box 4.10: Participation in Positive Activities

One quarter of young people do not participate in any positive activities³⁴. This group disproportionately includes those at risk of the poorest outcomes, including:

- those who are no longer in education, employment or training;
- those from Black and Minority Ethnic groups (particularly Pakistani and Bangladeshi young people);
- those from lower socio-economic groups;
- older teenagers; and
- young disabled people.

4.72 Positive role models – both adults and peers – can encourage young people to try new things. Families, communities and professionals all have a role to play in building relationships with young people to inspire and engage their interests.

4.73 Communities are often uniquely placed to understand and respond to specific needs and challenges. Serious issues associated with young people from particular ethnic or faith groups may need to be addressed by communities themselves, rather than solely by public services who may not be as flexible or well placed to respond.

³² Government’s Policy Review of Children & Young People, Dialogue with Young People, 2006

³³ DfES Children’s Services: The Market for Provision of Positive Activities for Young People, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, DfES (2006)

³⁴ Young People in Britain: The Attitudes and Experiences of 12-19 year olds, Park et al, National Centre for Social Research, 2004.

4.74 Engaging a small minority of young people, for example those with entrenched personal problems, those who have had contact with the Youth Justice System, or those who are part of a group that is marginalised from the community, can only be achieved with the support of structured and intensive provision, often provided by the third sector. Many of these young people, for example some young Black men, can be caught in a cycle of low aspiration and achievement, and are often vulnerable to negative peer influences, including, at their most extreme, gang culture. The Government recently initiated, funded and supported the REACH group to provide recommendations on how to raise the attainment and aspirations of Black boys and young Black men. One of the themes in the report is the significant difference that Black third sector organisations can play in helping Black boys to achieve.

Targeted support 4.75 The Government is putting in place reforms, announced in *Youth Matters* to provide integrated targeted support for the most vulnerable and difficult to reach young people, including those who are not in school or other forms of education, and those in the youth justice system, and their families.

4.76 These reforms, which are currently being implemented in all Local Authorities, acknowledge that services need to respond differently to young people in these circumstances, drawing on the strengths of multiple agencies working closely together. Through lead professionals and multi-agency teams, drawn from the full range of local services for young people, including social care, CAMHS and Youth Offending Teams, they will receive help to access whatever services necessary to remove barriers to participation and prevent problems escalating, with ongoing support from an adult they can trust.

Schools 4.77 Schools, as the main universal service for young people, are important to ensuring that this support and brokerage of activities are provided as early as possible. Extended services in schools and investment in a more personalised approach to learning through, for instance, a personal "learning guide" or coach for each pupil, should enable closer relationships between schools and local services in identifying and supporting those starting to develop problems. This should result in vulnerable young people benefiting from quicker referral to specialist help by someone they trust. Access to positive activities is a core part of any package of targeted support. For some young people, it is the foundation through which they build the confidence and a trustful relationship with adults who are working to secure their engagement in learning or employment.

Box 4.11 Targeted Youth Support: A young person's journey in Gloucester

Seb, aged 12, was bullied at his primary school and dealt with it by behaving badly in lessons, resulting in exclusion from school. He built up a reputation at school for being someone who gets into trouble. He had a close family member who was in prison and tended to mix with older young people.

His school assessed his needs using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process. This identified that Seb was worried about being beaten up in his neighbourhood and had been involved in drug dealing. He had recently used cannabis for the first time and said he liked getting stoned, drinking alcohol and smoking. He had problems sleeping and on occasions had talked about committing suicide. He distrusted people he does not know well. He had been chased by the police but had not been arrested for any offence. He talked about how he wanted to change and to try to stay out of trouble, both at school and with the police.

A multi-agency meeting was arranged to plan action to help Seb with the difficulties he was facing. A number of interventions were agreed, including support from a Youth Inclusion and Support Team (YIST) worker as Seb was clearly at risk of more serious offending, and from the child and adult mental health service (CAMHS). Seb built a rapport with the YIST worker, his lead professional, who worked with the multi-agency group to ensure delivery of the actions agreed on Seb's CAF, as well as working individually with Seb to improve his behaviour.

Seb went on to see CAMHS regularly and engaged in a number of positive activities, including helping out behind the scenes in an amateur dramatics production and attending army cadets twice a week. His school continued to work with him to tackle the bullying issue. As a result, his behaviour at school began to improve quickly and he has not been in trouble with the police.

4.78 The Government is also investing in a range of targeted support measures to address the needs of parents and families who are struggling to provide a stable family environment or parent their child effectively. The Department for Children, Schools and Families is piloting Parenting Early Intervention Pathfinders in a number of areas to increase support for the parents of children and young people aged 8-13 and ensure that they receive an earlier, more effective, coordinated package of relevant support to prevent negative outcomes. Family Intervention Projects in 53 areas across the country have been using intensive tailored action with supervision and clear sanctions to improve the behaviour of persistently anti-social households. Up to 1,000 practitioners are being trained to deliver parenting programmes and one-to-one support to parents attending the projects. Funding is also being provided to train specialists to deliver parenting support to parents whose children are involved in anti-social behaviour. Children's Trusts should recognise this key contribution parents can make, and conversely, how building young people's resilience through support and activities can help them to deal with more adverse family backgrounds.

Supported activities **4.79** Some activity-based programmes and approaches to youth work are particularly effective in reaching disaffected young people. These are often delivered by third sector and community organisations who have developed expertise in securing the engagement of the most marginalised groups. The Government wants to expand the availability of such provision for the hardest to reach. **Over the next three years the Government will therefore invest in greater support for third sector organisations to grow and develop provision which reaches out to the most marginalised young people.**

Box 4.12: Fairbridge – third sector provision for the most disengaged

The national youth charity Fairbridge uses positive activities to engage socially excluded young people and enable them to develop the skills and attributes they need to reconnect with mainstream services and succeed in life.

The young people supported by Fairbridge often have low self-esteem and chaotic lifestyles, which may mean that they find it difficult to engage with mainstream organisations that require sustained commitment. Fairbridge offers young people a tailored programme to raise their self esteem and aspirations and to help them identify long term goals. While many are attracted by the activities on offer the charity is clear that its aim is development rather than diversion - activities are structured, facilitated and set within the context of a wider long-term development plan, supported by a key worker. Anisha, aged 19, started at Fairbridge Kennington in November 2006. Before that, she had dropped out of college for a second time and was living in a hostel. Anisha's experience shows how constructive activities can be the first step in re-engaging in learning. Her first challenge was to complete a week-long 'Access Course' in the Peak District, where she took on activities such as abseiling, night walking and navigation. "The course really pushed me out of my comfort zone and taught me a lot about team work and controlling my emotions. I felt like I'd achieved something for the first time in ages."

Having returned from the Peak District, Anisha took part in a number of other courses, including Learn 2 Earn and the Community Sports Leaders Award. She adds, 'Since coming to Fairbridge I've had a really clear plan of what I'm going to do and what I can achieve. I know that even when things get a bit tough and I can't come for a few weeks the staff are still there to support me and help me stay on track.'

In Anisha's words: "All in all everyone at Fairbridge has helped me so much to become the person I am today. I can now realise my strengths. I am now looking to get myself back in employment. I'm volunteering and looking into doing a youth work qualification. With people that believe in me, I know I can stay focused and motivated and not fall back into the vicious circle that it is so easy to get trapped in."

4.80 Programmes such as Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP), Positive Futures, the Young People's Development Programme and Youth Inclusion Programmes are all successful in re-engaging young people facing serious problems because they combine structured, high quality activities with ongoing professional support and advice. However, experience and evidence shows that provision needs to be year-round – which not all of the schemes above are – and drawn from a wide range of good providers that are best placed to meet the needs of different groups of young people.

4.81 Over the next three years, the Government will therefore invest significantly, building on the success of PAYP, to expand the availability of year-round highly personalised provision for the most disengaged young people, in order to sustain outcomes and support progression.

4.82 Among other approaches, this will involve professionals holding a small activities budget for some young people, and purchasing provision from a range of different providers. This will increase the diversity of provision open to such young people, and give them the opportunity to mix with others from different backgrounds. The Government expects children's trusts to continue to commission these activities from a wide range of proven effective providers, particularly those from the third sector.

Outreach 4.83 Outreach youth work can be an important part of engaging highly disaffected, challenging young people who will remain unlikely to access youth centres or other facilities. It can help address anti-social behaviour and secure young people's engagement in wider support services, building young people's growing involvement in services and activities. Highly skilled youth workers can influence attitudes and behaviours while encouraging young people to progress.

Box 4.13: Tower Hamlets Rapid Response Team

To support the Tower Hamlets Partnership and Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhoods Initiative aimed at tackling crime and fear of crime, Tower Hamlets has introduced a Rapid Response Team (RRT). The RRT provides youth services in locations where there is anti-social behaviour and no access to any other youth provision.

The RRT are a group of Tower Hamlets youth workers who can be tasked to specific areas where youth-related disorder is prevalent, enabling them to respond to developing situations quickly and round the clock.

When the RRT is deployed, work is undertaken with the relevant Safer Neighbourhood Action Group to discuss what medium and longer-term youth provision is needed. This could include a Mobile Youth Centre for a period of six months. The mobile centre is fully equipped and staffed by trained youth workers and is an highly effective way of engaging young people and introducing youth provision into an estate or area where either little or no provision exists.

In view of the Community Safety Service Operations Manager:

"The Rapid Response Team has made a vital and extensive contribution to the effectiveness of the Tower Hamlets Partnership in dealing with issues of serious youth disorder. Their in-depth knowledge of community dynamics, and their ability to be rapidly deployed to any area to engage with young people, has successfully defused many potentially volatile situations."

In the view of the Chief Inspector, Tower Hamlets Police:

"The Rapid Response Team is an integral part of policing in Tower Hamlets. This highly motivated and professional group of people have the skills and attributes to reduce disorder, thus prevent crime and improve the safety of all residents in Tower Hamlets. They will respond to requests for assistance at all times day and night as well as provide an effective response to planned events such as the Melas and Festivals in the Borough. We are very fortunate to have them work alongside of us."

Residential programmes 4.84 Raising young people's aspirations can break the cycle of poor peer effects and the impact of living in fractured and disadvantaged communities. Taking part in residential activity programmes, such as those provided through the Do it 4 Real scheme, which take young people out of their immediate surroundings, can provide opportunities for young people to mix with peers from different backgrounds, help them to change their perceptions of others, understand and appreciate cultural differences, and develop new interests, ambitions and aspirations.

Box 4.14: Do it 4 Real

Young people involved in Do it 4 Real say that the main things they got out of their experience include:

- improved self-confidence from achieving things they thought they never could;
- trying things they had never tried before; and
- making new friends from different parts of England and learning about where they came from.

4.85 Existing programmes such as PAYP have made use of residential activities for these reasons. While countries including the US and France place much more importance on this type of provision, many young people in this country still do not have access to these opportunities for reasons including affordability and aspiration.

4.86 The Government will therefore invest in expanding the availability of residential opportunities, building on the success of Do it 4 Real. The focus will be on creating subsidised opportunities for young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to mix with a wide range of peers.

5

QUALITY: EFFECTIVE SERVICES DELIVERED BY A SKILLED WORKFORCE

SUMMARY

5.1 Evidence shows that high quality services delivered by a skilled and confident workforce are the key to making a real and lasting impact on young people's life chances. Young people have to think highly of services if they are to take up opportunities which are not only fun and exciting, but can also improve their lives.

5.2 The experience of recent reforms and consultation with young people has revealed much about what quality looks like. The challenge is how to ensure that local services are designed and commissioned to deliver opportunities and services that both attract young people and improve their outcomes.

5.3 Continuing to drive up quality means enabling more effective coordination and commissioning of services from across the statutory, third and private sectors; and supporting and developing the workforce to employ the very best practice in working with young people.

5.4 To **improve partnership and collaboration** among services and across sectors, the Government will:

- expect local partners to pool a proportion of their budgets spent on preventative initiatives; and
- invest in the expansion of third sector providers, particularly those with a track record of delivering services to the most disadvantaged young people.

5.5 To **clarify priorities and strengthen accountability** at local level, the Government will:

- ensure that performance management arrangements give sufficient priority to increasing the number of young people on the path to success; and
- work with the IDeA, as part of the National Improvement Strategy, to increase elected members' understanding of the importance of services for young people.

5.6 To **facilitate the use of effective practice** that can improve young people's outcomes, the Government will review current youth sector support arrangements with the aim of improving quality across all sectors.

5.7 Finally, to **support and develop the workforce** the Government will introduce a package of measures to improve the capacity of both managers leading the reform of local services and those working directly with young people, and to remove cultural barriers between agencies.

5.8 Over the next 10 years, these reforms will deliver the vision for quality set out in Box 5.1.

Box 5.1: A vision for quality**By 2018:**

- all young people will be able to benefit from high quality, integrated support services delivered by a wide range of statutory, third and private sector partners;
- a strong accountability and performance management framework will drive services to work preventatively and promote personal development and build resilience; and
- a skilled and confident workforce will commission and deliver the most effective practice, known to improve young people's outcomes.

QUALITY: WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT MATTERS

5.9 Evidence considered by the Review points to the importance of a high quality local offer that ensures that all young people can reach their full potential. A high quality offer is characterised by:

- services focused on building resilience in order to improve young people's outcomes and in particular, to protect more vulnerable young people against risk;
- the availability of a diverse menu of positive activities that meets young people's needs and desires. This is critical to ensuring that they find what is on offer attractive and are therefore more likely to participate; and
- the offer of additional support to those who need it through signposting and integration. Positive activities can be an excellent entry point to wider services, particularly for those who find formal services unattractive or difficult to access.

5.10 *Youth Matters* started a process of integration across local services for young people to create a higher quality, more effective and responsive system organised around their needs and voice. It stated that this was to be a universal offer, but with a strong focus on those who are struggling or facing challenging circumstances.

5.11 Local Authorities are responsible for leading this process of integration, involving their partners in joint planning and in commissioning strong contributions from the best local providers across the statutory, third and private sectors, who are able to demonstrate an impact on young people's outcomes.

5.12 Evidence shows that ultimately it is the practice of professionals and volunteers working directly with young people that transforms outcomes. Understanding adolescent development – including the specific physical and psychological development that occurs in adolescence impacting on health, wellbeing and behaviour and how it is influenced, is therefore vitally important to designing and delivering high quality youth activities.

5.13 The drive towards quality and evidence-based practice should not stifle innovation nor dampen the efforts of smaller grass roots organisations. Local community provision, run by enthusiastic individuals, will always play a key role in engaging young people as part of the local offer.

5.14 Successful implementation of these reforms in every local area is essential to offering higher quality youth support services that can play their part in narrowing the gaps in outcomes – in particular health and educational inequalities – that continue to exist between different groups of young people.

Box 5.2: Moving towards integrated services in Derby

One area of Derby is reconfiguring services to establish a Youth Support Team, consisting of a range of staff from Health, Social Care, Education Welfare and Youth services, as well as Connexions and local extended schools. The multi-disciplinary team will be co-located in the areas where they work.

The development of locality planning with partnership agencies and schools will allow both universal and targeted services to be more effectively commissioned, planned and delivered to meet the needs of local young people.

The Youth Support Team will offer a wide range of service delivery, for example one stop shops, detached work in schools, information, advice and guidance, positive activities and targeted engagement programmes for teenagers.

Supported by extended school staff, the Youth Support Team is developing multi-agency working in secondary schools, which allows for the improved coordination of service delivery linked to young people’s needs and academic pathways.

Although this model will need time to bed down, staff already feel that they have a much better understanding of each others’ roles and responsibilities and that there is better communication and coordination of delivery to young people.

PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

5.15 High quality provision has been at the heart of the Government’s approach to young people over the past 10 years. Many third sector organisations also take quality very seriously and strive to improve their performance. The Transforming Youth Work Development Fund has provided significant investment in youth work and the National Youth Agency has developed the Youth Services Quality Mark for Services for Young People to support local organisations’ quality management systems.

5.16 While the reforms set out in *Youth Matters*, and local activity to implement them, will go a long way towards driving up the quality of activities and support services for young people, a series of challenges remain:

- the overall local offer of activities and support is still poorly coordinated in many places and not diverse and flexible enough to meet the needs of all young people;
- commissioners do not always draw on the best of available provision. The third sector in particular faces significant challenges to maximising its contribution to the local youth support service;
- the role of local partners and the relationship between each within the local system of support for young people can lack clarity, reducing overall quality and impact. This may be due to fragmented funding streams or confusing messages from central Government about relative priorities. This can lead to inefficiency which can be overcome by better local collaboration and partnership working, including between schools and youth support services;

- local services including extended schools, Youth Offending Teams and Primary Care Trusts, do not always demonstrate the necessary commitment and shared investment to enable effective preventative work with young people or recognise the high cost of not doing so. Government priorities for individual services can sometimes sustain this problem;
- Local Authorities and their partners do not always give sufficient priority to services for young people – research shows that where statutory youth services have not been considered a local priority, they have tended to under-perform;
- different sectors often lack a shared understanding about the most effective, evidence-based practice, as well as systematic approaches to sharing and implementing it; and
- there remain issues around workforce quality, leadership and management of youth support services. Providing strategic direction for the workforce and improving local leadership will be essential in driving better partnership working and achieving better outcomes for young people.

5.17 To address these challenges the Government will introduce further reform to:

- **improve partnership and collaboration** - among services and across sectors - to facilitate better coordination of the local offer to young people and a greater focus on prevention;
- **clarify priorities and strengthen accountability** - to ensure local roles and responsibilities are clear and performance management arrangements incentivise the delivery of a quality offer;
- **facilitate the use of effective practice** - to ensure those working with young people deliver the highest quality support and evidence-based interventions known to improve outcomes; and
- **support and develop the workforce** - both at managerial level and at the frontline to improve the quality of local leadership and delivery of services to young people, and to enable better joint working by removing cultural barriers between agencies.

IMPROVING PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION AMONG SERVICES AND ACROSS SECTORS

5.18 Evidence considered by the Review points strongly to the need for more effective collaboration in the delivery of youth support services. Local Authorities need to play a strong leadership and coordinating role, working with a wide range of local partners from the statutory, third and private sectors to provide high quality services for young people.

Focusing on Prevention 5.19 Increasingly, evidence shows that youth programmes that seek to develop young people's skills and attitudes, rather than remedy 'problem behaviours', are more likely to result in them achieving their potential and resisting the effects of negative influences on their health, their learning and their behaviour. However, current funding and accountability arrangements still do not necessarily support a focus on positive youth development and prevention, despite the high cost of intervening only when problems get more serious, for example in response to poor adolescent health or offending behaviour. There are often programmes run by different services focused on the same young people, but not necessarily aligned – causing confusion on the ground, loss of impact and poor use of resources. The new performance framework and funding arrangements proposed in *Strong and Prosperous Communities: the Local Government White Paper*, are aimed at facilitating a more coordinated approach.

5.20 To enable better joint working, **the Government expects children's trusts to continue to embed good practice in working with Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) to involve the full range of local organisations in the development of Children and Young People's Plans. It is important that the CYP Plans give strong focus to the local strategy to deliver integrated services and a quality offer of positive activities for young people**, being clear about each partner's role in youth support services and young people's participation in positive activities.

5.21 More services investing together in a more preventative approach will ultimately help all local partners meet their objectives – be they reducing youth offending, improving sexual health or improving community cohesion. The Government expects that effective joint planning and the delivery of common strategic objectives for young people will require LSP partners with an interest in young people's provision to pool an element of their funding.

5.22 To test this approach, from 2008, Youth Offending Teams will be expected to pool with local youth support services 10 per cent of the Youth Justice Board funding they would expect to devote to young people's prevention initiatives. This approach will be tested on the basis that it enables Local Authorities to deliver more to the most at-risk young people, not less. The Department of Children, Schools and Families will work closely across Government to monitor the impact of this change on delivery, and if successful, this approach could be continued after the next round of spending from 2011.

5.23 In addition, **the Government expects all Primary Care Trusts to pool their budgets for preventing poor adolescent health outcomes, such as teenage conceptions, and harm from drugs and alcohol, with Local Authorities. It will be for local partners, as part of the Local Area Agreement process, to agree which budgets should be pooled to best deliver shared goals on health outcomes and how those monies are accounted for. The Department of Health will make this expectation clear to PCTs later this year, in preparation for the financial year 2008-09.** PCTs that do not pool budgets with their local partners will need to demonstrate that they are continuing to deliver the relevant health outcomes for young people, within the new performance and outcomes framework for the NHS and social care.

5.24 Further work will be carried out as part of future Public Service Agreement delivery agreements, including how the Local Government National Indicator Set and the NHS and Social Care performance and outcomes framework contribute to increasing the numbers of young people on the path to success.

Working with the education system

5.25 The education system, as the main universal service for young people, is central to creating a more preventative system. Where schools and colleges work closely with youth support services, young people benefit from better access to positive activities and personal support when they need it. This can remove barriers to learning and lead to better attainment and behaviour.

5.26 However, it is still too often the case that respective roles are not clear or there is resistance to working together. Differences in culture and ethos are often the cause. Within Children's Trust arrangements and building on the new statutory duty on schools to promote pupils' wellbeing, the Government expects integrated youth support services to work closely with schools and colleges in:

- helping learning providers and employers identify and respond effectively to young people's learning and wider needs and know how to draw in extra support when it is required;
- bringing in a range of support and advice services to work in and with schools and other learning providers to address needs, develop young people's social and emotional skills and help them make positive choices;
- providing a diverse menu of positive activities in and outside school that build skills and attitudes that support learning and young people's wider development;
- providing a lead professional for young people with multiple needs, to coordinate interventions and provide one-to-one support, including in advance of and during transition at 16 to prevent disengagement from learning; and
- helping parents to support young people's participation both in learning and positive activities.

5.27 The development of extended schools provides a clear opportunity for closer working with youth support services to deliver a better offer to young people. **The planning of extended services should be integral to the development of the wider Children and Young People's Plan, and the activities planned and offered by extended schools should be embedded within the overall local offer.**

5.28 The Government is committed to ensuring the sustainability of extended schools. Effective management of, and cooperation between, extended schools and other services is key to delivering this. There is already funding in the system to support the recruitment of extended schools coordinators in secondary schools and clusters of primary schools, and as the number of extended schools increases, funding will be available to support this further.

5.29 These coordinators will help to manage the delivery and provision for extended services for pupils, including liaising with extended schools remodelling advisers in the Local Authority and coordinating the extended schools role as part of local children's services, and other schools and third party providers, to ensure that pupils are offered a coherent and varied programme of activities.

5.30 The closer working between local agencies and schools provides a firm foundation to make further progress on reducing health inequalities amongst young people, which is an important prerequisite for participation in positive activities. Services should seek to build on the success of the Young People's Development Programme to offer a youth development approach with emotional and physical health at its core. The *You're Welcome* quality criteria – *Making health services young people friendly* also provide an opportunity for considering how to make health services accessible to young people.

5.31 Learning from the evaluation of the Department of Health Teenage Health Demonstration Sites, and from experiences in other countries, the Government will explore over the lifetime of this strategy, innovative approaches to the provision of school-based adolescent health and well-being services, complementing those provided in the community.

5.32 This will involve looking at the potential for reshaping the existing school nursing service and, where appropriate, locating them within emerging or newly developed multi-disciplinary teams being established as part of the *Every Child Matters* reforms. Such teams could be well placed to manage a wide range of conditions and issues such as asthma; diabetes; emotional health; smoking cessation; obesity; sexual health; drugs and alcohol management; sports injuries; vaccinations and immunisations and emotional and behavioural issues; as well as input to health promotion and PSHE. In particular, such a service could assist in the early identification of and support for incipient emotional health and mental health problems, building on existing work through the SEAL programme in primary and secondary schools. A model of this sort in New Zealand secondary schools has seen significant benefits across a range of outcomes. Evaluation of this approach shows significantly improved access and outcomes for young people in all areas of health care and an improvement for some students in educational achievement.

Box 5.3: The Hackney Health Hut Model

In Hackney, a multi-agency service model brings together statutory and third sector organisations in schools to improve the health and wellbeing of students. This is achieved by providing easier access to services, building better relations between young people and professionals, increasing early intervention and referral to specialist services and reducing the stigma of addressing health issues. The first Health Hut, funded through Hackney's Drug Action Team (DAT) in partnership with The Learning Trust, was established at Stoke Newington School and is open to students from neighbouring Daniel House Pupil Referral Unit and the youth centre in the school. A second Health Hut is now up and running at Hackney Free & Parochial School.

Consultation with young people, including a strong focus on peer consultation, indicated that their main areas of concern are sexual health, mental health and drugs and alcohol. To meet these demands, SUB19, the DAT commissioned young people's substance misuse service, 'CHYPS Plus Choices' (which provides support on sexual health issues), and Connexions, are all part of the multi-agency team. Links have also been forged with 'Off Centre', a counselling service for 13 to 25 year olds and 'A Space' who specialise in transition between primary and secondary school. Swift and easy referrals can be made to other specialist services where needed.

Young people were also consulted about barriers to accessing services to influence both the design and delivery of the service model. Young people suggested the name 'Health Hut' and continue to be influential in ensuring that the space is somewhere they feel at ease to access health information in their own time.

The Health Hut in Stoke Newington opened in the summer term of 2006 and since then over 1300 young people have made use of drop-in sessions and one-to-one support. Of those accessing individual support, more than 70% have been via self-referral, demonstrating the power of the model in terms of empowering young people to manage their well-being.

Working with the third sector

5.33 Delivering high quality provision means drawing on the strengths of partners from all sectors – statutory, third and private. Third sector providers often lead the way in engaging the most marginalised young people, yet some can find it difficult to influence commissioning and decision-making processes and get involved in local delivery arrangements. Where services do join up, it can be because of the drive and determination of the individuals involved rather than the systematic commitment from all partners. Many providers with real growth potential are held back because of a lack of sustainable resources and poor management practices and systems. The result is that innovative local practice is lost to the wider system.

5.34 Failing to capitalise on the expertise of all local partners limits the diversity and quality of provision and its ability to reach the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of young people. It is critical that third and private sector providers are real partners in local arrangements for supporting young people, and have full opportunity to make a contribution to identifying needs and planning to meet them. *Strong and Prosperous Communities* contained proposals to strengthen the third sector's representation on Local Strategic Partnerships and in developing Local Area Agreements, which are discussed in more detail later.

“Local authorities tend to rely on a small number, 2 or 3, of organisations to provide information and deliver services, resulting in commissioning being based on historical ties rather than value for money.” Voluntary Sector Provider¹

5.35 Consultation with stakeholders and consideration of the evidence – set out in more detail in the Review’s discussion document – led to broadly similar conclusions as the HMT/Cabinet Office third sector review of the role of the third sector in economic and social regeneration. In response to this the Government has committed to:

- **taking action to embed the principle that all Government departments and their agencies should pass on the flexibility of sustainable three-year funding to the third sector as the norm rather than the exception;**
- **delivering the two year National Programme for Third Sector Commissioning to train 2,000 commissioners in Local Authorities, Primary Care Trusts and other agencies. The programme will build in sustainability and long-term change through embedding the principles of good commissioning from the start; and**
- **demonstrating the third sector’s impact in public service delivery more persuasively through a stronger evidence base.**

5.36 In addition, when Local Authorities commission from third sector youth organisations, they are expected to follow the eight principles of good commissioning, set out in the Cabinet Office third sector action plan.²

5.37 The Government recognises that not all third sector organisations wish to be commissioned to deliver services. Some, such as smaller community bodies, would prefer grant funding or support in other ways. The third sector review therefore contains proposals to:

- **take forward the Budget 2007 announcement of an £80 million fund in small grants to community groups, through local grant funders to enable people and groups to make a difference in their local areas, including on services and activities for young people;**
- **reform Capacitybuilders, the Government-backed scheme to offer infrastructure support to third sector organisations. Future additional investment will focus on ensuring that infrastructure bodies are providing practical, tangible projects and programmes of direct benefits to the front line and better infrastructure support to small community organisations; and**
- **provide investment to improve the level and quality of small grant funding available to community groups.**

5.38 While many of the barriers experienced by youth providers are generic to all third sector organisations, the market for youth services is particularly under-developed³ and not contestable. As a result, young people are not getting the choice they deserve. The Government therefore wants to go further to support good third sector youth providers.

¹ *DfES Children’s Services: The Market for Provision of Positive Activities for Young People*, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, DfES, 2006

² *Partnership in Public Services: An Action Plan for Third Sector Involvement*, Cabinet Office, 2006

³ *The Market for the Provision of Positive Activities for Young People*, PWC 2006

5.39 Over the next three years, the Government will invest in greater support for third sector organisations that have developed effective approaches to working with young people to help them sustain and grow their provision through a mixture of grant funding and business support. This will include strategic growth funding for large organisations seeking to expand innovative projects and funding to support small organisations to develop sustainable approaches to working with disengaged young people.

Working with sports and arts partners

5.40 Local arts and sports-based organisations have a lot to offer young people, but often find it difficult to align their objectives with Local Authorities and contribute in a way which enhances the overall local offer. To support the involvement of the arts and sports sector in these arrangements, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) will look at the ways in which it can evaluate the performance of its delivery bodies against the objectives of increased partnership working and increasing young people's participation in positive activities.

5.41 In addition, DCMS will provide national leadership to promote champions for positive activities at regional and local level. To do this, it will bring together learning from Beacon Schemes, from the recent Cultural Pathfinder work and from experiences in different localities about what works in promoting positive sporting, culture and arts activities for young people. It will develop and disseminate this learning to its delivery partners through round-table learning events and networks and it will disseminate clear advice about how best they can join up to make the case for culture and sports.

5.42 This will foster a more joined up approach by cultural sectors and, through the work of the champions, raise awareness among local authorities of the potential role of culture in achieving their strategic objectives. This in turn should mean that the culture sector will be actively engaged in the local offer of positive activities and extended services, opening up new cultural and artistic opportunities to young people.

Clarifying priorities, strengthening accountability

5.43 Collaboration and effective integration at local level can be undermined by the way in which the Government currently sets priorities and manages performance. This is creating competing priorities in some cases, and insufficient priority in others. The Government will therefore take action to simplify the performance framework, and ensure departments work together more effectively to create a clear strategic direction for improving young people's outcomes. The creation of the new Department for Children, Schools and Families signals the start of this, bringing together children and young people's policy at the heart of Government and leading on driving action to improve youth outcomes.

5.44 The Government's performance management framework has played a fundamental role in driving up public service performance since 1998. The framework is set to evolve in the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review, with the introduction of a focused set of Public Service Agreements (PSA) that articulate Government's highest-priority outcomes and typically span several departments.

5.45 The Review considered ways in which participation in positive activities could be reflected in the new performance management framework, and thereby help to clarify the Government's expectations of Local Authorities. Many stakeholders were of the view, based on experience with previous targets, that a national indicator could encourage a greater focus on positive activities for young people, thereby driving up partnership working and quality. Following extensive consultation with a wide range of

local and national partners, the Government will ensure that the **new performance management framework agreed at CSR gives priority focus to increasing the number of young people on the path to success, including through monitoring the percentage of young people participating in positive activities.**

5.46 The changes to the performance framework at CSR will create an incentive to a wide range of public services to collaborate with each other more effectively than they do now to improve outcomes for young people. This will give additional leverage to Local Authorities as they work to fulfil their statutory duty to coordinate the local offer of positive activities, and should also help to address some of the barriers facing the third sector.

5.47 This collaboration at local level will be supported by close alignment of priorities at national level. Each Public Service Agreement will be underpinned by a cross-departmental delivery agreement, which commits central Government departments to collaborating on delivery.

Local area agreements

5.48 Through the revised Local Area Agreement process, each local area will negotiate with central Government, through Government Offices, up to 35 targets. These targets will be a subset of the new local government performance indicator framework being agreed through the Comprehensive Spending Review. The selection of these targets will be informed by the communities' priorities and Sustainable Community Strategies, and also the Government's priorities to be determined through the CSR.

5.49 This means that if young people's participation in positive activities or their wider outcomes are of concern locally, these may be reflected in the LAA as a priority for improvement, subject to negotiation with Government Offices and the balance of other priorities locally.

5.50 Greater priority for youth provision can also be encouraged by helping elected members and other partners understand the contribution that it can make to young people's outcomes, creating stronger accountability to the community. To raise the profile of youth provision with elected members, **the Government will, as part of the National Improvement Strategy, work with the IDeA and the Local Government Association to develop ways to build elected members' understanding of the value of positive activities** and the role of Local Authorities as strategic commissioners.

5.51 The priority given to services for young people locally is most clearly demonstrated by whether the level of resources allocated is sufficient to meet the level of local need. In some areas this is still clearly not the case, with continuing under-investment in youth support services. It is not the role of Government to limit local flexibility by prescribing a minimum level of funding – as some stakeholders have suggested for youth work in particular. The new funding arrangements for Local Authorities set out in *Strong and Prosperous Communities* will in fact enhance this local flexibility. Rather, young people and their communities have a right to transparency about the level of Local Authorities' investment so that they can hold them to account locally.

5.52 The Government is reviewing Local Authority financial monitoring arrangements in line with commitments in the Local Government White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*. Under current statutory arrangements, Local Authorities will continue to publish Section 52 data, setting out their spend on youth work. This reflects the Government's view that high quality youth work, delivered by third and statutory sectors, is central to delivering our ambition of increasing the number of young people on the path to success and an important function of integrated youth support services.

Inspection 5.53 Performance across all of the Government's priorities for local authorities, working alone or in partnership, as articulated through the local government national indicator set, will be monitored from April 2009 as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). The CAA will be led by the Audit Commission jointly with other public service inspectorates. This will involve a risk-based, proportionate approach to the whole local area, moving away from rolling programmes of inspection focused on particular organisations. The detailed methodology, currently being developed, will evaluate the progress by local authorities and their partners on delivering outcomes against both national and local priorities.

Box 5.4 Northumberland Teenage Health Demonstration Site

As part of the Northumberland Teenage Health Demonstration Site, the Family and Children's Trust (FACT) has set up a multi-disciplinary network of professionals working together to provide health information, advice and guidance to young people. Training courses, shadowing and mentoring opportunities have significantly improved the skills and knowledge base of youth workers (including young people graduating from local peer-to-peer programmes) about health issues and how to improve the quality of their health related activities. Topics such as mental health, healthy eating and smoking cessation are becoming part of the core curriculum of youth work, in addition to issues such as sexual health.

The benefits to young people are significant: on-the-spot expertise, more timely interventions and a 'professional friend' who is able to look at and support the young person holistically. In consultation with young people with chronic conditions, and working closely with the lead paediatrician for the THDS, the model will expand further, providing health support in non-traditional settings and formats.

5.54 Assessments will be based on a wide range of existing data – including on citizens' satisfaction with services – to inform communities and government and, where necessary, to determine appropriate intervention activity. The area's overall offer, in relation to local priorities and the needs of all young people in the area will be within the ambit of the CAA risk assessment, and may lead to inspection of youth support services where they are highlighted by the risk assessment. This will differ from the previous youth support service inspection regime which focused only on services directly delivered by the local authority and the young people they reached, creating an added incentive for local authorities to manage the overall offer effectively.

FACILITATING EFFECTIVE PRACTICE AND INNOVATION

5.55 The measures set out above will enable significant improvement in the quality of services for young people. However, these are complex reforms that need strong national leadership and collaboration. There are currently a number of organisations that support different aspects of young people's services, often successfully, in their own right. But overall, it is not clear that current support arrangements provided by these various bodies will be sufficient to drive and support the overall transformation needed. There is also considerable overlap in the roles of these bodies and therefore a

need for rationalisation. **The Government believes that there is a strong case for creating a single clear lead to support local delivery right across public, private, and third sectors** through providing the following critical functions:

- defining and supporting the implementation of effective frontline practice in working with young people to ensure services are designed to deliver practice that embodies the key characteristics that evidence shows can improve outcomes;
- shaping and facilitating a more diverse market of providers, including developing a light-touch kite marking scheme for high quality provision and sharing good practice in market management;
- working collaboratively to influence government departments and their NDPBs to align projects and funding streams focused on young people;
- ensuring easier access to the market for third and private sector providers, as well as philanthropists looking to invest in youth projects and facilities; and
- engaging publicly on the youth agenda, focusing on young people's participation in policy making and acting as an advocate for young people in discussions with government departments and other sector players.

5.56 Following publication of this Strategy, the Government will examine how these functions could be better organised and delivered, aligned with the framework of the National Improvement Strategy for local government. In particular, this will involve looking closely at the development of the proposed Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services and its potential role in supporting better practice in young people's services. The exercise will lead to proposals about how best to achieve these objectives.

SUPPORTING AND DEVELOPING THE WORKFORCE

5.57 Throughout the Review, young people have talked about the importance of 'trusted adults' who can encourage and support them to engage in new experiences and opportunities. Evidence shows that it is the work that adults do with young people in combination with activities that makes the difference – acting as positive role models, advocating and signposting to other services; but also setting appropriate and consistent boundaries, challenging poor behaviour and encouraging them to progress.

5.58 Of course, for the majority of young people their parents are the most significant role models. Most parents help create opportunities for their teenagers and encourage them to continue to enjoy their benefits. However, a minority do not live in families where positive values and behaviours are reinforced, increasing their vulnerability to poor peer influences.⁴

5.59 Young people themselves stress the importance of building relationships with adults in their community as an important part of growing up and developing their identity. Particularly for those with little support at home, finding adults they trust in their community helps build their confidence to access opportunities.

⁴ *The Way It Is: Young People on Race, School Exclusion, and Leaving Care*, The Princes Trust, 2002

“Having a mentor was good for me because he showed me he was actually listening and understanding me as a person... He gave me advice and some guidance to open my mind to see things in different ways and helped me to be more organised with my life.” Young person⁵

5.60 Skilled, knowledgeable, trusted adults and the relationships they build with young people must therefore be at the heart of the youth offer.

5.61 Youth workers and other professionals clearly play a central role. Often they are able to build relationships with young people that other professionals may find challenging. The best youth work challenges young people to have high aspirations and provides them with the skills to succeed in and out of education.

5.62 But other adults and older young people who give up their time to work with teenagers are also have a role to play. Many already work with young people in a wide range of contexts – from sport and arts clubs to small community-based youth projects, drawing on the skills and experience to offer exciting and attractive activities involving, for example, sports, digital media or music.

Where there are gaps in rural provision they are generally filled by the communities themselves.” Local Authority⁶

5.63 Many young people respond better to adults who understand their communities, their cultures, and their backgrounds, and who can offer appropriate inspiration, support and challenge. The Government believes there are potentially many more adults who could volunteer in this way, both from the ‘baby boomer’ generation who have recently retired and younger adults.

Skills and competences

5.64 The Government is committed to ensuring that those who work in a variety of contexts with young people develop the particular skills needed to deal with young people. Work is ongoing with the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) and the other Medical and Nursing Colleges to identify the specific skills that all doctors and nurses who work with young people should have, and to produce a training programme to disseminate these skills.

5.65 Similarly, for youth workers, the Government is working with the National Youth Agency which is identifying the skills and competencies in delivering good health information, advice and guidance that youth workers need in their work with young people. This will become part of all training in youth work in the future. Central to this training will be the incorporation of emerging research and evidence that adolescence is a distinct developmental stage. Such understanding will assist practitioners in getting beneath the surface of many presenting issues and to offer more valuable advice and support.

5.66 Ensuring excellence in the workforce is a long term priority for these reasons. But it is equally clear that there are challenges:

- in the move to integrated service delivery, providers are not always clear on the respective roles of different professional groups, or what the common requirements are across sectors and disciplines for working successfully with young people;

⁵ *Transitions: Young People with Complex Needs*, SEU, 2004

⁶ *DfES Children's Services: The Market for Provision of Positive Activities for Young People*, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, DfES, 2006

- the relatively low status of working with young people leads to problems with recruitment and retention – there are not enough incentives to attract more adults and young people to enter and remain in the workforce;
- the frontline workforce may sometimes lack adequate supervision and management, affecting the quality of engagement with young people; and
- achieving a balance between ensuring the wider youth workforce has the right skills and support while not deterring more adults from working with young people through raising skills thresholds.

5.67 Some of these barriers will be addressed by the ongoing reform of the children’s workforce, including the *Youth Matters* workforce reform agenda which is being taken forward by the Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC), Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), Skills for Justice and Skills Active. But the Government wants to go further to start a programme of reform built on the findings from this Review.

5.68 First, **the Government will introduce a new leadership and management initiative to support the development of a shared set of skills, knowledge and behaviour for leaders and managers across all sectors who work with young people, particularly those leading the integration of youth support services.** This will involve building on existing leadership programmes such as the Championing Children’s Standards. We will also explore whether the right leadership qualifications are available for workers who want to progress to the next level.

5.69 Second, the **Government will look at ways of encouraging more people into the workforce to whom teenagers can relate, and who can inspire them to make the most of their opportunities.** This will include attracting high calibre new entrants to work in the most challenging communities through a new post-graduate recruitment programme, learning from schemes such as Teach First. The Government, in partnership with others, will also test local initiatives to encourage more young people to take the next step in their careers by promoting and developing existing youth apprenticeships and undergraduate courses.

5.70 Third, **the Government will explore with national third sector youth organisations how to best work together in supporting the training needs of staff working in the third sector and volunteers.** This work will look at ways of ensuring that all workers acquire the necessary basic skills and knowledge and have opportunities to participate in joint training and development across the relevant professions, disciplines and agencies.

“In terms of enthusiastic staff the voluntary sector wins over... but often the work they do is not recognised as being high quality as it is not structured or developmental and the staff are less likely to be qualified.” Local authority⁷

⁷DfES Children’s Services: *The Market for Provision of Positive Activities for Young People*, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP DfES, 2006

5.71 Fourth, over the next ten years, the Government will also continue to work to build a culture of volunteering and mentoring – both of which can, where appropriate, provide an early and transforming intervention in the lives of young people who are at risk of social exclusion. **As part of this, the Department for Children, Schools and Families will work closely with Office of the Third Sector, the youth volunteering body and the business community, to explore how, in the context of modernising information, advice and guidance, disengaged young people can be offered a mentor to advise and support their transition to adulthood.**

5.72 The third sector review, to be published later this year, will also set out plans for further investment in volunteering to bring together different generations and help strengthen communities. The Review's interim report in December 2006 recognised the importance of voluntary activity in building trust in communities and promoting community cohesion. Third sector youth organisations that make use of adult volunteers will benefit from this additional investment.

5.73 And finally, **the Government will work with partners to introduce a common platform of skills and training for those across all sectors who work with young people – including developing new qualifications as appropriate for support staff.** This will work on the basis of every member of the workforce having a strong understanding of different aspects of young people's development. It will be supported by more consistent regulation, including development of codes of practice for workers with young people and their employers.

6

NEXT STEPS

6.1 This Ten Year Strategy has set out the Government's long-term vision for young people, and how, in the context of wider education and youth service reforms, investment and development of opportunities for positive activities will help to make this vision a reality.

6.2 Ensuring that young people are empowered to have influence over, and have access to, high quality positive activities and wider youth support services is crucial to ensuring that they progress through adolescence on the path to success. This Strategy puts in place measures to achieve this for all young people, but with a particular focus on the most vulnerable and marginalised.

6.3 The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) will lead on delivering this Strategy over the next 10 years, driving action and greater focus across Government on improving youth outcomes. This will require close working with other departments including the Department of Health, the Ministry of Justice, the Home Office, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Communities and Local Government. This includes the development of the new national drug strategy to be implemented from April 2008, with a clear focus on young people and families.

6.4 As part of Budget 2007, the Government announced an early Comprehensive Spending Review settlement for the Department of Education and Skills, which will now be taken forward by DCSF. In addition to existing baseline funding, part of which will be reprioritised to support these proposals, this CSR settlement has provided additional funding of up to £185m in the 3 years 2008-11 to underpin the commitments set out in this Strategy.

6.5 This strategy cannot be delivered without the commitment and expertise of local public services, voluntary groups, community groups, and the professionals working directly with young people and their families. It is Local Authorities who will take the lead, through children's trust arrangements, to improve outcomes for young people as part of their ongoing *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* programmes.

6.6 The Government will continue to engage and collaborate with Local Authorities and their partners to inform the implementation of the commitments in this Strategy.

6.7 Achieving the change that young people deserve, and which will benefit society more widely, will take sustained efforts in the long term. This is why the Government has launched this Ten Year Strategy to give a sense of strategic direction and what will be achieved in the long term. Some milestones include:

- In **2008**, the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds will continue, with additional resources for the most deprived areas. Pathfinders to lay the groundwork for investment of unclaimed assets in new and improved places for young people to go will commence. Resources to support other measures in this settlement, including the National Institute of Youth Leadership, expansion of provision of residential opportunities, and greater empowerment for young people, will come on stream.

- By **2011**, more young people will be taking part in year-round positive activities, some with support from a key worker. Young people in every Local Authority will have received expert support to improve their ability to influence provision locally and will be at the heart of decision making.
- By **2018**, every constituency will have a new and improved place to go, funded by unclaimed assets. Services for young people will be fully integrated, and young people will be fully equipped to access the help they need. Young people will have direct influence over 25 per cent of spending on their services.

6.8 This document concludes the Government's Policy Review of Children and Young People. The Government would like to thank all of those, in particular the young people, who submitted evidence to this Review and shared examples of the excellent work taking place across the country.

6.9 This strategy applies to England only

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