

Empowering Young People Pilot Interim Evaluation

Phase 1 Case Studies

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National Foundation for Educational Research



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Pilot Interim Evaluation
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Executive Summary

The Empowering Young People Pilot (EYPP) is part of the ten year youth strategy for positive activities, Aiming High for Young People, published in July 2007. It supersedes the planned Youth Opportunity Card (YOC), which was originally proposed as part of the 'Youth Matters' strategy that saw the establishment, in April 2006, of the Youth Opportunity Fund and the Youth Capital Fund (YOF/YCF). The aim of the pilot is to explore further in nine pilot areas the impact that giving disadvantaged young people spending power has on reducing financial barriers and increasing their participation in positive activities. Young people do not have direct access to the funds but are given the mechanism whereby they may be able to access the activity using funds paid directly to the provider of an activity or to the providers of transport to the activity.

The nine areas that are implementing the pilot have adopted a number of different strategies to enable the young people in their target group to access positive activities. The projects differ in the mechanisms they use, in the amounts of subsidy they offer per month (ranging from £25-£40), in the ways in which subsidies are used (whether for activities, transport, or ways of using equipment), and in the groups that they will be targeting. Target groups include young people in (or who would normally be in) school years 9 to 12 who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), children who are looked after (LAC), and, in some areas, other groups such as young carers.

The DCSF commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), NatCen and the University of Warwick to conduct an evaluation of EYPP. This summary presents the main findings from the interim report of the evaluation.

Key findings

- **Models adopted** – the mechanisms used by young people to access positive activities varied across the pilot areas. However, all Local Authorities (LAs) aimed to make the mechanism simple for young people, used familiar processes or people, and avoided stigmatising the target group. Variations across the LAs included the extent to which adult mediation was a feature of the model; the degree of flexibility given to young people to access the activities; and what their monthly allocation could be used for.
- **Involvement of young people** - young people had been involved in developing aspects of the delivery approaches and were consulted about the activities included in the offer. LAs planned to continue this consultation with young people throughout the pilot period. At this stage, the LAs had raised awareness of EYPP with their target groups. It was generally reported that one-to-one support, compared with postal correspondence alone, helped to achieve higher take-up rates. Young people were receptive to EYPP but take-up was lower than anticipated at this stage of the pilot. This was because the LAs had faced a number of challenges in engaging young people. These included young people mistrusting the funds offered to them or being uninterested in the pilot. In addition, some of the LAs had found their initial methods of communication ineffective. Plans were in place to increase take-up and to sustain involvement during the pilot. These included hosting events to publicise the EYPP and visiting schools and youth centres to provide support and encouragement for young people. LAs also planned to run focus groups to gain feedback on young people's experiences of

participating in activities.

- **EYPP activities** – across the nine pilot areas a range of activities was included in the offer. In order to define the activities the pilot teams had consulted young people, identified gaps in existing provision, and aimed to ensure that a range of providers was involved to deliver provision across the defined DCSF categories. The activities included those that related to sports, arts, media, recreation, education and residential activities. Young people's feedback on the activities was generally positive. At this stage in the pilot, providers were largely organisations that had previously worked with the LAs, but all areas had plans to develop their provision across the pilot period in response to young people's demands. For example, they aimed to recruit new activity providers in response to requests and feedback from young people about the activities they wanted to do. They also planned to use evidence of young people's increased participation in activities to negotiate discounts for the young people and to increase the number of activity providers involved in the pilot.
- **Outcomes to date** – at this stage, it was too early to comment on the frequency of access to activities by young people in receipt of EYPP money, or whether there was any evidence of an increase in the number of young people participating in positive activities in their area. Nevertheless, young people were said to be experiencing a number of benefits, as a result of EYPP, including improved self-confidence and social benefits, and developing skills. Young people who had participated in activities appreciated the opportunity to become involved in activities and reported increased awareness of the opportunities available to them in their local area. They were gaining new experiences, increased independence, and improved confidence and were developing specific skills and interests, as a result of their participation in EYPP.

Research methods

The evaluation aims to explore the impact of the pilots on young people and to examine the following hypothesis:

'Empowering individual disadvantaged young people to take part in positive activities of their choice through access to spending power increases their participation in such activities and contributes to educational engagement and other beneficial outcomes'.

In testing this hypothesis, the first stage of the evaluation had the following objectives:

- to investigate the delivery models adopted and the rationales underpinning these
- to examine the processes established to engage and support young people's participation in positive activities
- to outline the nature of the activities and the activity providers included in the pilots
- to ascertain the initial outcomes from the pilot.

In order to achieve these objectives, a programme of case study visits to the nine LAs was carried out from the end of March to June 2008. Interviews were conducted with staff involved in implementing the programme, young people, and representatives of organisations that functioned as activity providers to the young people. Overall, while the LAs had launched their pilots, some were behind their initial schedule. Although it has been possible to interview LA staff, in some areas it has been more challenging within the agreed timeframe for the fieldwork to identify young people and activity providers who have experience of the pilot. Consequently, this report includes the views of young people and activity providers in only six of the pilot areas. Further details are provided at the end of the summary.

Models adopted

The pilot complemented the LAs' strategic aims and existing schemes and activities for young people in the areas. The LAs varied in the extent to which the models reflected these existing schemes and the mechanisms used by young people to access positive activities. The pilot areas used card-based, web-based, and key worker approaches for young people to access the EYPP funds. All pilot areas aimed to make the mechanism simple for young people, used familiar processes or people, and avoided stigmatising the target group.

Key differences across the models included the extent to which adult mediation was a feature of the pilot and the degree of flexibility they offered. Some areas allowed young people to use their money to pay for transport to get to the activity or in certain circumstances to pay for other people to do the activity with them. It is not possible at this stage to assess the relationship between the model adopted and the extent to which young people engaged with the EYPP but this will be a focus of the next phase of the research.

Involvement of young people

There were examples across the case study areas of young people being involved in developing aspects of the delivery approaches. They had been consulted about the brand names and the design of cards and websites. Furthermore, young people had been consulted about the activities included in the offer and the LAs planned to continue this consultation with young people throughout the pilot period.

At this stage in the pilot, the LAs had raised awareness of the offer with their target groups. Contacts in schools and with other key professionals in the LA or voluntary sector had been used to support the recruitment process. Engaging young people through one-to-one interaction had helped to lead to higher take-up rates. Overall, adult support was viewed as important in engaging young people in EYPP; the extent to which adult mediation leads to increased participation can be explored in the follow-up LA visits.

Young people were reported to be receptive to EYPP but uptake was lower than anticipated at this stage of the pilot. This was because the LAs had faced a number of challenges in engaging young people. These included young people mistrusting the funds offered to them or being uninterested in the pilot. In addition, some of the LAs had found their initial methods of communication ineffective. Plans were in place to increase take-up and to sustain involvement during the pilot. These included hosting events to publicise the EYPP and visiting schools and youth centres to provide support and encouragement for young people. LAs also had plans to run focus groups during the pilot period to gain feedback on young people's experiences of participating in activities.

EYPP activities

Across the nine pilot areas a range of activities was included in the offer. In order to define the activities the pilot teams had consulted young people, identified gaps in existing provision, and aimed to ensure that a range of providers were involved to deliver provision across the defined DCSF categories. At this stage in the pilot, the types of activities offered to young people included those relating to sports, arts, media, recreation, and education and residential activities.

Where EYPP delivery teams had received feedback from young people, they were reported to be positive about the EYPP activities. Furthermore, all nine areas explained that there was scope to develop their provision across the pilot period in response to young people's demands and this was encouraged.

At this stage in the pilot, providers were largely organisations that had previously worked with the LAs. Work with new providers was more extensive in areas that had appointed a dedicated member of staff to this activity. Gaining new providers had been more complex when the provider was part of a national organisation, where head office approval was required, or where CRB or other clearances were not in place.

Outcomes to date

The LAs became involved in the pilot to raise participation among young people in their local areas. Expected outcomes of EYPP included broadening young people's horizons and contributing to increasing their educational achievement. Overall, most pilot areas felt it was too early to comment on the frequency of access to activities by young people in receipt of EYPP money, or whether there was any evidence of an increase in the number of young people participating in positive activities in their area. At this early stage in the EYPP development, young people were said to be developing self-confidence, gaining social benefits, and developing skills, as a result of EYPP.

Although evidence of an impact on activity providers and provision was limited at this early stage in the implementation of the EYPP, early indications were that the pilot was helping providers to promote their activities to more young people. Feedback from young people who participated in activities would inform the future development of provision.

Young people who had participated in activities appreciated the opportunity to become involved and reported increased awareness of the opportunities available to them in their local area. EYPP was also said to be helping them to gain new experiences and to meet new people. Young people also felt they had increased independence and choice as a result of their participation in EYPP because they were travelling to activities or booking activities (in areas where this was required), and developing specific skills and interests and confidence.

Implications

The evaluation to date has identified the following implications for the pilot LAs.

- **Recruitment of young people** – given that face-to-face contact, in comparison to postal invitations, was viewed as more likely to lead to higher take-up rates by young people, LAs may want to consider using methods involving adult mediation to increase take-up amongst their target groups.

- **Accessibility of EYPP** – LAs could benefit from gaining feedback from young people and activity providers on the mechanisms used to identify and access activities in order to explore ways of addressing practical barriers such as lack of internet access.
- **Range of activities** – as the EYPP continues to develop, LAs may wish to ensure that their mechanisms for consulting with young people regarding the activities included in the offer are maintained. There would be value in giving consideration to establishing how best to manage extending provision to meet requests from young people in the context where appropriate activity providers may not be readily accessible.
- **Recruiting activity providers** – as LAs continue to recruit a range of activity providers to ensure that a broad range of activities are available for young people to access LAs may want to consider a member of staff being allocated this role, given that recruitment of new activity providers was more extensive in areas that had appointed a dedicated member of staff to this activity.
- **Sharing practice** – there may be scope for sharing good practice between the pilot areas. It could be particularly beneficial to explore the different ways in which the LAs have increased take-up and to share strategies for sustaining young people's participation throughout the pilot period.

Research methods

- This summary is based on findings from research visits to the nine LAs involved in the EYPP carried out from the end of March to June 2008. Interviews were conducted with a total of 33 staff, including senior and operational managers with responsibility for EYPP, and other staff such as those involved in supporting the implementation and delivery of the pilots and individuals working directly with young people. A total of 46 young people who had taken part in activities funded through EYPP were interviewed across six pilot areas. In addition, interviews were conducted with 18 individuals from organisations that functioned as activity providers to the young people. The authors would like to extend their thanks to the interviewees who made time to discuss their experiences of EYPP.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Empowering Young People Pilots (EYPP) is part of the ten year youth strategy for positive activities, Aiming High for Young People, published in July 2007. It supersedes the planned Youth Opportunity Card (YOC), which was originally proposed as part of the 'Youth Matters' strategy that saw the establishment, in April 2006, of the Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund (YOF/YCF).

The aim of the pilot is to explore further in nine pilot areas the impact that giving disadvantaged young people spending power has on reducing financial barriers and increasing their participation in positive activities. Young people do not have direct access to the funds, but are given the mechanism whereby they may be able to access the activity using funds paid directly to the provider of an activity or to the providers of transport to the activity.

The nine areas that are implementing the pilot have adopted a number of different strategies to enable the young people in their target groups to access positive activities. The projects differ in the mechanisms they use, in the amounts of subsidy they will be offering per month (ranging from £25 to £40), in the ways in which subsidies are used (whether for transport, activities or equipment), and in the groups that they will be targeting. Target groups include young people in (or who would normally be in) school years 9 to 12 who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), looked after children (LAC), and, in some areas, other groups such as young carers. In areas where the number of young people who are potentially eligible for funding through the pilot exceeds the number that could be funded within the current budget allocation, the local authorities (LAs) have identified sub-groups within the broader target group.

The projects differed in terms of their start-up date. Four areas intended to launch the full pilot from January to March 2008 and five areas intended to launch them in April 2008.

The LAs had all launched their pilots when they were visited, but some were behind their initial schedule. One of the LAs launched their pilot as planned in January 2008 and the three others launched in March or April 2008, which was later than they had originally planned. Four of the five areas that were planning to launch in April 2008, did so towards the end of April and the other one launched in mid June.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The evaluation aims to explore the impact of the pilots on young people and to examine the following hypothesis:

'Empowering individual disadvantaged young people to take part in positive activities of their choice through access to spending power increases their participation in such activities and contributes to educational engagement and other beneficial outcomes.'

In testing this hypothesis, the first stage of the evaluation had the following objectives:

- to investigate the delivery models adopted and the rationales underpinning these
- to examine the processes established to engage and support young people's participation in positive activities
- to outline the nature of the activities and the activity providers included in the pilots
- to ascertain the initial outcomes from the pilot.

This interim report focuses on the LAs' experiences of implementing the EYPP including key challenges and lessons learned, and the emerging findings regarding the young people's experience of participating in activities to date. The relationship between these approaches, and the outcomes for the EYPP pilot areas, will be explored through the follow-up visits which will be conducted between January and March 2009.

1.3 Research methods

The research has a mixed methodology design. This includes a detailed multi-strand quantitative study to assess the *relative impact* of EYPP on the take-up of positive activities, together with a qualitative study in all nine areas in order to develop an in-depth *understanding* of the operation of EYPP and the perceptions and views of key stakeholders including LA staff, activity providers and young people. This report focuses on the early findings from the qualitative evaluation of the nine LAs. This aspect of the research entailed two main phases of data collection:

- case-study visits to the nine LAs
- telephone interviews with parents/carers and school staff.

Overall, while the LAs had launched their pilots, some were behind their initial schedule and, while it has been possible to interview LA staff, in some areas, it has been more challenging to identify young people and activity providers who have experience of the pilot within the agreed timeframe for the fieldwork. Consequently, interviews with young people and activity providers will be conducted in three of the LAs during September 2008.

1.3.1 Case study visits

Case study visits to the nine LAs were conducted from the end of March to June 2008. This was around 6 to 8 weeks after the pilot was launched in eight areas and within two weeks of the launch in one area. Each visit was tailored to the context of the LA and the models adopted but, in general, a visit entailed interviews with the following:

- A senior manager in the LA with overall responsibility for the pilot (six interviewees in total).
- An operational manager in the LA with day-to-day responsibility for the pilot (nine interviewees in total).
- Other staff with involvement in the pilots (18 interviewees). These included staff with administrative and financial management

responsibilities, others supporting the implementation and delivery of the pilots such as activity provider support officers, and individuals working directly with young people such as youth participation officers and key workers.

- Activity providers (18 interviews were conducted in six LAs).
- Young people who had taken part in activities funded by EYPP (46 young people in six LAs).

In addition, telephone interviews have been conducted with parents or carers of young people who have participated in activities, and with school staff in the LAs that are working closely with schools. To date, telephone interviews have been completed with parents/carers in three LAs and members of school staff in two LAs. Interviews in the remaining areas will be undertaken during August and September 2008.

The LA visits aimed to explore the experience to date of LA staff, young people and activity providers of implementing the pilots and the outcomes thus far. More specifically they explored:

- the delivery model for implementing the pilot, and influences on this, and perceptions of the relationship between the pilot and the LA's strategies and priorities
- the features of the models including the mechanisms for participating in the activities
- approaches adopted to marketing and promotion and young people's awareness of the pilots
- the support provided for young people to engage in the activities
- the nature of the activities and activity providers
- the young people's experiences of participating in the activities
- approaches adopted to monitoring and evaluating the pilots
- the main outcomes to date
- perceptions about future developments.

The views of LA staff, activity providers, and young people are presented in this report. In relation to some aspects, the numbers of LAs where an approach was found, or a view was expressed are detailed (see Figure 2.1). This is to provide some guidance of an experience or approach within these nine LAs. However, in considering these figures, it is worth taking into consideration that, during the interviews, respondents were not all asked identical questions with a range of responses, as they would be on a questionnaire. Rather, the views expressed in response to a semi-structured set of interview questions will reflect the issues, priorities, concerns and context for each interviewee.

1.4 Structure of the report

Chapter 2 of the report explores the rationale for the models of delivery adopted by the LAs, including how the pilot fits with strategic plans and existing schemes or activities for young people. It outlines the process of developing the models, the key features of the models, and investigates the relationship between the approaches adopted and effectiveness of the models to date.

Chapter 3 discusses the engagement of the target group of young people in the LAs, including the strategies used for marketing and how awareness was raised with activity providers, young people and parents/carers. It also outlines how young people have been supported to participate in activities and how successful this has been with regards to uptake and use.

Chapter 4 explores the range of activities young people in the areas can access and how the LAs have engaged the activity providers. It also explores the LAs' plans to adapt or extend the activities during the pilot and young people's experiences of participating in the activities.

Chapter 5 explores the early indications of the outcomes from the pilots, for the LAs, and young people, and the extent of any impact on the provision of activities for young people to date.

Chapter 6 discusses the mechanisms for managing the pilots and the LAs' approaches for monitoring uptake of the offer and evaluating the funds. It also outlines approaches to overcoming fraud.

Chapter 7 presents LA staff's plans for the remainder of pilot, including their views on the transferability of the models and the future development of the pilots.

Chapter 8 concludes the report by highlighting the key issues arising from the report, and provides recommendations for LAs and policy makers.

2. The EYPP delivery models

Key findings

- There was a general consensus among the pilot teams that the pilot complemented their authority's strategic aims and fitted well with other policies within their LA.
- All of the case-study areas had existing schemes or activities to encourage young people to become involved in positive activities and the pilot was viewed as an opportunity to extend these.
- The pilot provided the LAs with opportunities to empower young people, to engage more young people in positive activities, and had the potential to involve young people in shaping activities and services.
- Across the pilot areas the mechanisms had different features but all of the LAs aimed to make the mechanisms simple for the young people to use through familiar processes or people, and aimed to avoid stigmatising the target group.
- The consensus among the pilot teams was that the amount of money available for young people was sufficient for them to participate in activities.
- The pilot teams indicated that delivery models had the potential to work well and young people generally had positive views of the pilot.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the rationale for the delivery models and the key elements of the models adopted across the nine case-study LAs. It discusses:

- the relationship between the delivery models and the LAs' strategic aims, policy and initiatives, and existing schemes or activities for young people
- the process of developing the models
- the key features of the models and similarities and differences between the approaches
- the relationship between the approaches adopted and the effectiveness of the models to date.

2.2 Rationale for the models

2.2.1 Relationship between the funds and the LAs' strategic aims

The pilot was perceived to be part of an agenda to empower young people, particularly those who are disengaged, and was said to fit well with the LAs' strategic aims. One of the project managers said, '*it is just another strand in the empowerment of the young people*'. The comments given by the LA staff indicated that they considered that young people were being empowered through having the financial capacity to participate in activities and the potential to shape the activities available to them in their local area. The pilot provided opportunities for the LAs to get input from young people regarding the activities they want to do. One of the strategic managers

explained its relationship with her LA's strategic aims, *'it fits in terms of consulting young people about what activities they want, where they want them and what the barriers are'*. Furthermore, the pilot teams indicated that young people might be involved in using their monthly allocation to influence the activities offered. For instance, members of a youth participation team suggested that young people could use their money to commission services, although she added that it could be a difficult concept for some young people to understand.

Engaging more young people in positive activities was viewed as a key aim of the pilot and the LAs viewed their involvement in the pilots as an opportunity to develop their existing work to promote positive activities for young people. One of the youth service managers said that many young people in the target group were not currently accessing services provided by Children's Services and *'through the pilot we can engage them more fully'*. The LAs were already providing a range of existing schemes and activities for all young people to encourage them to participate in positive activities. These included free leisure passes for all young people, free swimming for all young people aged between 11 and 16, and programmes of activities for young people during the summer holidays. A strategic manager in one of the LAs explained that these types of activities were offered to young people to encourage them to engage in positive activities and to address issues around health and obesity. It is worth noting that existing activities in the LAs had an impact on the activities included in the EYPP offer. This is discussed further in Chapter 4.

The LAs reported having directories of activities for young people and other web-based information to promote positive activities, and members of the youth participation teams and youth workers were already engaged in promoting positive activities to young people. However, the pilots provided opportunities for the LAs **to extend** the positive activities available for young people in their target group, and were perceived to fit well with LAs' integrated youth services and extended services. One of the strategic managers said that the pilot was *'being used as part of the strategic plan for out of school activities to engage those youngsters who are disengaged and to extend positive activities'*. Another said they were always working towards encouraging young people to participate in positive activities and pilots had given them *'an additional boost'*. There was evidence that the EYPP provided scope for the LAs to consolidate information about positive activities. For instance, in one of the areas, the pilot allowed them to create one website where young people could access information about positive activities. This website had links to the family information service and information for young people about volunteering opportunities added as well as EYPP activities. Project managers in some of the LAs had encouraged youth clubs and youth projects to become activity providers. Others viewed the pilot as an opportunity to extend links with schools. This issue is explored further in Chapter 3.

Staff in the LAs said the pilot complemented other policies within the LA. More specifically, the pilots were said to fit with the ten year youth strategy and the Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes, in particular, 'enjoy and achieve', 'be healthy', and 'make a positive contribution'. At this stage there was some evidence of integration of the EYPP into wider policy such as ECM and YOF. Young people were making positive contributions through being engaged in activities to support the pilots. For example, in one of the areas, young people were involved in devising newsletters and negotiating discounts with providers. There also was some evidence of integration between EYPP and YOF in some of the areas. YOF panels had been consulted at various stages of the planning process and one of the LAs was using the YOF and Children's partnerships to ask for funding for activities the young people wanted to do such as setting up a local girls football team.

The consensus among the strategic and project managers was that there were potential links between the pilot and the YOF. For instance, one of the strategic managers said they were exploring ways of maximising and using the links. They noted that friendship groups do not always sit within the pilot target group, so this LA was exploring ways of enabling the young people in the target group to pool their resources to pay for coaching sessions and residential trips, and of supporting other young people to join them through YOF funding.

Involvement in the pilot had assisted some of the LAs in meeting other strategic aims. The areas using technology in their delivery mechanism viewed the pilot as an opportunity to develop their technological capacity and use technology as a means of engaging young people. A strategic manager, in a LA using a card-based approach, explained how the LA had an existing card in operation but had not previously used this approach to engage young people. A manager in another LA with a card-based system said, *'we wanted to test it out in [LA area] and we are a very creative and innovative city so we are really committed to looking at radical solutions'*. The pilot provided opportunities for these LAs to test out a model of one card with many different uses.

Overall, EYPP was said to be distinctive because it:

- created new mechanisms through which young people could access positive activities
- gave young people financial capacity. One of the project managers said, 'there was nothing like EYPP before. This is obviously the first time that spending power has been placed in the hands of young people for them to choose'
- provided an opportunity for the LAs to develop and extend services for young people
- provided opportunities for adults to have positive exchanges with young people
- encouraged young people to be independent because they could choose the activities they wanted to participate in
- gave young people opportunities to develop other skills such as money management.

The LAs said that it was not possible at this stage to assess the extent to which young people were beginning to shape the services and activities in their areas. However, the extent to which young people had an influence on services and activities will be explored in the follow-up LA visits.

The next section outlines the rationale underpinning the delivery approaches adopted by the case-study areas.

2.2.2 Factors influencing the development of the models

The nine pilot areas had adopted a number of different strategies to enable young people in their target groups to access positive activities. A number of issues had influenced the LAs' choice of delivery model.

In some areas the primary reason for adopting a specific delivery model was a desire to **build on an existing scheme**. Three of the LAs, all using card-based approaches,

said they had selected a delivery model based on the extension of an existing scheme in their area (pilot areas 4, 7 and 9). The project managers said that a similar card was in operation in the LA so the cards were already recognised by young people in their target groups and would not be stigmatising for them. One of the project managers said, *'it [the card] looks quite grown up, nothing is childish about it, no bright colours, and so there will be no stigmatisation, it's just another card'*. Furthermore, the cards were said to be part of a system which had already proved workable for the LAs.

Other LAs had **developed new mechanisms** such as web-based approaches, through which young people could access information about activities (pilot areas 2, 5 and 6). These approaches extended existing brochures of positive activities and had involved some consultation with young people. For example, one of the areas had consulted young people to some extent through a survey about how they like to receive information. This revealed that they wanted to receive information through text, email or via the Internet.

Most of the LAs had involved young people in developing aspects of their delivery models (see Section 2.3.1). In one of the case-study areas, the LA reviewed their delivery plan as a result of consultation with young people involved in YOF/YCF. In this area the delivery model reflected feedback from young people and led to changes in the original delivery approach. The LA had originally wanted to use a card-based approach. However, the feedback from young people to that delivery idea was negative. The LA then reviewed their plan and chose an approach which reflected young people's views of what helps them to access activities. One of the pilot team said:

Young people said that sometimes it's not only about money or what is available, but having someone to support you to do it, a buddy to help you decide what activity to do and how to attend the activity.

Young people's input influenced the model adopted and its features, such as the use of the money to pay for the additional transport costs.

Other key influences on the choice of the delivery mechanism included:

- **avoiding stigmatising the target group.** The comments given by LA staff on their choice of delivery model indicated that this was a key concern. For instance, two LAs had decided to offer their card-based system to all young people in their areas, with money added for the target group. They expected this would minimise the stigma felt by the target group (pilot areas 7 and 9).
- choosing mechanisms that were viewed as **simple and flexible for the young** people to use. For example, one LA, with a card-based approach, had developed a system whereby young people did not need to pre-book and considered this a more flexible mechanism for the young people. Others selected what they considered to be more simple approaches to get the pilot underway quickly; for example, using a key worker approach which built on existing relationships between adults and young people or adapting existing websites for the pilot.
- **using technology** that is familiar to young people and they are confident in using. One of the strategic managers said, *'IT is the media that young people use... so it makes sense to use IT to engage young people'*. The comments on the choice of delivery method indicated that accessing

information online and topping up cards were felt to be mechanisms that many young people were familiar with. This was expected to make it more likely for them to participate in the activities.

- adopting approaches perceived as **sustainable**. This rationale was provided by the LAs involved in developing mechanisms with more complex technology.

2.3 Process of developing the models

This section outlines the process of developing the models including any changes made to the delivery approaches and the involvement of young people in the process. It also discusses the LAs' views on the cost effectiveness of the models.

The LA staff reported finding the DCSF guidance helpful when they were writing their delivery plans. It was received in time to form the basis of their proposals and several commented that they found the guidance *'invaluable'* because it outlined what the DCSF was expecting. Project managers noted that they would have liked further clarification of the existing DCSF guidance relating to the use of the monthly allocation to purchase equipment and guidance relating to the evaluation process but said that the DCSF had been helpful when dealing with enquiries relating to these issues.

At the time of the LA visits, most of the pilot teams said that the pilot had been cost effective. They had not needed to use complementary funding because any initial costs associated with the delivery mechanisms had been included in their proposals. However, some managers indicated that at this stage in the process, it was too early to comment. Views about cost effectiveness will be revisited in the follow-up LA visits [January to March 2009].

Five of the LAs opted for card-based approaches including Smart Cards, a pre-paid debit card, and a travel card (pilot areas 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9). Three other LAs selected a web-based approach (pilot areas 2, 5 and 6) and one of the LAs selected a key worker approach (pilot area 1). Figure 2.1 summarises the features of these models and Section 2.4 compares the delivery approaches adopted by the pilot areas. The LAs did not report any major changes to their original delivery approaches but some had revised aspects of their plans such as their target groups.

2.3.1 Involvement of young people

The LAs had involved **young people in the development** of aspects of their delivery approach. Young people had been consulted about branding, the design of cards and websites, how the mechanisms worked, and the activities they could access. A member of the pilot team in one of the LAs said, *'we've done a huge amount of work around the website and how the thing looks and feels in consultation with young people'*. Young people in this LA had also been involved in testing how the website worked.

Another LA ran a competition and did a survey to identify names for its website, and a group of young people then selected the name from these suggestions. Young people in this area were also involved in testing the website as the project manager explained:

We did a 'look and feel' session with young people to come and have a look at how the website was being put together and to make

suggestions about what they liked and didn't like, colour schemes, navigation of it...

Young people also helped them to market the website. In one LA, young people on the YOF panel had been involved in helping to design the marketing materials. Several LAs had set up focus groups of young people to monitor the progress of the pilots and to gain their feedback on how the mechanisms were working.

Other key groups, such as parents/carers and school staff had not been consulted to the same extent with regard to the delivery mechanisms of the pilots. However, some project managers and youth workers said they intended to get feedback on how the mechanisms were working from the perspectives of these groups during the pilot period. As might be expected, input from young people was considered to be most important at this stage.

2.4 The features of the models and differences and similarities between the approaches

This section provides an overview of the key features of the delivery models adopted by the pilot areas, including how staff have been deployed and links have been established with other departments and agencies. The target group, approaches to branding provided for young people and how young people use EYPP are discussed in addition to the LA staff's views on the amount of money available within EYPP. The emerging findings relating to young people's views of the model are presented.

2.4.1 Staff involved in the pilot

The pilot provided an opportunity for the LAs to work in pilot teams and with colleagues in other departments. A **typical team** in a LA included the project manager, supported by a strategic manager, and other team members with administrative or other responsibilities related to the implementation of the pilot.

Some LAs had recruited additional staff to coordinate EYPP or youth participation officers to support the young people. Two of the pilot areas employed members of staff whose primary responsibility was to engage the activity providers and others engaged with activity providers as part of their role.

Throughout this report, the manager with overall responsibility for the pilot will be referred to as the 'strategic manager,' and the manager with day-to-day responsibility for the pilot referred to as the 'project manager'. Other members of staff will be referred to as the 'project team'. However, it is recognised that in some of the LAs it was a cross-departmental programme. Staff from many different parts of the LA, and with a diverse range of roles, were involved in assisting the pilot teams to identify the target groups and to develop the technology.

Most of the pilot areas worked with members of youth participation teams, youth workers, or key workers, who had direct contact with young people in the target groups. These members of staff worked with the young people to encourage them to participate and often had other roles such as liaising with the local schools or youth centres. For example, in one of the LAs with a web-based approach, a youth worker had responsibility for ensuring that young people had access points in youth centres.

Other LAs used links with key workers in the voluntary and community sector and other professionals such as Connexions workers or social workers to support young people. These staff were working in youth or community centres to engage young

people in the pilots. One of the key workers explained her role, ‘I’ve been going into schools, I’ve been to youth clubs handing out leaflets, telling them, showing them and demonstrating’. Chapter 3 outlines the awareness raising and promotional activities undertaken by the pilot areas and the support offered to the young people in the target group.

Figure 2.1 summarises the key features of the delivery models adopted by the LAs.

Figure 2.1 Summary of the features of the models adopted across the nine LAs

LAs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Delivery mechanism									
Web-based approach		●			●	●			
Card-based approach			●	●			●	●	●
Key worker approach	●								
Existing facility									
Complementary to existing activities or scheme	●			●			●		●
Approach not chosen to complement existing facility		●	●		●	●		●	
Target group (Chapter 3)									
Includes FSM and LAC	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Includes others (such as SEN, LDD and young carers)			●	●	●	●		●	
Engagement of young people (Chapter 3)									
Opt in	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Opt out								●	●
Mediation (Chapter 3)									
High level of support from adults	●								
Some support from adults		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Optional support from adults									●
Access to the activities (Chapter 4)									
Generally immediate access								●	●
Dependent on the provider	●	●	●		●	●			
Pre-booking required				●			●		
Possible use of the money (Chapter 4)									
Possible to use to pay for transport	●	●							●
Possible use for equipment	●		●						
Use of the monthly allocation (Chapter 2)									
Monthly allocation can be saved	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
Monthly allocation can be topped up	●								●

2.4.2 The target group

As would be expected, all nine of the pilot areas included young people who are LAC and who are eligible for FSM in their target groups. However, some of the LAs also included young people with special educational needs (SEN), learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), young carers and vulnerable young people, and those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in their target groups. Two of the areas, with card-based approaches, had decided to distribute cards to all young people in the LA, with money added to the cards for those in the target groups (pilot

areas 7 and 9). One of the project managers explained, *'we don't want to give a card out which is a stigmatising card, so we are giving the card to all young people aged 11 to 16'*. In both of these LAs, the card was part of an existing system.

In areas where the number of young people potentially eligible for funding through the pilot exceeded the number that could be funded within the current budget allocation, the LAs had identified sub-groups within the broader target group. In order to achieve their target group, one LA had included the most disadvantaged one per cent of young people in the area followed by young people in receipt of FSM and young people with full statements of SEN. Chapter 3 (Section 3.4) explores the extent to which the original target group was retained by the LAs and how successful the pilots have been with regard to uptake and use by the young people.

2.4.3 Branding

All nine of the LAs had used brand names for the pilot and in some areas young people had been involved in developing these (see Section 2.3.1). Branding was viewed as important to help young people recognise the scheme. For example, one of the areas used the name of an existing summer programme of activities for young people and a member of the team said, *'we have had a lot of feedback from young people about the name and they're pleased that we haven't called it something different as it's helped them explain it to their mates'*.

2.4.4 How young people use EYPP

The projects differed in the ways young people could access EYPP funding. Instant access to activities or travel was available in two of the pilot areas with card-based mechanisms (pilot areas 8 and 9). For instance, in one area, young people could use their card at any outlet throughout the country, providing the outlet type was accepted by the card. Young people in two other areas had to pre-book their activities and telephone the activity providers directly to reserve sessions (pilot areas 4 and 7). The comments from the key workers indicated some concerns regarding the impact of young people not being able to access activities or facilities immediately on their participation in activities. In their view, they were not likely to plan ahead and they said that pre-booking activities might deter some young people. In other areas, the extent to which activities could be accessed was dependent on the providers' existing systems for booking the activities.

The extent to which the pilot areas **offered adult support** to help the young people to participate in the activities varied. Most of the LAs offered some degree of adult support through their links with youth participation teams and one of the LAs based their delivery model on mediation. LAs with high levels of one-to-one support for young people expected this to lead to greater participation. As one of the project managers explained, *'young people won't do something unless there is someone encouraging them to do it'*. Key workers explained that some of the young people in their target groups had low levels of confidence and needed adult input to help them to organise their travel to the activity. In two of the LAs, ongoing adult support was not required because young people had immediate access to the activities (pilot areas 8 and 9).

The consensus among young people who had participated in the activities was that they were pleased to be involved in the pilot and would recommend it to their friends. One of the young people said, *'it gives you the chance to do anything you want and to experience different things'*. Overall, young people reported that getting involved in activities was simple. Young people with key workers reported meeting with them regularly to talk about the activities they would like to do. In their opinion, this was

working well and had helped them to participate. One young person described the team contacting a martial arts centre for him to find out how much it would cost and organising a taxi for him so he could undertake the activity.

Other young people in areas where pre-booking was required, described looking at the internet with their key workers to see what activities were on offer and then phoning up and booking them. A young person in this area said, *'it's dead easy to book online, you just choose the option that you want to do and the time'*. However, a few young people disagreed and said it was not young person friendly because they had to book their activities in advance or because they had problems pre-booking the activities.

Young people in areas with web-based mechanisms, or in areas with card-based mechanisms where activities were booked online, generally said the websites were good and reported them being easy to use. However, a minority found it difficult to read information from the website, reported information about the activities being misleading or not detailed enough. Concerns relating to the card-based mechanisms raised by the young people included having problems activating their cards, not understanding how to register their cards and being worried about what to do if they lost their cards. Concerns were also expressed that, in most cases, it was not possible for young people to pay for others to do activities and this could limit young people's participation. One of the LA managers explained that they would need to consider ways of enabling young people to use their money for others, *'we need to try and get a way around that because a lot of young people do not want to go because their friend is not eligible'*. This issue was also mentioned by key workers who were disappointed that young people were not allowed to take their family or friends with them. The pilot teams perceived this as a potential barrier to uptake and use of EYPP funding and support.

Lack of transport to get to activities was perceived by the members of the pilot teams who worked directly with young people as a barrier to engagement in positive activities. However, in some pilot areas it was not necessary to include travel costs in the model because free transport was already offered to all young people in the LA. One pilot area prioritised provision for travel and provided young people with a travel card in response to consultation with young people (pilot area 9).

Young people could use their money to pay for **transport costs** in two other pilot areas and this reflected concerns that a lack of free transport provision in these areas would be a barrier to participation (pilot areas 1 and 2).

The project managers in some pilot areas were exploring ways of enabling the costs of transport to the activities to be included in the offer. One of the youth workers explained that Connexions staff purchased monthly travel cards for young people and it would be easier if they could give money for transport directly to the young people via the pilot.

2.4.5 The LAs' views on the amount of money available for young people

The projects differed in the amounts of subsidy they were offering per month. This ranged from £25 to £40 and the consensus among the pilot teams was that the amount of money available for young people was sufficient for them to participate in activities. A key worker in one of the pilot areas explained that these young people have very little so, *'I think [the amount received] per month for a young person is fantastic'*. Furthermore, most of the LAs operated a system whereby the young people could save their funding over time to pay for more expensive activities. This

was perceived to be an important feature, which would permit the young people to access more expensive activities such as scuba diving or having a specialist sports coach attend a training session.

The observations of the pilot teams on the amount of subsidy offered to the target group revealed that they considered the amount might be too much for young people depending on the activities they participated in. For instance, if young people only used it to pay for activities provided by the voluntary and community sector, such as a subsidised youth centre, it would take them a long time to spend their monthly allocation.

Fewer LAs (see Figure 2.1) had mechanisms whereby other people could add additional funds for the young people (pilot areas 1 and 9). However, several pilot areas currently without this facility said they were in the process of developing mechanisms whereby parents/carers or LA services could 'top up' the young people's monthly allocation. The comments from the key workers indicated that this would be useful for other services in the LA because it would allow them to reward instances when young people made positive contributions such as volunteering for events.

2.5 The relationship between the different delivery models and the effectiveness of the models to date

At the time of the LA visits the pilot teams indicated that delivery models had the potential to work well. However, some of the pilot areas were currently behind their original schedules, so they felt it was too early to comment on the effectiveness of their models to date. Overall, the LAs employing more complex technology in their delivery models had experienced some delays in implementation. A member of the pilot team in one LA said during an interview in mid-April, *'we've registered 300 thus far, because of the IT stuff the website's not been up and running that long, we're still very much in the early stages'* and another pilot area had just launched their card-based system at the time of the LA visits, so the pilot team could not comment on the effectiveness of the mechanism to date.

At this stage, it is not possible to comment on the success of a particular approach. However, a number of challenges relating to specific delivery mechanisms were identified by the members of the pilot teams working directly with young people, which could have an impact on the relationship between the approaches adopted and the effectiveness of the models to date. These included:

- young people's lack of access to the internet in areas with web-based approaches. One of the key workers, working in an area with a web-based approach, explained that due to low levels of home access, many young people only have internet access at school. This was viewed as a barrier to participation because it limited the amount of time young people had to access the website. Indeed, some young people in the target group were unable to access the internet through school IT suites or those provided in public libraries due to them being banned from these locations.
- private and voluntary sector activity providers not having card readers in areas where the mechanism relied on this.
- young people not being allowed to use their money to pay for others to participate in activities. Key workers noted the impact of young people being unable to pay for friends and family to do the activities as a potential barrier to participation.

- the offer not including transport costs in some areas, which was expected to have an impact on participation.
- the extent to which the pilot areas offered adult support to help the young people to participate in the activities.

2.6 Summary

In summary, although the LAs had adopted different delivery models the EYPP complemented LAs' strategic aims and existing schemes and activities available for young people in each area. The LAs varied in the extent to which the models reflected existing schemes and there were variations amongst the LAs in terms of the mechanisms young people used to participate in activities. However, all pilot areas aimed to:

- make the mechanism simple for young people,
- use familiar processes or people, and
- avoid stigmatising the target group.

Key differences between the models were the support offered to the young people and the extent to which young people had immediate access to activities and free transport costs. Overall, the delivery models were expected to work well, but because some of the areas were currently behind their original schedules they felt it was too early to comment on the effectiveness of their delivery models to date. As would be expected, the LAs employing more complex technology in their models had experienced some delays in implementation, whereas the pilot areas employing other mechanisms had launched their pilots sooner.

Young people's uptake of the offer could be determined by the level of support they receive and the extent to which the practical barriers such as lack of internet access are overcome. The relationship between the different delivery models and the outcomes will be a key focus of the second phase of this research.

3. Engaging Young People

Key findings

- A range of approaches had been used to identify target groups including accessing free school meals records or making contact with key professionals.
- The number of young people in the target groups differed across the LAs. However, all included young people eligible for free school meals and looked after children, in school years 9 to 12.
- The pilot teams had sent EYPP-branded correspondence directly to young people at home or school to invite them to participate. These were followed up with reminders.
- Delivery teams in some areas had engaged with schools and other key professionals such as Connexions and Youth Offending Teams, and voluntary organisations to recruit young people.
- Promotional materials had been used to raise awareness of the pilot. These included launch events, on-line directories and EYPP-branded resources.
- Key workers were used to encourage young people to become involved in EYPP. This was viewed as an effective method of engaging young people.
- At this stage of implementation, take-up was lower than anticipated by the pilot teams. However, the LAs had plans in place to increase take-up and to sustain young people's involvement in EYPP during the pilot period.

3.1 Introduction

Young people are intended to be at the heart of the EYPP; thus reaching and engaging with them was of utmost importance to delivery teams. Their time had been spent raising awareness of the pilot, and crucially, getting young people signed up and engaged in positive activities. This chapter explores:

- the range of awareness raising strategies that had been used to achieve this
- the level of engagement and reasons for this
- the main challenges and experiences in implementing EYPP and the lessons learned to date.

3.2 Marketing and awareness raising

Delivery teams had faced a number of questions when starting their respective pilot schemes. Who were the young people in their target groups? How and where could they be reached? And, what and whom would encourage them to sign-up and take part in activities? These questions were approached in similar ways despite the pilot teams operating in quite different settings. The sub-sections below give details of the strategies used by the delivery teams to raise awareness of the pilot. They were not necessarily applied in a specific order. Indeed, one of the stages listed might have been employed alongside another.

Identifying young people

The first task for delivery teams was to decide upon the young people entitled to receive EYPP funds. This was young people in (or who would normally be in) school years 9 to 12 who are eligible for FSM and children who are looked after. In order to identify specific individuals who met these criteria, delivery teams adopted a variety of approaches. These included, selecting certain schools, inviting schools and key workers to make nominations, accessing free school meals records¹ or making contact with key professionals involved with looked after children or those with LDD. However, this was not necessarily an easy process, and delays at this stage were seen to bring about delays in reaching young people.

Invitation to take part

Collecting young people's names and addresses enabled delivery teams to target them directly. Letters of invitation were sent to young people at their home or school address (via delivery teams or schools) informing them how to register for the scheme. Some young people who were interviewed confirmed that they had personally received such an invitation, but others drew attention to their key worker's role in raising their initial awareness. They had chosen to take part for one or more of the following reasons:

- interested in certain activities
- the chance to meet new people
- parental and/or key worker encouragement
- excited by the money on offer
- felt privileged to be involved
- had the opportunity to try new activities
- to relieve boredom.

Young people were provided with freepost envelopes for returning their registration form and parental consent form where appropriate. The letters also gave details of the young person's local EYPP website and local delivery team. Such correspondence was EYPP-branded and may have included a membership card, USB keys and answers to 'frequently asked questions' (FAQs). The letters were usually followed with one or more reminder letters. One project manager referred to this as a '*drip-feed effect*'. He said: '*They would probably have thrown the first one away, even the second, but may have opened the third.*' Yet, despite such persistence, postal invitations were not always enough to secure participation, and other strategies were employed.

Engaging with schools

In addition to postal invitations, delivery teams in some areas had also engaged with schools and, in one case, further education colleges. These were viewed as important registration points offering access to large numbers of young people. It was a specific strategy in one pilot area to involve teachers (or 'keyworkers') in the recruitment of young people. Similarly, parents were more receptive to promotional materials being distributed via a school. For example, one parent recalled how her children had received a letter about EYPP asking them to complete and return a form

¹ These might be cross-referenced with other records held by schools, Connexions, the Youth Offending Service and the Care Service.

to qualify for EYPP funds. This particular mother discarded the forms and various reminder letters received as she was wary of the scheme. She explained that:

I thought it was a scam. In a time when youngsters are being told to be wary of giving out their mobile phone numbers to strangers, on the other hand they're being asked for such private information without much explanation

She became more trusting of the scheme once correspondence was sent via the school. Another parent reiterated the importance of sharing information with young people and parents via the school and remarked that, '*people listen to them [schools]*'.

Additionally, one pilot area was especially reliant on the support of schools. Its model required photo ID cards and facilities for photographing young people which were only available through schools.

It was generally reported that **face-to-face meetings**, in comparison to sending letters, led to much **higher recruitment rates**. This strategy provided young people with extra encouragement as they could see friends signing up to the pilot and support from adults was readily available. The targeting of young people at schools, however, needed to be managed sensitively to avoid drawing attention to a young person's individual circumstances.

While schools were important venues to access young people, some schools were said to be more receptive than others. Delivery teams found some schools busy with other priorities, thus not able to provide extra support. Yet, in other cases, schools agreed to distribute letters to young people or allowed one-off access (such as speaking about the pilot during an assembly). In schools where more extensive support was provided, delivery teams were able to meet young people during lesson times, before/after school or at lunch on a regular basis.

Overall, one project manager spoke about working closely with schools. This pilot area had built good relationships with five schools. These schools wrote to parents about the scheme and one headteacher had appeared in a promotional DVD. This was felt to be a helpful move as parents trusted the school. Another project manager also mentioned that schools had written to parents on behalf of the EYPP pilot, but did not refer to such close working relationships.

A key barrier to engaging with schools was having no designated contact person in the school. One team member said '*it's been a barrier just getting past the front desk to speak to someone*' and that having a '*route in*' was more effective. The support offered also depended on a teacher's commitment to making the scheme work, and also their position within the school. One team member said those with a pastoral role or an extended schools remit might be interested, but did not yield enough influence in a school. Equally, if the contact person was a deputy head or head of year they had to balance their support with other pressures like exams and Ofsted inspections. This interviewee, and her colleague, mentioned that special schools had been particularly supportive, but even in these cases it was hard to keep regular contact.

In addition to identifying key staff, a practical consideration for EYPP project managers was finding an appropriate location within a school to discuss the programme with young people and to activate cards or access the website. For

example, delivery teams reported meeting young people in busy school canteens or in a room which young people had to make an effort to find.

Working with key professionals

As well as engaging with schools, it was also necessary to work with key professionals inside and outside of local authorities. Two project managers indicated that support from their head of directorate was important in raising awareness of the pilot. It was also especially helpful to liaise with local authority colleagues who could promote the scheme and provide information, and it was generally thought that these relationships needed to be strengthened. The main departments with whom interviewees liaised included: Children's Services, Connexions, Extended Services, Services for LAC and LDD, Youth Participation Teams, and Youth Offending Teams. There were also key professionals working outside of local authorities who were helping to raise awareness of the pilot. One area had been working closely with a voluntary organisation that was trusted by young people. Another pilot area was using keyworkers as a method for engaging with young people. It was reported that such meetings had enhanced relationships between young people and keyworkers as they had a positive focus and were not just about '*mopping up problems*'. Overall, as one project manager pointed out, keyworkers were being used to facilitate relationships with young people. She said: '*We are trying to empower the young people here, and not get the professionals, the key workers, to do it for them, that has always been a bit of a fear.*'

Engaging parents

Engaging with parents was crucial in reaching young people. A key reason for this was made clear by one team member: '*If you get the parent on your side, you've got the child on your side half of the time.*' A further reason for engaging with parents was that, in some cases, parental consent was required in order for young people to engage in certain activities. Therefore, to gain the support of parents, it was important that parents understood the pilot and saw it as a legitimate scheme. Time had been spent explaining – initially by letter – what the pilot involved. A useful way of winning over parents was making letters conversation-like or '*short and snappy*'. Other techniques for engaging with parents included a free-phone telephone line, adverts in local newspapers and attendance at school parents' evenings.

It was considered important to promote EYPP to parents but they had not been consulted about the EYPP delivery mechanisms (see Section 2.3.1) or about the range of activities included in the offer. This is discussed further in Chapter 4. Parents interviewed often commented on their lack of knowledge regarding the complete range of EYPP activities on offer, over and above those that their child was participating in. For example, one parent recalled signing a consent form for her son to take part in EYPP. However, since then, '*communication had dried up*'. She explained that it was up to her son to disseminate information which was proving unsuccessful and she would prefer to be kept up-to-date via e-mail.

Promotional materials

A range of promotional materials had been used to raise awareness of the pilot. It is worth noting that the success of e-technologies was dependent on internet access, and also pilot areas having access to young people's email addresses and mobile telephone numbers. The promotional materials used by pilot areas included:

- Launch events (providers putting on activities to generate interest)
- On-line directory of activities

- SMS alerts
- Banners, leaflets and e-newsletters
- Stalls, drop-in sessions and road shows
- Newspaper coverage and bus advertising²
- EYPP-branded bags, water bottles, t-shirts, USB keys.

Project managers were unable to say which materials from the above list were the most effective means of promotion. Some explained that it was a combination of a number of strategies and they were keen to expand on their promotional activities in innovative ways in the future in order to disseminate information about EYPP.

Engaging with providers

The ability of young people to participate in the EYPP depended on the activities that were available. These need to appeal to young people and meet their diverse needs in order for them to be taken up. The pilot areas all had some providers onboard at the time of being interviewed. These had been selected on the basis of local knowledge, recommendations made by colleagues and consultations with young people about their interests. Overall, as will be discussed further in Chapter 4, gaining activity providers' participation was largely dependent on their type (voluntary or commercial), their existing links with the LA, their size, their technical expertise and whether or not they saw the pilot as being beneficial to them and/or their local community.

3.3 Supporting young people's participation

Young people had been supported in a number of ways depending on their specific needs. The key to reaching young people was said to lie in being flexible and responsive. One project manager explained that some young people needed individual tailored support (meeting one-to-one with a keyworker) and some preferred to meet in a group, whereas others were happy to speak to the delivery team by phone/email or visit the website. It was generally agreed, however, that it was not sufficient to simply send letters to young people or direct them to a website. They needed extra support through face-to-face contact or text messages, such as 'there's a new activity at the gym, have you seen it?'

In most areas, support had been offered by key workers, and less often by activity providers³. The key workers were either based within delivery teams or in voluntary/community organisations. They were able to provide intensive face-to-face support to young people, especially those with low confidence and aspirations who needed extra encouragement. One team member remarked that some young people would not have signed up to the pilot without such support. She also expressed the view that young people found it difficult to '*think out of the box*', and referred to her role in expanding their outlook:

² One area was planning to promote the pilot by using a 4X4 vehicle in conjunction with a local radio station.

³ Around half of the activity providers who were interviewed said they had given advice to young people about the activities they offered. However, this did not necessarily differ from the advice generally given to young people outside of the pilot.

I think sometimes it's a case of I sow the seeds, and I see what emerges a couple of weeks down the line, because they do think about it, they talk to their friends, and maybe they'll come back.

A further way of supporting young people was through local EYPP websites, often with additional support as outlined above. One project manager mentioned running 'look around' sessions to familiarise young people with the website. A team member from this area mentioned that young people's technical abilities varied – some found it easy and others were confused. Another project manager remarked that the website needed to be kept simple, not too text heavy. Another said it was useful to give full details of providers so young people could do their own research (although researching providers via the internet was difficult for young people without such access). One area mentioned working with youth centres to make internet access points accessible. Since internet access was a problem, one area had made printed copies of the online directory. This area had also linked to a local bus planner on the website as young people were previously put off going places because they didn't know how to get there.

3.4 The nature of the target group

In line with DCSF criteria, pilot areas were making funds available to facilitate access to positive activities for young people in (or who would normally be in) school years 9 to 12 who are economically disadvantaged (for the EYPP defined as those eligible for Free School Meals or looked after children). Some pilot areas were targeting particular groups within these criteria such as young people in care and young people with learning difficulties/disabilities, in school years 9 to 12. Such young people, as mentioned in 3.2, had been identified through various methods such as school nominations. However, such methods did not always generate the required number of young people, and consequently ways of reaching young people had been extended. In addition, five pilot areas had additional categories including: young carers, young parents, foster children, those leaving care and those whose needs were being met through School Action Plus (pilot areas 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8).

The number of young people in target groups ranged from 1000 to 3500. However, such figures were not necessarily inclusive of all young people who meet the criteria listed above. The measures used to select young people were questioned by three project managers. One spoke about the problem of reaching young people in care because they are a transient group. The use of free school meals as a measure of economic deprivation was also questioned. This manager was concentrating on the most disadvantaged wards to try to reach young people, and checked their eligibility when they completed an engagement plan. Two other managers explained that they were working with a smaller cohort than expected as the number of young people claiming free school meals had decreased. They did not know the reasons for the decline, but it meant they now needed to achieve 100 per cent participation to reach their target.

3.5 The extent to which awareness has been raised

Delivery teams had employed a range of methods to raise awareness of the pilot, as discussed in Section 3.2. The success of such efforts in engaging young people varied. At the time of the visits, the number of young people who had made some connection with EYPP in their area (such as activating their card or registering on the website) ranged from 23 to 1,750 young people. A number of suggestions were made as to why this was the case. Some delivery teams had spent longer than

anticipated setting up and promoting the pilot, and increasing participation was reported to be a pressing issue for delivery teams. One project manager said:

I think the crunch now is about getting the kids to take up the offer. Now is the hard bit because, to an extent, we're not going to be judged on [the publicity materials]. We're going to be judged on how many kids come through the door and how much of that money is spent.

The shortfall in participation by young people had not been expected by delivery teams, with several remarking that they had been 'surprised' by the low (or slow) uptake. These interviewees had expected young people to embrace the offer of money for activities, but this had not always been the case. One strategic manager said that he and his team thought young people were being presented with a 'fantastic offer' so were 'quite surprised' by the slow take-up. Similarly, a project manager was surprised by the take-up rate because the pilot was offering 'free money'. Several pilot areas had consulted with young people at the planning stages of EYPP through focus group discussions and liaisons with YOF/YCF panels, in an attempt to provide an EYPP offer that was appealing to and catered for the target groups. However, despite such efforts, take-up was still considered to be slower than expected in these areas. The slow take-up led one delivery team member to suggest that money might not be the only barrier to young people's lack of participation in positive activities.

Despite the lower than anticipated take-up rates, delivery teams in four areas mentioned that young people who had signed up to EYPP had been 'very receptive' or 'mostly positive'. Such enthusiasm had been noticed in other areas too, but alongside some scepticism and apathy on the part of young people. Delivery team members in one area suspected that the most enthusiastic young people were engaged in positive activities prior to the pilot. One of these interviewees mentioned that the keenest young people had asked for activities that they are already doing to be put on the EYPP website so they could pay for these using their credits. Another interviewee from this area reported meeting young people from the target group who were already engaged in activities, thus she felt the pilot might not be reaching the most disengaged young people.

Overall, several suggestions were offered by interviewees to explain young people's slow participation in the pilot. The most frequently cited reason was that young people were mistrusting of the funds being offered. Young people had raised questions such as 'are you really giving me this money?' and 'what's the catch?' They simply did not believe that they were being offered 'something for nothing', as a strategic manager said. Another strategic manager said: 'Young people said that they wanted free travel. They have it now and aren't signing up. I just don't know why that is.' Additionally, one team member described young people as being 'fairly nervous' about the initiative because they had encountered short-lived pilot schemes before. He said: 'It starts then it stops' and this had made them sceptical.

A further explanation for the shortfall in participation was related to the young people in the target group. By definition, the group was hard-to-reach (in this case, a segment of the population that may not usually participate in positive activities). This had presented a problem as some young people were simply uninterested in the pilot. One project manager said: 'We cannot underestimate the apathy of some of the young people towards schemes like this.' Another interviewee, a team member, had received responses from young people such as: 'I'm just not interested' 'It looks like it's too much effort' 'It's not cool' or 'I can't be bothered'. Her colleague also

referred to young people's outlook, saying: '*It doesn't necessarily seem to be the money; it seems to be more about the attitude.*' Another team member mentioned meeting two young people who thought the pilot was either '*too patronising*' or '*too authoritative*', and another mentioned a young person who was concerned about data protection.

In addition to the above, the method by which delivery teams had initially communicated with young people was thought to be ineffective by some interviewees. A mass mailing of letters was felt to be too impersonal and bewildering to young people. It was suggested that some young people had not realised what the letter was about and needed face-to-face contact with key workers in schools and other community venues. A further problem associated with the letter approach was that some young people in the target group, and their parents, had poor literacy skills. It was also mentioned by one team member that parents of some SEN children had not consented to their child's participation, although some had reconsidered when they were told about activities that accommodated the needs of young people who were disabled.

It is worth noting that visits to pilot areas were undertaken shortly after their launch dates, and the situation was said to be improving. The EYPP was getting noticed and young people were seeing others benefiting from the pilot. One project manager said that a local advertising campaign, and seeing friends spending, had resulted in young people saying '*am I too late?*' and '*can my friend be on it too?*' Indeed, word-of-mouth was seen as a powerful promotional tool. The upcoming Easter and summer holidays were also seen as key periods for more young people to get involved, and new activities had been added to the existing offer. One project manager assumed that raising awareness would continue until it was judged to be not beneficial for a young person to take part because the pilot would end shortly.

3.6 Plans to sustain young people's interest

The nine pilot areas had been focusing their efforts on getting young people to take up the EYPP offer. However, once enrolled, strategies were needed to sustain young people's interest in activities. The delivery teams, along with some activity providers, mentioned several ways in which they had or were planning to maintain young people's interest – with the overriding method being regular communication. They were keen to find out what young people thought of the pilot, and also what improvements were needed in order to make it '*young people friendly*'. The strategies given by these interviewees are listed below:

- feedback from young people (via online portals/message boards, focus groups, star-rating systems for activities, mystery shoppers)
- newsletters (including some designed by young people)
- website competitions and incentive draws
- meeting with key workers (to discuss monthly plans)
- adding/varying activities (e.g. offering shorter sessions)
- advertising and awareness raising events
- identifying and publicising internet access points
- monitoring credit usage (contacting those under-spending or doing repeat activities)
- publishing 'myth-busting' information about the pilot

- buddy system
- SMS service/call centre.

Take-up varied across the nine pilot areas due to the different launch dates and recruitment processes. At this stage, there was no evidence of a relationship between the involvement of key workers and take-up rates. The effect of specific features of each model, such as using a key worker, on young people's participation in EYPP will be explored in the follow-up LA visits.

3.7 Challenges and lessons learned

Overall, at the point when pilot areas were visited by NFER, delivery teams had faced several challenges in implementing their respective pilots, and were learning lessons from these. Some such challenges have been mentioned in the previous sections, specifically the problems encountered in reaching and engaging with young people. Indeed, this was the most frequently cited challenge. Delivery teams had been surprised by the pilot's slow take-up and had endeavoured to find successful dissemination routes. One team member expressed the following view:

The challenge really is to get the young people to think a little bit more long term, to think a little bit more about new skills, trying to do something that's a bit different.

The pilot's timescale was another challenge for the delivery teams. One strategic manager remarked that the implementation date had been introduced too quickly, and his team had to work hard to set up systems and engage partners. This issue was raised by a project manager who said the pilot had taken longer to start up than anticipated, and there had been insufficient preparation time. A second project manager had experienced delays in getting key information from colleagues and thought this had put his pilot about two months behind schedule. These challenges had an impact on the recruitment of young people.

A further challenge was dealing with criticisms of the pilot. Two strategic managers and a project manager mentioned that questions had been raised by colleagues about the pilot rewarding bad behaviour or '*money for bad kids*'. One strategic manager said it had been necessary to convey to colleagues how the pilot links with other policies and initiatives, and to start working together on making the money effective. He said: '*This is part of trying to change young people's and parents' attitudes, but also our own. It's part of something bigger, it's part of a raft of things.*' This interviewee commented that they had some difficult discussions with colleagues, but said that this had been necessary and productive.

A range of other challenges were mentioned by delivery teams, and some activity providers, as outlined below:

- being sensitive to young people's individual circumstances
- finding registration and internet access points
- dealing with new technology/putting systems in place
- under-spending by young people
- too few key workers
- getting 'buy-in' from providers/organisations

- collecting and protecting personal data
- finding cost-effective transport for young people
- devising exit strategies.

3.8 Summary

At this stage of the pilot, the LAs had identified their target groups and had used a range of methods to raise young people's awareness of EYPP. Strategies included sending correspondence directly to young people and using contacts in schools and other key professionals in the LA or in the voluntary sector to support the recruitment process. Key workers were also used to encourage young people to become involved in EYPP. The intensive one-to-one support provided by the key workers was viewed as an effective method of engaging young people in EYPP.

Overall, young people were reported to be receptive to EYPP and positive about becoming involved. However, at this stage of implementation, the take-up was lower than anticipated by the pilot teams. Plans were in place to increase take-up and to sustain young people's involvement in the pilot. These involved keeping in regular contact with the target group and gaining their feedback on their experiences of participating in the pilot.

4. EYPP activities

Key findings

- In order to define EYPP provision, the EYPP delivery team typically examined existing provision, consulted with young people, identified the gaps in provision and ensured that there was a range of providers to deliver provision across the defined DCSF categories.
- The types of activities varied across pilot areas with some offering a very broad range, whilst others were narrow in comparison.
- Across all pilot areas there was scope to develop provision across the pilot period in response to student demand. This was encouraged.
- There was some consensus across some pilot areas that they had not recruited as many activity providers as they would have liked within the early stages of implementation.
- The receptiveness of providers varied. It has proved easier to recruit providers where historic collaboration had existed. Providers from the public sector were considered less problematic to engage than private providers.
- Certain providers had changed their working practice in order to accommodate the pilot and to some extent, discounts were negotiated for young people eligible for EYPP funds.
- Young people were positive about EYPP activities and felt that there was a broad range of activities on offer.

4.1 Introduction

Across the nine pilot areas, EYPP delivery teams had included a range of activities in order to engage the most disadvantaged young people in positive pursuits. This chapter discusses:

- the range of activities available to young people at the early implementation stage of EYPP. The chapter does not seek to provide a detailed account of each activity but rather focuses on the broad nature of the activities, how the activities were defined, as well as the plans to extend the range of activities during the pilot period
- type of activity providers and how receptive they have been to EYPP
- young people's views on the activities and their experiences of taking part in EYPP. Although young people who were interviewed as part of the evaluation had all experienced EYPP activities, the extent and nature of the activities in which they had participated varied, and to some extent this is reflected in their comments
- the challenges and lessons learned about EYPP activities during the early months of implementation.

4.2 Defining the range of EYPP activities

Under Section 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, LAs are required to secure access to sufficient educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people in their area. Therefore, pilot areas, to some extent, had started to develop a directory of activities for young people and were already offering a number of free activities for young people in their area. This appeared to be a useful starting point for the development of EYPP activity provision. Some pilot areas had a wider range of existing provision prior to the launch of EYPP than others. For example, in one pilot area, a positive activities directory for young people already existed which included approximately 2000 activities. In areas where there was less evidence of such an extensive directory, interviewees from the pilot delivery teams found ways in which to collate provision.

In order to define their activities, typically EYPP delivery teams:

- **examined existing provision** for young people in terms of positive activities. As one EYPP project manager stated, *'we took everything that we had that was of reasonable quality'*
- **consulted with young people** about EYPP activity provision in the early stages of the pilot and felt that they were to some extent, offering activities that young people wanted to participate in
- **identified any gaps in provision** and then considered the possibilities of including additional activities
- **ensured that there was a range of providers** to deliver provision across the defined DCSF categories as shown in Table 4.1 below.

In addition, EYPP delivery teams and members of the EYPP Project Board were typically personnel who had experience of working closely with young people and/or had liaised with youth participation officers or the Connexions service. Therefore, they were aware of young people's requirements. None of the pilot areas had **consulted with parents** and in some cases, interviewees explained that this was deliberate. An EYPP project manager in one area reported that, *'the more people we spoke to about it, the more problematic it became'*. Furthermore, LAs felt that they had to be cautious about who they spoke to given the relatively small target group.

Once EYPP activities were identified, they were **categorised according to the broad activity framework** as set out by the DCSF within the EYPP guidelines. Table 4.1 below provides some examples of EYPP activities.

Table 4.1 Examples of EYPP activities available to EYPP participants

Type of activity	Example activity
Sport	Scuba diving, gymnastics, climbing, sailing
Art	Pottery classes, game design, photography, theatre trips
Media	Film-making
Recreational	DJ-ing and MC skills, t-shirt making, circus skill training, hot air ballooning, stand-up comedy
Educational	Health and safety courses, school trips
Residential	“Do It For Real” summer residential, activity holidays
Miscellaneous	Army or sea cadets, bell ringing, family history, City Tour bus trips

The **types of activities** varied across pilot areas with some offering a very broad range, for example, over 3000 activities, whilst others were narrow in comparison. Indeed, a strategic manager from one pilot area explained how her team were deliberately keen to keep provision narrowly defined at the start of the pilot, in order to, *‘make sure systems worked, the back office worked and the risk-assessment and fraud element worked’*.

EYPP activities included the following:

- those that young people could participate in individually, such as swimming and rock climbing
- group activities, such as football, or where young people with special educational needs would benefit from a collective activity, for example, bowling for a group of young people
- one-off events, such as attending a concert, hot air ballooning or school trips
- regular classes, such as judo, dance or circus skills training.

Numerous activities including some organised through youth groups or schools were reported as being offered free of charge to young people. One particular pilot area ensured that a combination of low and high cost activities were included within their provision to allow students the opportunity to budget and monitor their own spending.

At the time of the interviews, some EYPP project managers explained that a number of activities were not yet ‘live’, since they were waiting for providers to return registration documentation (Criminal Records Bureau clearance, copies of insurance policies or risk assessments). Once relevant documentation had been received, an increased range of activities would be accessible to young people. None of the pilot areas had commissioned new activities specifically for EYPP; all activities were

already available and accessible to young people in the area. As one strategic manager explained:

The “newness” could be engaging young people who haven’t used these activities before. Part of it is about changing what services offer but it’s more about shaping what happens than inventing new activities.

All nine areas explained that there was **scope to develop their provision** across the pilot period in response to young people’s demand and, indeed, this was encouraged by EYPP delivery staff. Interviewees were keen for activities to be young–person led and explained the ways in which young people had helped to develop provision, through discussions with a member of the EYPP delivery team, comments provided through an EYPP website or via e-mail correspondence. One strategic manager explained that *‘it’s all about choice and allowing the young people to choose exactly what it is they want to do. We will support them in achieving this’*. An interviewee in another area reiterated such sentiments and had tried to ensure activity providers accommodated young people’s requirements. He stated that:

We know this is a young person focused project, empowering them not empowering the activity providers...it is the choice of the young person and if they don’t want to spend their money on that activity, that’s well within their rights.

Whilst it was uncommon for pilot areas to entirely reject a request from a young person, **certain activities, whilst not problematic, needed careful consideration**. Decisions about what activities to include were generally based on legality and strategic thinking within the LA. Some examples of activities considered unsuitable are described in the vignette below.

Activities considered unsuitable for EYPP

Young people within one pilot area had been informed that there was scope within EYPP to *‘do any activity that they wanted’*. However, a support worker from the Youth Service within this area explained that this was not always possible. He spoke of a young male who had a history of violent outbreaks. Prior to EYPP, activities such as kick-boxing and martial arts were not encouraged despite the young person’s desire to participate in them. The support worker explained that, *‘we can’t officially sign-post them to where they can do these activities or go with them to attend these activities’*. The EYPP project manager appreciated the importance of assessing requests on a case-by-case basis and stressed the importance of allowing young people to choose how to spend their funds. He stated that: *‘we’re not promoting martial arts but if it’s what they want to do and you have no solid reason why they shouldn’t do it, then they should be encouraged to participate in it for physical fitness and so on.’*

In another pilot area, some suggested activities by young people were not included in the EYPP provision due to a conflict of interest existing between different LA strategies. While some young people had suggested a trip to a local burger restaurant as a positive activity, the healthy eating agenda within the LA meant that this activity could not be endorsed through EYPP. Another area was unable to include paintballing as an activity since the provider had failed to pass the risk assessment.

A strategic manager in another pilot area explained that some young people had requested to save their EYPP monthly funds in order to pay for a school trip. He questioned whether young people should be using their funds in this way to fund one-off events as opposed to booking activities they could take part in on a regular basis. However, he explained that, *'we consider things on a case-by-case basis...but we really want young people to be doing things on a weekly basis'*.

Overall, EYPP delivery teams stressed to young people that, although they could be receiving guidance and support from key workers and other support staff, the LA was not liable for an activity. As one interviewee stated:

If something goes wrong it's down to the provider, we've just booked the ticket.

A number of the pilot areas had issued young people with an EYPP card which clearly stated that the young person was under the age of 18 and that the provider was liable for enforcing their own policies.

There was evidence to suggest within three pilot areas that young people could **purchase tickets for friends or family** to participate in an EYPP activity. Where this occurred, LA interviewees considered this *'important to encourage young people to spend time with their friends and families'*, and to encourage young people to access activities which they would not have undertaken on their own.

The DCSF guidance states that funds should not be used for purchasing general goods and products. However, LAs can, exceptionally, consider ways in which EYPP funds can be used to access the equipment necessary to participate in particular activities, providing this is formally linked to participation itself. Some areas had discussed the principles of funding equipment with the DCSF. The vignette below details some examples of the pilot areas' own deliberations regarding purchasing equipment.

Using EYPP funds to purchase equipment

An EYPP project manager from one pilot area understood that purchasing equipment was possible only in circumstances when equipment could not be hired. A young female living in a small rural village was keen on basketball. There was nowhere for her to practise her skills and she wanted to use EYPP to purchase a basketball net and ball for her garden through which she became *'more sporty'*

Within a second pilot area, the EYPP manager described a situation when they had to decline a request for a piece of equipment when a young girl had requested a trampoline for her garden. The rationale for not using EYPP funds for this was that she could sign up for a trampoline course at the local leisure centre.

4.3 How activity providers were engaged

Overall, pilot areas were keen to recruit providers that:

- historically had a *'good track record'* of providing activities for young people

- could operate with little disruption to their current working practice
- would be liked by young people
- could offer a wide range and network of provision.

Generally, it had proved easier to recruit providers where historic collaboration had existed: the short turnaround time in which pilot areas had to implement the scheme meant that it made sense to collaborate with existing partners where possible. One particular interviewee commented that, *'we knew which agencies could operate from day one and offer a wide network of provision...they were the ones we knew young people would like...it's not rocket science'*.

Some interviewees were unable to precisely state the number of activity providers recruited during the early stages of implementation. However, there was some consensus across at least seven of the nine areas that they did not have as many activity providers as they would have liked at this stage of implementation. The types of activity providers varied across the public, private and to some extent, the voluntary sector. Providers from the public sector were generally considered *'unproblematic to engage'*. Interviewees within two LAs divided into district councils, recalled liaising with the neighbouring councils in order to facilitate use of the leisure services across the authority. There was some evidence that schools were recruited as providers of EYPP provision. For example, a community school in one area was working towards the school being *'a dedicated learning village'*. The interviewee from this school explained that their involvement within EYPP would allow them, *'to offer a more enriched programme. It fits perfectly with our brief to widen participation for young people and their families'*.

Providers were recruited in the following ways:

- **active recruitment of providers** - someone from the EYPP delivery team was tasked with recruiting providers, and in two of the pilot areas this was a team member's specific role to help ensure a broad provision for the young people and to continue dialogue with existing and new providers as and when required
- **providers approaching the LA** to be included in the scheme. This was reportedly rare, but increasing. Interested providers were able to complete an online registration form on the EYPP website in one pilot area. The EYPP project manager would then invite providers to a meeting to discuss their involvement.
- **automatic inclusion to EYPP** – as was the case in one area. Under to the delivery model implemented, all providers that had access to chip and pin facilities and assigned a specific merchant code were eligible to be part of EYPP. Providers were sent a letter informing them of the pilot and forewarning them that young people might use their cards at their establishment. There was little further engagement with providers within this pilot area.

Whilst the number of recruited providers was considered to be *'un-exhaustive'*, there were occasions when a provider was considered unsuitable. In order to ensure that they met certain criteria, checks on the suitability of the providers took place in all but one of the nine pilot areas. For example, providers were asked to produce health and safety risk assessments for each activity, Criminal Records Bureau clearance documentation for provider staff, child protection policies and have the appropriate

insurance liability cover. There existed a willingness from the EYPP delivery teams to help providers develop policies and to produce the appropriate documentation. There were occasions when activities were not included in the provision due to failure to produce such documentation.

The **receptiveness of providers** was said to vary across providers. Some were reported as being, *'really positive'*, and viewed EYPP as *'an untapped resource'*, and an opportunity for *'increased revenue whilst looking good by engaging the disengaged'*. Other providers, while seeing the value of their involvement in EYPP, were described by LA staff as being *'cautious'* and had an element of suspicion about the types of young people that might access their facilities. Often providers were said to have been invited to a meeting or presentation evening delivered by the EYPP team and had been given an EYPP information pack to help alleviate concerns. On the whole, dissemination of information appeared to have worked well, as the activity providers interviewed across the pilot areas were generally positive about their involvement in the scheme and any issues they had encountered were said to have been *'ironed out relatively quickly'* and that they were, *'happy to be involved'* in EYPP.

There was some evidence to suggest that certain providers had **changed their working practice** in order to accommodate the EYPP. Typically, this encompassed the way young people paid for the activities. For example, it was company policy for a football club to only issue tickets via invoice for large group bookings. However, after negotiations, the LA was able to request advance tickets. While the provider explained that they would prefer to issue invoices for larger ticket bookings, they were happy to accommodate the LA's needs. Another activity provider had divided a three day course into smaller modules delivered over a few months in order to enable young people to use their monthly allocation to fund their participation.

To some extent, **discounts** were negotiated with providers. This occurred on an individual basis and some providers had been more willing to provide discounts than others. In two pilot areas, a member of the EYPP delivery team was tasked with liaising with providers and negotiating discounts for EYPP. In such cases, discounts were more evident. Commonly, public sector providers issued discounts to all young people within the area and therefore, further discounts specifically for young people eligible for EYPP funding were rarely negotiated. Private providers were reported by one LA as being more open to negotiation as, *'they are familiar with that approach'*. Some providers had offered '2 for 1' offers while there were also reports of restaurants and other retail outlets offering discounts to holders of EYPP cards (although young people were unable to use their funds to purchase goods at these outlets). For example, young people in receipt of an EYPP card were able to receive a £15 discount on a ticket for a large local music festival. Only one area had been unable to negotiate discounts with providers. The strategic manager in this area explained that, *'it's better to run with the existing system. Discounts are another discussion down the road'*. There was also the feeling that LAs would have more power to negotiate once they had the evidence that young people had been accessing their activities.

4.4 Young people's views on the activities and experiences of taking part in the activities

As stated in Section 4.2, young people had helped shape EYPP provision. In their drive to ensure EYPP continued to be young-person led, pilot areas valued young people's feedback on EYPP activities and had plans to incorporate this into their

delivery model over the duration of the pilot. However, at the time of case-study visits, EYPP had only recently launched and therefore, the number of young people who had participated in EYPP activities was limited and it was considered too early for EYPP delivery teams to conduct focus groups with young people. Similarly, feedback from parents of targeted young people was unavailable, and where it was available it was anecdotal.

Where feedback from young people was collected by EYPP delivery teams, interviewees reported young people being positive about EYPP activities. Evidence from interviews with young people supported this. Young people explained that there was a *'good choice of activities'* and found EYPP to be *'a great experience'*, often remarking that it was *'amazing!'* or *'exciting!'*. Few negative remarks were made by young people interviewed about the scheme. The following comment summarises the general consensus amongst those young people interviewed: *'I would say it's really good as it gives you opportunities to do things you haven't done before or to save up for something special'*.

4.5 Parents' views on EYPP activities

Parents interviewed explained that the lack or provision in their local areas prior to EYPP, as well as the cost of such activities, restricted participation, particularly in larger families. For such reasons, they were positive about EYPP and the opportunities it presented to their children. However, there was evidence to suggest that not all parents were fully aware of the full range of activities on offer through EYPP. Indeed, one parent explained that she was only aware that her son had received tickets for a concert through EYPP after discovering tickets stubs in his bedroom. Such parents commented that their child failed to communicate information about the scheme and they wanted to be more aware of the types of activities their child was participating in.

There was some evidence to suggest that parents discussed options with their children. However, on the whole, they had little involvement in deciding which EYPP activities their children would participate in. For example, one parent commented that she does not get involved in choosing activities and remarked that, *'this would just be wrong for a teenager'*. In pilot areas where support from adults was evident (all but one of the pilot areas), parents were pleased that their child had an adult that they could discuss their activity options with. However, the level of mediation varied between pilot areas and parents were not always aware that their child had someone to discuss their EYPP options with. For example, one parent commented on the need to vary the types of activities young people participate in. She explained that her son had gym membership through EYPP and initially was attending the gym a few times a week. However, she felt that, *'they got a bit sick of it so haven't been as much'*. For this reason, she was keen on her son taking part in a variety of activities in order to maintain his enthusiasm. She explained that she had encouraged him to try new activities.

In two pilot areas (pilot areas 1 and 3) the delivery model allowed for young people to purchase equipment. A parent from one of these pilot areas explained how beneficial a basketball set had been to her daughter due to the difficulties her daughter experienced trying to find a suitable place to practise her skills. Furthermore, the parent remarked on her preference for purchasing equipment rather than organised activities. She felt that *'they would get more out of equipment'* and would not be able to sustain the cost of other activities once the scheme came to an end after the pilot period.

4.6 Challenges and lessons learned

There was a general agreement amongst LA interviewees that EYPP activities should be young–people led and meet the demands of the young people targeted. However, the pilot areas had encountered a number of challenges. The pilot areas appeared to have experienced tight timescales in which to implement EYPP with the repercussions being that some areas had not recruited as many providers at the time of case-study visits as they would have liked. As noted in Chapter 3, a number of pilot areas had also experienced more difficulty recruiting young people than they had originally anticipated and therefore, they focused their efforts on the recruitment of young people rather than new providers and had engaged largely with providers who had existing links with the LA. A strategic manager summed up the frustrations of a number of EYPP delivery team interviewees when she remarked that:

What always frustrates me is when you end up with tight time-restricted funding...it forces you to do things in sometimes an unnatural way. Whereas if you just had the funding placed, you might let it evolve in a slightly different way...that is the nature I suppose of budget lines and funding.

Recruiting providers proved particularly challenging for an area providing transport through EYPP. An interviewee remarked:

We've done relatively well with engaging providers considering the challenge we have of selling this offer to them as there is little in it for them. It [EYPP] is not direct subsidy. It's just that one step removed from having £10 in your pocket.

Overall, some of the key issues when recruiting providers included the following:

- **Recruiting larger national chains** proved particularly challenging when permission to be involved in schemes such as EYPP required head office approval which was time-consuming. As one interviewee stated, *'you have to write off to the head office and the process of going through that is probably larger than the scope of this project'*.
- Some activity providers were **anxious about changing their working practice** for the limited period in which EYPP was operating and were not keen to have either new technology, such as card readers installed, or invoice the EYPP central office for activities attended.
- Not all providers were able to **meet the criteria set out by the LA**. As mentioned in Section 4.2, providers were required in eight out of the nine areas to produce certain documentation before being classified as an EYPP provider and have their activities promoted to young people (for example, risk assessments and CRB clearance, liability insurance). Difficulties were often experienced when working with private providers where CRB clearance in particular was not common practice within their organisation and not plausible within businesses experiencing a high turnover of staff (cinemas, go-karting providers). Having a dedicated EYPP delivery team had value in ensuring providers had the appropriate support in producing relevant documentation whilst other areas attempted to overcome this by booking group activities to certain providers also attended by a youth worker.

Two LAs reported difficulties arranging particular group activities. For example, in one area, the strategic manager explained difficulties trying to accommodate a young person's desire to play football. He stated that, '*you've got one person maybe two interested but you need 10 to have a game of five-a-side...it's not always possible*'.

Other logistical challenges were cited by interviewees, including the following:

- Providers experiencing difficulties uploading details of activities to EYPP websites. This had proved more time consuming than they had envisaged. EYPP teams had supported providers in this, often assuming the responsibility on behalf of providers.
- In some cases, the activities on offer were restricted by the technology in place. For example, whilst a leisure centre was keen to include all activities in EYPP, they were unable to offer gym access to EYPP eligible young people since card readers had yet to be installed. Similarly, leisure centre reception staff in another LA had no internet access at the reception desk. All bookings were made centrally and staff were provided with a printed list of attendees. A support worker suggested that paper vouchers issued to young people in advance would alleviate such issues. Often cheques had been issued to young people in order to pay for activities and on occasions, activities had been pre-paid through the central EYPP delivery team.

In some areas, the delivery model meant that young people were able to request vouchers or tickets to events. In some cases this meant that the young people were able to **take friends or family**. This was considered by project managers as a benefit of their model, in particular when young people were not keen to participate in activities alone. They considered it, '*important to encourage young people to spend time with their families*'.

Whilst there was scope for young people to sign up for a regular set of activities over a period of time (dance classes, guitar tutoring or gym membership), others were one-off events, (City Tour open bus excursions, concert tickets). Young people, who signed up for less regular events such as these, were reported to require support and encouragement in order to book future activities. A support worker in one LA explained how this can be challenging. She said:

The challenge really is to get the young people to think a little bit more long-term; to think a little bit more about new skills, trying to do something that's a bit different. The young people seem to be anxious about the unknown.

4.7 Summary

In summary, LAs had begun to develop a positive activities directory in order to engage the most disadvantaged young people and had plans to develop this across the pilot period. It was considered important for EYPP to be young-person led and efforts were made across the pilot areas to involve young people in shaping the provision. Overall, young people considered the provision to be broad and were positive about EYPP, as were parents.

At this stage of implementation, LAs' main challenge had been recruiting young people, and contracting with providers was largely confined to organisations that had previously worked with the LA. The opportunity to extend the provider network had

been limited, which in some cases may have confined the degree of choice open to some young people, which in turn may have impacted on take-up. Work with new providers was more extensive in areas that had appointed a dedicated member of staff to this activity. In most areas, meetings had been arranged with groups of providers to outline the initiative and to tackle any concerns about the operation of EYPP and the needs of the client group. Gaining the support of new providers had also been more complex when:

- the provider was part of a national organisation, where head office approval had to be sought before local involvement in EYPP could be secured, and
- CRB and other legal clearances were not in place.

5. Early impact of EYPP

Key findings

- LA staff indicated that the EYPP was beginning to have an impact at this early stage in terms of improving their engagement with the target group of young people and in increasing participation in positive activities.
- Although EYPP had yet to have a notable impact on changing the nature of provision for young people, there were indications that the pilot was helping to promote the existence of positive activities to more young people.
- While as yet there was no evidence of an aggregated increase in participation in positive activities, there were indications of increases in the number of activities being booked and of individual young people participating in activities when they had been unable to do so previously.
- The EYPP was considered to be already benefiting young people, or had the potential to do so, in relation to their self-confidence, socially and in the development of skills.
- Young people indicated that they had benefited from having something to do, from having new experiences and meeting new people and becoming more aware of the available opportunities. They were also gaining in terms of increased independence and exercising choice and in developing personally and in terms of specific skills and interests.

5.1 Introduction

The pilots were at an early stage of their implementation when they were visited and, as noted in Chapter 3, the number of young people who had participated in activities at this stage was relatively small. However, this chapter focuses on the extent of any impact of EYPP to date. It examines:

- the impact on the pilot LAs
- the impact on the activity providers and on provision
- Early indications of the impact of EYPP on young people and more widely.

5.2 Impact on the LA

The prevailing view among the LA managers and staff was that their aim was for the EYPP to help them in raising participation among young people in their authority. In addition, they noted a range of other aspects that they aimed to achieve through implementing the programme. Two interviewees wanted the EYPP to help introduce young people to new experiences, new people and to broaden their horizons. As one explained '*quite a few of them [young people] don't really move out of the area where they live*'. In addition, three felt that participation in EYPP would be a contributory factor in improving achievement in education for young people in the area and encouraging them to remain in school. One interviewee also felt it would assist young people to develop important budget and financial management skills, as they approached school leaving age. The EYPP was also considered to provide a

new mechanism for engaging with young people with the characteristics of the target group and could potentially provide a conduit for communicating with them.

The observations of interviewees in LAs indicate that they aimed to have a wider effect through their involvement in EYPP. For example, one manager aimed to use EYPP to challenge perceptions of young people among those who considered them to be universally 'yobs':

I would love these young people just to get a better idea of what they can do, and actually go out there and take part in these activities, because only by them taking part in the positive activities will the general perception of the job change.

In another area, it was felt that the EYPP could potentially '*be a kick start*' for opportunities for young people more generally in the area since it could lead to discounted provision. This illustrates LA managers' vision for the EYPP in their area. At the time of the visits, in general the extent of any impact was felt to be limited as most interviewees felt it was '*too early*' to identify any impact on the LA. Where they did perceive an impact at this stage, it related to the following aspects:

- **Engagement with young people** – the EYPP had assisted LA staff in engaging with young people and, in one area, with schools. For example, in one area the EYPP was said to have helped some key workers to initiate contact with young people as it could be used '*as a carrot to make contact*'.
- **Increased participation** – at the time of the interview, a manager in one area felt that the EYPP was already reaching young people who did not usually participate and commented that '*last month we had 160 bookings...definitely touching a group of young people that wouldn't have been able to do something but are [now] doing it*'.
- **Negative perceptions** – one impact of EYPP on two LAs which was less positive, was to raise the issue among adults of young people, who were regarded as behaving poorly, being rewarded with '*goodies*'. In addition, the EYPP had raised concerns about equity among those who were '*just above the free school meals threshold*' whose children were not eligible for EYPP funds.

5.3 Impact on activity providers and on provision

Although in time, it was generally felt that the EYPP would impact on the nature of provision for young people, it was considered to be too early for any impact to be evident as yet. Nevertheless, interviewees in six areas noted that feedback from young people who participated in EYPP activities would inform future development of provision. In particular, it was noted by one interviewee that the EYPP provided a particular opportunity to gain feedback from the specific target group of young people from whom it was often challenging to gain feedback. Some LAs had established mechanisms for such feedback including the use of star ratings on the activities website or using young people as '*mystery shoppers*'.

In general, the activity providers who were interviewed also felt that it was too early to identify any impact on their provision as a result of EYPP. However, there were some early indications of developments in provision in response to EYPP. For example, some activity providers observed that the EYPP was **helping to promote**

what they offered to more, or a wider range, of young people. As one explained, the word-of-mouth promotion of activities, through young people who had participated as a result of EYPP, was '*brilliant for us*'. In addition, one activity provider was gaining in experience of working with some young people and observed that '*it has sharpened our focus towards working with more vulnerable groups*'. There was also evidence in one activity provider that EYPP had **improved the range of activities** that could be offered to young people. While previously the leisure and sports activities offered for young people had to be at a low cost, the ability of young people to pay for provision through EYPP had led to additional more expensive sports, such as golf, diving and tennis, being offered. In another case, the activity provider had adapted the **duration of the activities** as a result of EYPP. For example, a three day course being delivered over a number of months. Although these developments are limited at this stage, the extent to which these types of changes are experienced more widely will be explored through the second phase of the research.

Another aspect of the impact of EYPP on activity providers was in relation to their management and practice. In some instances, internet booking was a new development, others had to install an EYPP-related card reader, and others had to upload information. Where electronic recording mechanisms were not possible, some activity providers were noting manually the participants who were funded through EYPP. Overall, these adaptations did not appear to have been a concern or challenge for the activity provider involved. In some cases, the activity providers had adapted their approach to charging. For example, some providers invoiced the LA for payment and, in one case, they did so when they would not usually. In addition, one provider had adapted their usual charge to a '*monthly membership*' option for young people who paid through EYPP.

Overall, the activity providers did not consider that there had been a notable impact on their organisations as a result of EYPP. None felt that there had been significant cost implications, although a few noted that they had to spend some of their time in relation to coordinating EYPP. The one instance where an activity provider expressed concern, related to young people booking activities through the EYPP and then not attending.

5.4 LA staff's and activity providers' views on the impact of EYPP on young people.

5.4.1 Barriers to young people's participation

As noted in Chapter 3, there are a range of barriers to young people's participation in positive activities. Reflecting on the reasons for non-participation among young people prior to the introduction of EYPP, many interviewees in LAs and activity providers said that **lack of money** was a barrier for many young people. In addition, **lack of transport**, or lack of affordable transport, linked with the location of some types of activity providers, was highlighted as a barrier by many interviewees. Those who commented on the lack of transport included interviewees in rural areas and also those in more urban areas where the cost of transport was a concern. In one such area, the EYPP project manager commented that there was a need to find creative solutions to this challenge and outlined their approach and explained that: '*if they [a young person] come up with something that we don't have an activity provider who can provide [locally], but we have a Learning Mentor or youth worker, anybody at all who can actually facilitate it for them, ...that's the only way we are going to get transport*'. In three urban LAs, concerns about **safety** were said to be a barrier to participation. This was said to be the case either because of late finishing of some

activities or because of territorial concern and travelling through areas where other 'gangs' were dominant.

Lack of opportunities or provision was less widely mentioned as a barrier by interviewees. While some acknowledged that provision needed to be diverse and appropriate to the interest of the young people, the availability of opportunities did not appear to be the most notable barrier to participation.

In addition to the logistical barriers of finance and transport, many interviewees considered that **lack of support or encouragement** was a barrier to participation. Moreover, some specifically highlighted a **lack of support from parents** as a barrier. LA staff and activity providers reflected that, as a result of this barrier, young people needed encouragement because, previously, '*no-one told them that they were good at something*'. In addition to this emotional support and positive encouragement, young people were said to need practical guidance such as '*showing them if they've never been shown*' and ensuring that they had '*not just spending power, [but] information about what they can do and support to help them take part*'. Related to this need for encouragement was the **lack of confidence** among some young people that was reported to be a barrier by interviewees. Young people were said to be '*shy*' or '*embarrassed*' and to not want to participate on their own. Interviewees generally aimed to challenge this and, as one activity provider reflected, '*society places too much emphasis on perfection – we're trying to relax that*'. The final main barrier that was noted by interviewees in three areas was **peer pressure** and the notion that participation lacked '*street cred*'.

The models that had been adopted to deliver EYPP, detailed in Chapter 2, appeared to reflect LA staff and activity providers' cognisance of these barriers. The models aimed to address these various barriers to differing extents through providing young people not only with the finance to remove that barrier but also, in some cases, transport and support, guidance and encouragement. The extent to which these different elements of the models have an impact on young people's participation will be a focus of the next phase of the research. However, the impact of the EYPP on young people, at this early stage, is explored in the remainder of this chapter.

5.4.2 Impact of EYPP on young people's participation and development

As might be expected, given the timing of the visits so soon after the launch of the EYPP in the pilot areas, many interviewees felt that it was too early to say what the impact had been on young people. Overall, most pilot areas indicated that they could not yet comment on the frequency of access to activities by young people in receipt of EYPP money, or whether there was any evidence of an overall increase in the numbers of young people participating in positive activities in their areas. In the two areas where LA staff felt able to comment, both said that the number of bookings via their websites had increased in the last month, (pilot areas 1 and 2) although this would not necessarily be restricted to young people in receipt of EYPP funds. However, it was evident that many young people were not using their full allocation of funding each month. While this could be because they were saving for one activity or for a particular time such as the school holidays, it could also suggest that young people were not participating as much as was initially anticipated when the monthly funding amount was decided on.

Among the activity providers who were interviewed, there were examples of an increase in participation. One said that they had seen an increase in numbers since EYPP was introduced and a second reported that bookings had been '*crazy*' at first when EYPP was launched and were now more steady. A third provider observed

that the nature of the participants was different and said that '*without [EYPP] we would never have seen these children*'. In addition to this evidence of an emerging impact on participation, interviewees provided details of individual instances where young people had begun to participate as a result of EYPP funding. For example:

- one activity provider said that a young person who lived very close to the leisure centre, but had been unable to access it due to the cost, was now using the gym and observed that EYPP funding '*had empowered them to visit something that was literally on their doorstep*'
- one activity provider observed that young people who had started to participate in an arts activity as a result of EYPP were now making return visits and bringing different friends with them
- one activity provider felt that new young people were participating and observed that 'I think it is fantastic because I don't think they would have done anything like this beforehand, they certainly would not have come into any of our buildings and been able to afford the gym membership'
- a key worker cited an example of a young man in a low income family, who '*haven't had that ready cash*', had been socially isolated and did not leave his house but was now able to go out more and to play football with his peers as a result of being able to access money – 'he doesn't have to ask, it's there for him'
- LA staff in one area which had a web-based approach, which included a mechanism to provide '*feedback*', noted that young people were contacting the site to say thank you for the activity they had participated in. In addition, with the encouragement and support of staff, they were participating in different activities than they had previously, such as going to the theatre.

Overall, the prevailing view among interviewees appeared to be that EYPP would lead to an increase in participation but some observed that its impact would not be observable within the timeframe of the pilot. In particular, among those who hoped that it would have a beneficial impact on young people's participation in education and engagement, the timing and difficulty of attributing any change to engagement in positive activities was perceived to be a challenge. For example, one LA staff member felt that it would be possible to observe a change in self-confidence and self-esteem but that '*it is hard to isolate [a young person] being part of this pilot for 12 months, making a difference to his school attendance*'.

Interviewees' reflections on the impact, and potential impact of EYPP, reveal that in addition to participation, young people will benefit socially and in their personal and skills development.

A number of interviewees felt that some young people were already developing in their **self-confidence** as a result of their involvement with EYPP. More specifically, the EYPP itself was considered to help develop their confidence, for example: '*just in terms of being brave enough to ring an adult they don't know and ask for help*' or '*when they ring up and they are asking how much is left on their card...you can see their confidence is building all the time*', as two LA staff observed. A third said that learning budget management and saving through EYPP was '*a great tool to benefit these young people to get them ready for the outdoor world*' when they leave school.

Young people were said to be already experiencing **social benefits**, or would do so, as a result of EYPP. At a simple level this benefit included making new friends and being able to *'do what their friends do and they could never afford to do'*. However, in the view of some LA staff, it had the potential to extend beyond this and help broaden young people's horizons and *'give them social capital'*. As one pilot project manager explained *'it is trying to get kid A and B to go to a judo club and meet kid C and D and introduce them to a different outlook'*. In one instance, some young people who had participated in an activity were said to have begun to demonstrate more positive behaviour as a result of their participation.

Interviewees also considered that young people would develop **skills** through their participation in EYPP and in positive activities. In particular, it was observed that they would develop budget and financial management skills. In addition, in one case, the skills that a young person was developing through participation in a positive activity would transfer into his formal education. His key worker reported that he said *'this will help me with my computer skills, it's different from school, it's something I want to do'* which illustrates the complementary benefit of EYPP-funded participation alongside education.

5.5 Young people's views of the impact of being involved in EYPP

At the time of the visits, young people were beginning to familiarise themselves with the EYPP system in their areas and to engage in activities. Therefore, it was not possible to speak with young people in some areas about the impact of EYPP-funded activities on them as they had yet to participate. Consequently, the research team will be revisiting these areas in the autumn to interview young people about their participation. This section presents a preliminary analysis of the findings from those young people who have been interviewed to date. These findings will be updated and augmented when further interviews are completed.

The views of young people who had participated in EYPP-funded activities indicate that, while some of the effects of participation are closely linked to a tangible outcome of the activity, such as skill development and having something to do, there were also indications of additional outcomes such as personal development. These are summarised below.

- **Something to do** – some young people said that they appreciated having *'a nice place to get away'* and that they *'won't be as bored – less spare time, which is a good thing'*. In addition, there was the benefit of being more active when they were participating in sports-related activities, as was the case for two friends who said *'we go to the gym and baths more often...it keeps us out and active rather than staying in'*.
- **New experiences and meeting new people** – young people said that they benefited from the opportunity to participate in new experiences and that EYPP participation *'helps you meet new people'*.
- **Improved awareness of opportunities** – it was evident from the comments of some young people that, prior to their engagement with EYPP, they were unaware of some of the possibilities available for them. As one said *'it's a great experience because I didn't even know the [activity] was there'* while a second interviewee stated *'I never knew where the [activity] was until I saw it on the website'*. The importance of raising awareness in challenging the perception that there is nothing to do is illustrated in the comment of a third interviewee who said *'I'm feeling less*

bored because there was nothing to do, I never knew where anything was'.

- **Increased independence and choice** – some interviewees observed that they had become more independent as a result of EYPP. There were two dimensions to this: firstly, developing independence as a result of finding their own way to activities and, secondly, being responsible for choosing and booking their activities. As one said *'it's all us, we know what we're doing'*.
- **Developing specific skills and interests** – as might be expected, young people who were interviewed mentioned the development of specific skills or interests as an impact of their participation in EYPP. For example, they had learned sailing skills and creative arts skills.
- **Personal development** – some young people noted that they had developed personally. For example, some interviewees had overcome shyness, increased their confidence or confronted a fear of water, as a result of their participation in activities funded through EYPP.

5.6 Summary

In summary, although the visits were undertaken shortly after the launch of the pilots, there was emerging evidence of an impact of the EYPP in terms of providing young people with an opportunity to engage in positive activities. While the EYPP funds reduced one of the barriers to participation by providing young people in the target group with financial support, the pilot was also helping to raise young people's awareness of the opportunities that were available for them to access.

Among the activity providers there was some evidence that they were adapting the timing or duration of activities in response to the EYPP but, in general, they had been able to accommodate the EYPP with limited impact on their organisations.

6. Managing the process

Key findings

- EYPP project managers generally reported to a project board that provided guidance during the start-up phase and monitored take-up and use of EYPP
- Each LA had a system for monitoring young people's use of EYPP in terms of their participation in activities and expenditure. The monitoring data was electronic and generally gathered through a mechanism that was related to the EYPP approach such as via the internet, through the card system or by a key worker.
- LA staff were able to use monitoring data to encourage young people who were not using their funds to engage with activities, to explore unusual patterns of use, and follow-up with young people, and to ensure that young people who were not spending their money were aware of any limits to the amount they could save.
- All LAs had strategies in place to mitigate the risk of fraud. These included individual verification processes, use of a known key worker, limits on cards and the capacity for a young person to lock a card that was lost or stolen. No LAs had yet experienced fraudulent use of EYPP funds.

6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the way in which the implementation of the EYPP was being managed overall in the pilot areas. It examines:

- the approaches adopted to monitoring and managing the EYPP funds including the mechanisms for monitoring uptake of activities using EYPP funding
- the approaches adopted to minimising the risk of fraud.

6.2 Monitoring and management of the EYPP

The EYPP project managers generally reported to a project board or management committee about their progress and to gain guidance on emerging issues. These meetings were often monthly and, at the time of the visits, had tended to focus on the start-up phase of the implementation and on the take-up of activities to date. Some managers reported that there were additional meetings with representatives of their finance departments. Indeed, senior managers who commented on monitoring the financial aspects of EYPP generally mentioned that this fitted into their standard procedures for financial management within the LA. In addition to the management board meetings, the second aspect of monitoring the EYPP programme that was mentioned was the regular monitoring data returns to DCSF relating to progress and uptake of activities.

One of the key pieces of information that was monitored and shared at these meetings was the take-up of activities by young people. Each LA had a mechanism for monitoring take-up and their approaches were related to the nature of the payment mechanism for young people but all were electronic and/or web-based. More specifically:

- five LAs had a database behind their web portal in which transactions were recorded (pilot areas 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6)
- in three LAs, the transactions made with a card were recorded into an electronic database which could then be accessed by LA staff online (pilot areas 7, 8 and 9)
- in one LA young people did not book activities directly, instead there was a central booking system, managed by LA staff, in which transactions were recorded (pilot area 1).

Within most monitoring systems, LA staff reported that the data that was collected included individual-level information on the activities that a young person had booked and their expenditure. In addition, in some cases the activity provider with whom any activity was booked was also recorded. Generally, LA staff accessed this information each month but it was possible in some cases to access it in '*real-time*'.

In one area, it was reported that it was not always possible to associate the use of the EYPP funds with an individual young person. Nevertheless, in most cases this was possible and managers and operational staff were using this information to identify where young people were or were not using their money and were in a position to follow this up with young people if required. In one area senior managers noted that the system enabled them to examine whether participation in activities through EYPP varied in relation to specific target groups such as young offenders or young people who were looked after. They could then explore whether key workers who were engaged with young people whose use of their EYPP funding was lower than expected could be encouraged to reinvigorate their efforts with young people to increase participation rates. In another area, where a card mechanism was in place, staff were able to use their monitoring approaches to identify where young people had attempted to use their card in outlets that were outside of the scope of the EYPP and to follow this up. Similarly, managers in a third area noted the possibility of monitoring to assess whether there were any '*unusual patterns*' of use of the funding so that appropriate action could be taken.

In other instances, key workers or managers could identify that young people were not spending their funds and could contact them directly to clarify the limit that they were allowed to save and to ensure that they understood that they needed to use the funds before a deadline. In one area, a key worker noted the value of making contact in this way as it provided an opportunity to guide young people about the type of activities that were available that they did not always notice when scanning the website.

While some of the activity providers who were interviewed explained that they were not able to monitor the use of their facilities or resources by young people who received funds through EYPP, others were able to monitor use of activities by EYPP participants. There were two broad approaches to this. In some cases, the activity provider monitored use through their **existing mechanisms**. These could be electronic, such as a leisure centre which used a '*swipe card*' to record which members were using which facilities, or manual, such as the youth centre which had a '*signing in*' record which they reviewed against details of EYPP participants. The second approach was for the **LA to provide details from their systems** for the activity provider of the use of the activity or facility by EYPP participants.

Where activity providers gathered feedback from young people to evaluate their provision, their approaches to monitoring EYPP funds did not differ from their existing

mechanisms. These included discussion groups, young people's forums and feedback from project workers. In addition, activity providers gathered informal feedback from participants in their activities.

6.3 Approaches to managing the risk of fraud

One of the main reasons for LAs to closely monitor the use of the EYPP funds was to manage and mitigate any risk of fraud. All of the LAs had assessed this risk and put strategies in place to minimise it as part of their planning process. At the time of the interviews, none of the LAs reported that they had experienced any fraudulent use of EYPP funds. In general, although it was an early stage in the use of the funding, they considered that their strategies were appropriate and would be effective in ensuring that there was not fraudulent use of EYPP funding.

The main mechanisms that LA staff highlighted to mitigate the risk of fraud included:

- an **individual verification processes** (nine areas). Young people who had a card or booked activities through a website had a unique username, password, PIN or photo card, as appropriate, which ensured that they were the only person who could access their account
- A facility to **lock the card** if it was lost or stolen (one area)
- Use of a known **key worker** to book activities (one area), to access the unique id or activate the card (two areas) or to activate a new card after a loss or theft (one area)
- **Limits placed on the card** which eliminated the possibility of its use in inappropriate outlets or to access cash (two areas)
- Limits on the card so that it could **only be used once in 24 hours** to prevent its use for friends or as a result of coercion (one area)
- Identity numbers and card readers **sent separately** to young people (one area).

These mechanisms tended to focus on the risk of fraud among young people. However, some LAs said that they had considered the risk of fraud among activity providers. However, the risk of fraud among activity providers was considered to be low, since most providers were already known to the LA (in one area) or because any fraud would require collusion between an activity provider and a young person which was felt to be a minimal risk (one area).

At this early stage in the implementation of EYPP, LA staff were monitoring the use of the funds, as noted above, in order to ensure that these mechanisms were working. In addition, staff in one area had requested feedback from activity providers and young people regarding the extent of any bullying or coercion that might lead to misuse of the EYPP funds. An outstanding risk that was noted by staff in two LAs was that young people could use their EYPP funds to purchase tickets, or book facilities, which they could then 'sell' to their peers thereby converting the EYPP funding into cash. This was being reviewed as the pilot developed. In a third LA, a risk that was continually under review was the possibility that young people might use the travel element of the funds but not then access activities. The LA had planned for this possibility and had a system in place whereby any occurrences would appear in monthly reports and the LA would contact the young person and discuss it with them verbally. A second occurrence would result in a written reminder and a third

would incur a warning of suspension of the card if it occurred again. At the time of the visit, no such instances had occurred.

6.4 Summary

In summary, the staff in the nine pilot LAs had established mechanisms to monitor the progress of the programme and take-up and use of activities through EYPP among young people. On the whole, they had a system in place that enabled them to examine whether individual young people were using their EYPP funds, and in what way, and they were using this information, in collaboration with key workers, to encourage and guide young people in the use of their funds. At this stage in the implementation, LAs had not experienced fraudulent activity in relation to the funds and in general had systems in place to mitigate any risk. Most commonly this entailed ensuring that young people who received the EYPP funds had a unique password or ID number which enabled only these specific individuals or their key workers to access their account.

7. Future developments

Key findings

- The main challenge identified by the LAs related to the slow start to the implementation of the pilot, lower than expected up-take of the offer among young people and limited opportunity to date to expand the provider network. Their plans for the remainder of the pilot period included:
 - strategies to increase take-up
 - increasing the provision of one-to-one support and employing new marketing and awareness raising strategies
 - extending ways young people could access EYPP such as offering transport subsidies and 'top-up' facilities
- The delivery teams generally agreed that their delivery models could be transferable to other LAs depending on the existence of complementary youth strategies/policies being in place.

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents:

- the LAs' plans for the future development of the pilot
- their views on to extent to which the models implemented in the case-study areas could be rolled out to other LA areas.

7.2 Plans for the remainder of the pilot

The project managers in the pilot areas reflected on plans for the remainder of the pilot period. These included encouraging more young people to take up the offer and participate in activities. Other priorities included engaging more activity providers and extending the ways young people could use EYPP.

The LAs had experienced some issues with regard to encouraging young people to take up the offer and participate in the activities. Indeed, in some LAs take-up had been slower than anticipated by this stage in the pilot period. Therefore, these LAs had plans for the remainder of the pilot which included adopting strategies to encourage more young people to take up the offer and participate in the activities.

In order to achieve greater take-up rates, project managers in the LAs indicated that they intended to **increase the interaction with young people** in their target groups and to gain feedback from young people on their experiences of participating in EYPP. They intended to achieve this through a range of activities including:

- hosting events to publicise the EYPP
- visiting youth centres to provide information for young people and encourage them to take up the offer

- increasing links with schools by visiting staff and promoting EYPP in school assemblies
- running focus groups to gain feedback on young people's experiences of participating in activities.

The LA staff noted these types of activities would allow them to respond to young people's requests for activities and to adapt or extend the activities included in their offer. They expected this would increase young people's participation in the pilot.

The LAs also planned to increase the amount of support for the young people to access activities. Plans mentioned by the pilot teams included establishing more one-to-one support for young people from key workers, promoting the initiative more widely among parents, encouraging young people to book activities through increasing the number of access points in youth centres, and developing links with schools to increase their role in registering young people. Other ideas included providing taster sessions to encourage young people to participate in a broader range of activities.

In some areas the pilot teams also planned to **develop their awareness raising and marketing strategies** to increase take-up. They explained that this was in response to finding that existing strategies had not led to anticipated take-up rates. Plans to increase take-up and participation included using radio promotion and visiting youth centres to encourage more young people to get involved.

Some project managers indicated that **engaging more activity providers** during the course of the pilot was also a priority. They explained that new activity providers would be recruited in response to the feedback from young people about the activities they wanted to do. One project manager said:

Once we've got them on board [activity providers] we can go back to them and tell them that they've had so many young people through EYPP and hopefully they'll want to stay on board and offer better discounts.

The project managers noted that they hoped to use evidence of young people's increased participation in activities to negotiate discounts for the young people and to increase the numbers of activity providers involved in the pilot.

Some LAs were in the process of exploring ways of **extending the ways young people could use the EYPP mechanism**. For example, one LA, with a card-based mechanism available to all young people within the LA, was exploring ways in which the card could be used to pay for transport and schools meals for all groups of young people. This was in response to Youth MPs advising the LA that transport was a key issue for young people. Consequently the LA was in discussions with a transport company to explore how the card could be used as a mechanism for travel subsidies to be provided for young people.

Plans for the remainder of the pilot also included implementing systems for **parents/carers or other LA teams to credit young people's cards or web-based accounts**. Pilot teams viewed this as a potentially safe mechanism to give resources to young people. Furthermore, parents/carers could use the mechanism to give money to their children and know that it was being used to pay for positive activities.

7.3 Views on sharing of practice and transferability

The consensus among the delivery teams was that the pilot model in their LA would be transferable to other LAs. Overall, the pilot teams reported that the extent to which their delivery model was transferable to other areas would be dependent on the existing strategies other areas had in place.

It was noted that all LAs should have existing systems in place to promote positive activities for young people, such as websites providing information for young people about activities in the local area, and these would be a starting point for LAs to develop similar schemes like EYPP. The comments from the pilot teams indicated that card-based systems could be implemented in areas already using similar systems, such as travel cards, for young people. However, they would be more costly to adopt in areas without the infrastructures in place or in rural areas where activity providers would be less likely to have card readers (where these were required). The LAs also indicated that the pilot brand names, which had been developed to meet the needs of a particular target group within the LA, would not necessarily be transferable to other areas or a wider group of young people within the same area. For example, the brand names used in some of the case-study areas were developed from existing schemes, which were familiar to the young people living in that area.

The project managers said that other LAs would need the capacity to implement EYPP. In order for other LAs to run a similar scheme, they would need the support of senior managers and enough people in the project team to implement and support the pilot. One of the project managers said, *'It's quite an operation to run the project'*. In particular, administration support would be required if other areas adopted models with mechanisms where young were registered and activities were pre-booked.

7.4 Summary

In summary, the LAs had plans for the remainder of the pilot including encouraging more young people in the target group to take up the offer and participate in the activities. To increase young people's engagement in the pilots, some LAs planned to:

- gain feedback from young people about their experiences of participating in activities
- increase the amount of support provided for the young people
- expand the range and choice of providers and provision
- further expand marketing and publicity strategies
- encourage more support from parents and schools.

Pilot teams were positive about the notion of the transferability of their delivery models to other areas. However, the extent to which their models could be adopted by other areas was viewed as being dependent on the existing systems the LAs had in place to support young people's participation in activities. Overall, card-based systems were perceived to be more complex and costly to implement in particular in areas where existing technology was not already available.

8. Conclusion and implications

8.1 Progress to date

Overall, the EYPP areas had launched the programme using models that were in line with their original plans and intentions, and were broadly positive about the success of the pilot to date. At the time of the visits, take-up rates varied across the pilot areas. One reason for this was the variation in launch dates. The LAs that had launched their pilots earlier in the year had a longer time scale in which to recruit young people. However, at this stage in the implementation, the take-up across the areas was slower than had been anticipated. The LAs had faced a number of challenges engaging young people in the pilot. These included young people mistrusting the funds offered to them or not being interested in the pilot. In addition, some of the LAs had found their initial methods of communication ineffective. The delivery teams were addressing these issues through additional marketing, one-to-one support and extending the target group to additional young people who fulfilled the criteria for inclusion in the pilot.

Although young people's experience of participating in the EYPP was limited at this early stage, those who had used EYPP funds to participate in activities were positive about their experience and found that it had helped them to have something to do and to be more aware of what opportunities were available for young people in their area. In addition young people who had participated in activities had benefited personally and in developing specific skills and in becoming increasingly independent. There were also emerging indications that young people were able to afford to participate in positive activities as a result of EYPP, when they had previously been unable to do so. Furthermore, activity providers were receptive to the pilot and did not appear to have found it burdensome to engage with the pilot.

8.2 Effectiveness of the models

The extent to which the models adopted by LAs are effective will be a key focus of the next phase of the research. At this stage, the research has revealed that, in addition to the differences in terms of the delivery mechanism (card, web-based or key worker) and the amounts of money available to young people each month (between £25 and £40), there are other elements of the models that may be associated with their effectiveness in raising young people's participation in positive activities. For example, the extent to which young people can access activities instantly may impact on their participation, or the extent to which they can pay for friends or family to participate alongside them may make a difference to their participation. Indeed, it may be that the different models have elements that are effective for different purposes. The research has indicated that lack of finance, lack of transport and lack of encouragement and support have been identified as key barriers to participation. The models adopted by LAs have the potential to address these barriers to differing degrees. While they all provide financial support, some allow for transport to be funded, while others do not, and some have support from a key worker as a central element and others have this to a lesser extent.

The development and impact of the models will also be dependent on existing provision in the LAs. For instance, the extent to which lack of transport is a barrier to engagement in positive activities will vary depending on the existing travel provision in the area and whether it is freely provided for all young people. In areas with good transport links and free travel it could be less of a barrier to engagement.

Furthermore, the extent to which travel is problematic could be dependent on the type and location of the activities chosen by the young people. For example, young people might find it straightforward to travel to a town or city centre but more difficult to travel to less familiar areas.

One of the main ways in which to assess the effectiveness of the models adopted by LAs to deliver the EYPP will be the extent to which participation in positive activities has increased among the target group of young people. However, the research has suggested that there are other aspects to the effectiveness of the models that would be worthy of consideration. For instance, some models may be more effective in terms of being quick to start and to engage with young people, such as those with a less technological approach or those able to build on an existing scheme. However others, such as those which aim to provide a service for all young people, and to provide additional funding for a sub-group of target young people through the same mechanism, may be less effective in the short-term, as they have longer start-up requirements. They could be more effective in the longer-term in engaging with a larger number of young people and ensuring that there is no stigmatisation.

The models may also differ in their effectiveness in relation to indirect benefits for young people. For example, areas where young people have to pre-book activities, albeit with some support from a key worker, may have the effect of developing young people's independence, confidence and negotiation skills to a greater extent than those where young people have instant access and have little interaction with the provider.

These issues and nuances of effectiveness in relation to each of the models will be explored through the next phase of the research.

8.3 Young people's involvement

In its implementation phase, the EYPP has been influenced by young people in its development in relation to some key aspects. Young people were said to have been involved to some extent in the design of the pilot including the design of cards or websites and the marketing materials. In addition, they were consulted regarding the activities that would be offered through the EYPP. This involvement of young people in the design and implementation of EYPP is ongoing through mechanisms for young people to provide feedback on activities in which they had participated, and to identify additional activities that they would like included in the pilot.

The young people who were interviewed varied in terms of their participation in positive activities before the launch of EYPP. Some had participated in positive activities previously while this was the case to a lesser extent for others. Assessing developments in the extent of young people's involvement in positive activities will need to take into account the different starting points of young people. While some will start to participate as a result in EYPP when they have not participated before, others may increase the range and nature of the activities that they participate in while others may maintain a similar level of participation. These different levels of participation will be one of the focuses of the next phase of the research.

8.4 Adult support

Although the pilot areas had included the support of adults to different degrees, in all cases, there was some element of support. It appeared that the role of adults was important in the successful implementation of EYPP in relation to engaging young

people and in encouraging and guiding them in taking up activities. It was evident that young people could sometimes be suspicious or uncertain about the pilot when it was introduced to them by letter and that some mediation by a known and trusted individual such as a school teacher, social worker, or Connexions personal adviser, could gain their confidence and commitment to the pilot. In addition, adult support was found to be valuable in broadening young people's horizons and raising their awareness of the range of activities in which they could participate through EYPP. Moreover, adult support was instrumental in supporting the young people to gain the confidence they sometimes required to contact activity providers and arrange activities. While the support of adults appeared to be an important factor in ensuring the success of the EYPP, it was also evident that this needed to be underpinned by an appealing and appropriate range of provision that met young people's needs and interests and was accessible to them.

8.5 Funding the participation of friends or family/carers

The research revealed that some young people valued participation in EYPP because it enabled them to meet new people. However, it was also the case that EYPP participants would like to attend some activities with their friends or family/carers and they were sometimes discouraged from participating because they could not use their EYPP funds to pay for others to accompany them. There could be value in examining whether creative solutions, such as looking for additional funds for other young people in a group who do not receive EYPP funding, or negotiating discounts as a result of young people, some of whom receive EYPP funding, coming together as a group, are alternative solutions adopted, and the extent to which these are successful.

8.6 Engagement of Activity Providers

The EYPP areas had all engaged activity providers in their pilot at the time of the visits and, in general, the type of provision on offer to young people was meeting their needs and interests. However, some young people felt that provision could include other opportunities. The main challenges for LA staff in engaging activity providers included where they were national organisations that required head office approval, which could delay their agreement to participate, or as a result of practical barriers such as gaining CRB clearance for staff. Recruitment of new providers was more extensive in areas that had appointed a dedicated member of staff to undertake this activity.

Overall, the extent to which activity providers were receptive to participating in EYPP was related to a number of factors. Firstly, the ethos of the organisation was influential. Activity providers who had a community focus were more receptive than those who were more commercially focused. Secondly, the activity providers' view of the reward for their organisation was a factor, so that they could be more receptive where they could see a clear financial benefit than if the relationship between participation and revenue was less direct. Thirdly, it had been easier to recruit activity providers where there was a history of collaboration between the organisation and the LA. Finally, the amount of effort required by activity providers to participate could be influential. Those who had to install equipment, or train staff, could be less likely to engage than those where providing activities for young people funded through EYPP could be more easily accommodated in their existing systems.

8.7 Implications for LAs

- **Recruitment of young people** – given that face-to-face contact, in comparison to postal invitations, was viewed as more likely to lead to higher take-up rates by young people, LAs may want to consider using methods involving adult mediation to increase take-up amongst their target groups.
- **Accessibility of EYPP** – LAs could benefit from gaining feedback from young people and activity providers on the mechanisms used to identify and access activities and to explore ways of addressing practical barriers such as lack of internet access.
- **Range of activities** – as the EYPP continues to develop, LAs may wish to ensure that their mechanisms for consulting with young people regarding the activities included in the offer are maintained. There would be value in giving consideration to establishing how best to manage extending provision to meet requests from young people in the context where appropriate activity providers may not be readily accessible.
- **Use of the EYPP funds** – LAs may want to consider allowing young people to use the monthly allowance to pay for transport.
- **Recruiting activity providers** – as LAs continue to recruit a range of activity providers to ensure that a broad range of activities are available for young people to access, LAs may want to consider a member of staff being allocated this role, given that recruitment of new activity providers was more extensive in areas that had appointed a dedicated member of staff to this activity.
- **Sharing practice** – there may be scope for sharing good practice between the pilot areas. This could be particularly beneficial for exploring the different ways in which the LAs have increased take-up and to share strategies for sustaining young people's participation throughout the pilot period.

8.8 Implications for DCSF

- **Use of the EYPP funds** – DCSF may wish to consider extending the flexibility of eligible use of EYPP funds to support young people's access and participation in positive activities. For instance, they may want to consider developing opportunities for workable approaches that enable young people to participate in activities with friends or family who are not eligible for the EYPP funds. This would aim to ensure that some young people do not decide not to participate because they do not want to go alone to an activity.
- **Guidance on the use of the EYPP funds** – LAs may find it helpful to have further clarification from DCSF regarding the use of the funds to purchase equipment.
- **Sharing strategies for dissemination** – it may be helpful for the LAs to receive information about the successful strategies used in the pilot areas to publicise the pilot.

- **Sharing practice** – there may be scope for DCSF to support the sharing of good practice between the pilot areas. They may wish to consider collating and disseminating strategies used by the pilot areas to address some of the challenges such as increased take-up and to share strategies for sustaining young people's participation throughout the pilot period.

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