

# Targeted youth support

Next steps



department for  
children, schools and families

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# Foreword



Working together across government and with our regional and local partners, we have achieved a huge amount for young people. From our *Aiming High for Young People* strategy to the *Youth Crime Action Plan*, words have been

backed up with action and significant additional investment.

I am delighted with the progress that is being made. We know most young people enjoy their teenage years and make a successful transition to adult life. Ambitious reforms, like those we are making to 14–19 education, are providing new and engaging opportunities for increasing numbers of young people. But for some young people this is still a time when serious problems can emerge or earlier difficulties escalate.

For these young people there is no quick fix. They need us to help them as early as possible, creating personalised support packages and ensuring that local services are well co-ordinated and delivered in an accessible, engaging way.

That is why we developed the targeted youth support reforms. Over the last two years we have worked alongside local areas to support them to take action and to fully implement all seven elements of the reform programme.

The emerging picture is very encouraging. Nearly all local authority areas have now fully implemented the reforms and we have seen local areas develop and deliver radical change programmes that will transform the way vulnerable young people are supported.

But we also know that there is more to do. Implementing the targeted youth support reforms has been a real achievement. But we now need to ensure that the reforms take root so that all young people, whatever their circumstances, can lead an active, healthy life, to stay engaged and attaining in learning, and to help them achieve all that they are capable of. This document sets out how we intend to help local areas improve and develop their arrangements over the coming months and years.

**Dawn Primarolo**  
**Minister of State for Children,**  
**Young People and Families**

# Introduction

1. The *Children's Plan* set out our ambition to make this the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. Ensuring all young people have access to effective, targeted support when they need it is critical to achieving this goal.
2. Targeted youth support reforms have already made a significant contribution to the *Children's Plan* commitment for all areas to have consistent, high quality arrangements that provide identification and early intervention for all children and young people who need additional help in place by 2010. The reforms also play an important part in the delivery of a number of national priorities, including improving attendance and behaviour, narrowing attainment gaps, reducing teenage pregnancy, and raising the participation age. Effective targeted youth support arrangements are critical to the delivery of the Public Service Agreement (PSA) 14 – increasing the number of young people on path to success. The performance indicators underpinning PSA 14 are:
  - reduction in first time entrants aged 10–17 into the criminal justice system
  - reduction in young people frequently using illicit drugs, alcohol or volatile substances
  - reduction in NEET (not in education, employment or training) among young people aged 16–18
  - reduction in under-18 conceptions
  - increased participation in positive activities
3. It was in *Youth Matters* that we first set out our plans to transform the way vulnerable young people are supported. We built on this in *Aiming High for Young People*. And the Youth Taskforce, working alongside the Government Offices, has successfully led the national change programme necessary to support implementation of targeted youth support reforms.
4. The targeted youth support reforms bring together local services and create a common approach to identifying vulnerable young people, early assessing their needs and providing integrated support. Services are helped to identify emerging difficulties in young people's lives and respond to them quickly and effectively so fewer young people experience serious problems.

5. From the start we knew that the shape of targeted youth support in each area must reflect the local context and, in particular, the views, experiences and needs of local young people. We didn't set down a particular delivery model; instead we developed a framework based around seven delivery elements of high quality targeted youth support.

The seven delivery elements are:

- Identifying vulnerable young people early, in the context of their everyday lives.
- Building a clear picture of individual needs, shared by young people and the agencies working with them, using the common assessment framework (CAF).
- Enabling vulnerable young people to receive early support in universal settings.
- Ensuring vulnerable young people receive a personalised package of support, information, advice and guidance, and learning and development opportunities, with support for their parents or carers as appropriate, co-ordinated by a trusted lead professional and delivered by agencies working well together.
- Strengthening the influence of vulnerable young people, and their families and

communities, and their ability to bring about positive change.

- Providing support for vulnerable young people across transitions, for example moving on from school or from the support of one service to another as needs change.
- Making services more accessible, attractive and relevant for vulnerable young people.

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# Celebrating success

6. We challenged local areas to put their new arrangements in place by the end of 2008. We identified four implementation phases to support local areas to move towards transforming their youth support arrangements alongside detailed guidance setting out what achievement at each level would look like. To meet our challenge each local authority had to achieve ‘full implementation’ of all seven of the delivery elements across their areas.

The four implementation phases are:



7. Virtually all local areas reported to us that they had achieved full implementation of their targeted youth support arrangements by early 2009. We are delighted with their achievement.

8. The changes local areas have put in place have delivered real improvements. The first independent evaluation of targeted youth support pathfinder areas has given us an insight into the impact the reforms are having.
9. Research carried out by York Consulting found that where the policy has been introduced as intended – specifically in relation to early identification, CAF and the lead professional role – there had been a significant improvement to the way professionals were delivering multi-agency support to young people. Where researchers identified positive change, this was being achieved through taking a well managed and structured approach, underpinned by effective multi-agency panels often linked to co-located teams.

10. The evaluation identified that, where effectively delivered, the targeted youth support reforms have enabled the development of professional practice, helping to:

- improve awareness of the full range of services for children
- improve case management skills
- improve skills in working with and supporting parents and carers
- improve understanding of information sharing

11. In turn, young people who had received effective support are benefiting from improvements in practice. The research looked in detail at the outcomes of a sample group of young people. This included reviewing case notes alongside in-depth interviews with the young people, their parents/carers, and the professionals involved.

The research found that targeted youth support was helping to:

- prevent exclusions from school
- improve attendance and behaviour
- raise levels of attainment
- strengthen relationships
- reduce offending

12. Right across England there are examples of how targeted youth support reforms are

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changing the way youth professionals work and improving outcomes as a result.

- **Identifying young people early:** In South Tyneside early intervention is supported by the extended services core offer helping schools and other universal providers identify vulnerable young people at the earliest possible opportunity and then activate timely, appropriate and effective interventions.
- **Building a clear picture of individual needs:** In Warrington integrated working and the CAF has improved outcomes for young people. Vulnerable young people now benefit from individually tailored support packages based on a multi-agency plan, which are continually assessed by benchmarking and then measuring their



level of need score throughout the life of the plan. These scores, based on the five Every Child Matters outcomes, range from one (universal) to four (acute).

- **Early support in universal settings:**

Locality Integrated Service Teams in Southwark bring together: educational welfare; family support; educational psychology; health (health visitors and school nurses); Sure Start; child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS); and behaviour support. The teams help increase the capacity of schools and other universal settings to intervene early to address needs. This means offering a single local point of contact, providing advice and guidance to support a child or family with additional needs, signposting to support services, and supporting the use of the CAF.

- **Personalised support co-ordinated by a lead professional:**

In Shropshire young people report that they get a far more holistic and joined up service, offering the support they need and for many they now have, for the first time in their lives, a trusted adult they can turn to thanks to the lead professional role. Lead professionals are recruited from a variety of agencies and professions including

schools, education welfare, youth workers, personal advisers, housing and health.

- **Strengthen the influence of vulnerable young people:**

Young people in Brent are fully engaged in defining and developing service settings as well as feeding into the service planning cycle and this is helping to build trust in services. The Brent Youth Parliament produces an annual progress report for the council executive and a six-monthly report for the scrutiny committee, in which it proposes service improvements.

- **Providing support for vulnerable young people across transitions:**

In Bristol work to help vulnerable children make a successful transition to secondary school starts in year five, involves the children, their parents, their primary and designated secondary schools, and focuses on the social and emotional aspects of the transfer. The result has been a 50 per cent reduction in fixed-term exclusions among those helped.

- **Making services more accessible, attractive and relevant:**

Young assessors in Wiltshire are assessing all organisations that support young people. In addition to inspections, the young assessors who have been recruited through service

referrals, adverts in schools, youth services and youth publications also work with their peers to ensure their views are included. Early indicators suggest that service delivery is improving with issues being picked up and addressed quicker than before.

## Getting back on track

B was identified by his Head of Year because of his disruptive behaviour at school. His attendance had also dropped and he had begun truanting from specific lessons. B's behavioural problems appeared to be escalating and he had become involved in starting small fires.

An assessment identified the issues affecting B's behaviour and an appropriate package of support was quickly put in place. This included support from an educational psychologist to help him deal with the challenges at school and home. The Head of Year discussed B's problems with his class teachers to identify appropriate ways of dealing with his behaviour; and arrangements were made for him to participate in positive activities over the school holidays alongside some targeted work on the consequences of starting fires.

As a result of the package of support offered to B his attendance at school soon increased. B's behaviour improved significantly in a relatively short period of time and his relationships with his class teachers improved since they adopted a new approach to dealing with his behaviour. He was not involved in starting any further fires. Despite his difficulties, B was a bright student and needed to be stretched to maintain his interest at school. B is now more settled in school and good progress reports have been received in key subjects at the end of the year.

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# Ensuring the reforms take root

13. The challenge now is to ensure that the reforms take root and bring about far reaching, long-term improvements to service delivery and lasting impact on outcomes for vulnerable teenagers.
14. This means making progress on both the *sustainability* of the reforms and the *systematic* ways in which they are applied. We want to see all partners including schools, youth services and positive activities, community safety and police, and health services, systematically and consistently working together to identify young people at risk early on, and that the right systems are in place to provide joined up support when it is needed.
15. We want to see the concept of risk and protective factors being used extensively in professional practice and being used to support all young people identified as vulnerable. We want to see systems in place to predict and respond to young people's

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increased vulnerability at times of transition and support well organised into tiers which enable young people to move effortlessly between them.

16. It is essential that information sharing underpins multi-agency working, that the majority of the children's workforce has been trained to use the CAF, and it is used consistently and in line with best practice. We want local areas to be able to manage the shift to early intervention, even when introduction of the CAF uncovers existing

unmet needs. We want to see a sufficient supply of lead professionals and training and support is being continually refined and improved. We want to see the new multi-agency teams effectively managed and supported to ensure coherent, evidence-based interventions. We want to see increasing use of agreed quality standards when delivering services and a comprehensive process in place for all parents and carers to shape services and provide feedback at both operational and strategic levels which, together with analysis

of performance data, is leading to discernible improvements to service delivery. We also want to see that young people's – and their families' and carers' – participation in service design and delivery systematically drives continuous improvement.

17. That is why we are publishing this document now. It is important that we recognise the progress made by local areas but we also need to set out our priorities for supporting the targeted youth support reforms for the coming year.

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# Strengthening local leadership

18. The commitment of strategic leaders has been critical to the successful implementation of the targeted youth support reforms. Embedding the new arrangements present new leadership and management challenges.
19. The recently published 2020 children and young people's workforce strategy has set out a substantial change programme for more than two million people who work with children and young people. It has a focus on the youth support workforce, and we have already begun a programme of work, based on the commitments outlined in *Aiming High for Young People*. Through this programme we will:
  - *Fund a three-year workforce development programme which will support and strengthen leadership and management across the youth workforce. Up to 300 strategic leaders and 150 new and emerging leaders will have benefit from this programme along with 5,000 front-line managers.*
20. Whilst specialist skills are essential for improving outcomes for young people and need to be maintained, it is also important that existing staff can offer their expertise from a platform of skills that are shared by all who work with young people. To enable this we have committed to a range of measures, including:
  - *Introducing a skills development framework to map skills and competences at different levels of the workforce.*
  - *Developing the concept of a youth professional status ensuring that the workforce can unite around a common purpose, language and identity.*

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# Enabling everyone to play their part

21. The *Children's Plan* made it clear that parents bring up children, not governments. Parents are the most significant influence on their children's lives. Our *Think Family* reforms reflect this, focusing on local area services and systems to ensure better outcomes for vulnerable families by co-ordinating the support they receive from children, adult and family services. It aims to ensure that all services working with vulnerable children, young people and adults consider the family context, identify families which are at risk, provide support at the earliest opportunity, and meet the full-range of needs within each family they are supporting. It is essential that the targeted youth support reforms promote the 'think family' approach, providing tailored support that seeks to fully engage and include parents of vulnerable young people.
22. We also want to deepen our understanding of the difference that targeted youth support is making in schools. So we will:
  - *Support Centre for Excellence and Outcomes (C4EO) as they focus on the role of schools in delivering effective targeted youth support and looking at the impact of early intervention and multi-agency support on attendance, exclusion and attainment of teenagers.*
  - *Use legislation and guidance to require greater clarity about local early intervention arrangements within the Children and Young People's Plan, and ensure that Children's Trusts, with the full involvement of schools, have the necessary duties to promote and deliver a comprehensive local system, informed by the national framework.*
23. Colleges and Work-Based Learning providers also have a crucial role in supporting vulnerable young people to participate and succeed. Through the Education and Skills Act 2008, we are raising the age of compulsory participation in learning for all young people to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015. To enable this to happen, we must ensure that the right learning places and the right support are available for every young person. The September Guarantee aims to ensure that every young person aged 16 and 17 receives a suitable offer of a place in learning, and the delivery of the targeted youth support reforms in schools, colleges

- and other learning settings is essential to ensuring that vulnerable young people receive the highest quality support to remain engaged. This will also support delivery of the PSA 14 indicator to reduce the proportion of 16–18-year-olds who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).
24. Many young people will at some point need healthcare from the National Health Service and this support is delivered through a variety of health settings. In *Healthy Lives, Brighter Futures*, the strategy for children and young people’s health, we set out a range of measures including the roll out of the ‘*You’re Welcome*’ standards, so that all young people, wherever they live, will be able to access young people-friendly confidential contraceptive and sexual health services. There is an urgent need to make faster progress in reducing teenage conception rates if the PSA target is to be met. Successful delivery of the teenage pregnancy strategy will rely not only on access to contraception and high-quality advice about sexual health, but also on a range of early interventions that can help raise young people’s aspirations and support young people to make positive choices. This will require local authorities and primary care trusts (PCTs) to work together, with targeted youth support reforms playing a key role in bringing people together and providing early interventions for young people.
25. Targeted youth support can also enable early identification of, and support for, young people at risk of substance misuse. Reducing substance misuse requires a multi-agency strategy, including health services, education, family support, and enforcement agencies. Integrating targeted youth support with the delivery of specialist treatment services and having clear referral processes in place is essential to ensuring that those young people who do develop a problem as the result of their substance misuse get the help that they need. Joint planning with young people’s substance misuse commissioners based in the local authorities is key to ensuring an integrated approach. This includes access to young people’s alcohol provision as outlined in the *Youth Alcohol Action Plan*, published in June 2008.
26. Youth services, both those provided by local authorities and those delivered by the third sector, often have the opportunity to identify young people in need of additional support as well as provide access to positive activities. So we will:
- *Increase the awareness of the contribution positive activities can make as part of a*

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*package of multi-agency support and promote the use of the CAF and the role of the lead professional to those working in youth services.*

- *Work with the Youth Justice Board to develop joint guidance to ensure that youth offending services are fully part of the targeted youth support reforms in every area*

27. The *Youth Crime Action Plan* (YCAP) set out the Government's strategy for tackling youth crime, and progress is measured by national indicators on reducing first-time entrants to the youth justice system (PSA 14) and reducing youth re-offending (PSA 23). Youth offending services need to be fully engaged in local targeted youth support arrangements if the system is going to work for those who are at risk of offending or who are either entering or exiting the criminal justice system. So, in addition to YCAP commitments, we will:
28. The role of those working to improve community safety should not be overlooked. Housing officers, wardens, police officers and anti-social behaviour workers can often identify children and young people who are at risk at an early stage if they are linked into local targeted youth support arrangements. Crime and disorder legislation enables and promotes information sharing but local arrangements need to recognise and reach out to this important group of front-line workers.



# Achieving excellent delivery

29. We are determined not only to sustain these reforms but continue to improve them, so every area can achieve excellence locally in each of the seven delivery elements and across youth services more generally. That is why we are investing in a range of programmes and making a commitment to supporting the embedding of targeted youth support.

30. We know from the self assessments that local areas have shared with us and the messages coming from the initial evaluation that some of the delivery elements are more challenging than others. For example, shifting the emphasis from working with young people already facing considerable personal, emotional and social challenges to intervening earlier is emerging as a particular challenge.

To support local areas understand and overcome these challenges we will:

- *Continue to ensure good practice is shared through the production and distribution of guidance and case studies. Working with our partners we will hold a series of Youth Taskforce regional events to enable managers and practitioners to share good practice and understand the contribution targeted youth support can make to PSA 14 and related areas, including reducing teenage conceptions, improving outcomes for teenage parents, and tackling the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training.*
- *Champion the work of C4EO and its focus on targeted youth support within the broader*

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*youth theme commencing in September 2009. C4EO uses trained and accredited peer advisers to work with local areas, sharing good practice and supporting improvement.*

31. In many areas, better commissioning offers the greatest scope for improving services and achieving excellence. Working with the Department of Health we have established the Commissioning Support Programme which will help Children's Trusts plan, design and implement services more effectively.

Over the coming months we will:

- *Encourage local leaders to take advantage of the online resources and networks and use some of the consultancy time on offer to each Children's Trust to explore the role of commissioning in the delivery of targeted youth support and how it can better integrate commissioning of youth support services with education and learning provision.*

32. At the operational level we also know that producing detailed delivery guidance is also important in helping achieving excellence. Working with the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) we will:

- *Publish updated guidance on the use of the CAF and the role of the lead professional.*

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33. Local areas have collectively made good progress. However, significant challenges remain and in some areas these are greater than others. We are committed to taking action in areas where we have concerns. So we will:

- *Continue to make available support for those areas with the greatest delivery and operational challenges.*
- *Use the option of designating a local area that needs additional support as a 'youth priority area' where we have wider concerns and think it will accelerate improvement.*

# Focusing on impact

34. In order to make further improvements to the way support is delivered and maximum difference to the lives of young people it is critical we understand impact better. So we will:

- *Continue to make available high quality support for local areas to improve the way they monitor the impact of targeted youth support, use that information to develop their own services, and support others to do the same.*
- *Ask local areas to provide their Government Office with an overview of the impact that the targeted youth support reforms are beginning to have on practice and outcomes towards the end of 2009.*
- *Work closely with C4EO to complete a knowledge review focusing on targeted youth support which will bring together robust qualitative and quantitative data and identify the best, validated local practice that has proved to be effective.*

- *Commission Ofsted to undertake a survey that looks at the progress local areas are making towards embedding targeted youth support within a context of developing effective integrated youth support services.*
- *Support the CWDC as they seek to develop a deeper understanding of the impact of different models of integrated delivery on outcomes for children, young people and their families. We will also use the information from the CWDC on the progress being made towards establishing an integrated children and young people's workforce.*

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# Moving forward

35. As we focus on both the *sustainability* of the reforms and the *systematic* ways in which they are applied, it is now time for local areas to renew their commitment to targeted youth support and to embedding the reforms.
36. This means taking action to address each of the four priority areas of: strengthening local leadership; enabling everyone to play their part; achieving excellent delivery; and focusing on impact. Action planning will need to reflect what's happening locally and how to make best use of support available.
37. Government Offices are providing support to local areas and we have asked them to maintain an overview of progress being made. For more details contact your Government Office:  
  
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38. All the resources produced to support the targeted youth support programme are now available on one CD ROM. This includes copies of our change management tool, a range of information leaflets and extended case studies. To request a CD ROM email [youthtaskforce@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:youthtaskforce@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)



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