

---

**TRANSFORMING YOUTH WORK - RESOURCING EXCELLENT YOUTH SERVICES**

---

**Responsible Cabinet Member(s) - Councillor Chris McEwan, Children's Services Portfolio**

**Responsible Director(s) - Cliff Brown, Director of Community Services**

---

**Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to highlight the key findings from the recent Ofsted inspection of the Youth Service and areas of weakness in meeting the Government's specification for an 'Excellent Youth Service' from the DfES guidance document, Transforming Youth Work – Developing Youth Services for Young People. In response to the Ofsted inspection an Improvement Action Plan is required. The draft plan is attached at **Appendix 1**. This must be signed off by GONE before 10 October 2005 . During on going discussions with them they have raised the issue that the plan is not fully resourced and this report identifies the additional resources required.

**Information and Analysis**

2. Ofsted inspected the Youth Service in February 2005. The service was found to be inadequate with weaknesses outweighing strengths. The quality of the work and the service's use of resources represented unsatisfactory value for money.
3. In response to the inspection it is a requirement that an Improvement Action Plan to address the issues raised in the inspection is produced. A draft Action Plan has been developed (**Appendix 1**) to address Ofsted's recommendations listed below. This is subject to ongoing discussion with GONE in order to achieve a sign off by the deadline of 10 October 2005. It will then be translated into the 2005/2006 Service Plan for the Youth Service and in accordance with the corporate service planning framework be presented to and monitored by Life Long Learning Scrutiny Committee.
4. The Ofsted Recommendations are to:-
  - Ensure that sufficient resources are available and are effectively deployed to secure sustainable improvements to the service.
  - Improve the overall quality of youth work practice.
  - Involve young people more effectively in the overall development, management and evaluation of the service.
  - Review and strengthen the management structure and clarify roles and responsibilities.
  - Review the quality assurance arrangements and ensure consistent implementation across the service.
  - Improve the availability and reliability of management information.

- Further develop the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of young people in Darlington.
- Develop and implement service-specific policies and plans in a number of key areas, including child protection, equality, diversity and race relations.

### **Transforming Youth Work**

5. In 2002, the Government set out its specification for an excellent Youth Service in *Transforming Youth Work- Developing Youth Services for Young People*. To take this agenda forward additional resources were provided to Councils.
6. The Government's expectation of local authorities in the provision of a sufficient youth service in partnership with voluntary bodies and others is to demonstrate strategic leadership and to have a clear understanding of local circumstances that impact upon the lives of young people. Thus it should: -
  - Provide strategic leadership for the whole youth service.
  - Ensure the local authority youth service is a key contributing partner to the Connexions Service and local preventative strategies.
  - Ensure the active participation of young people in the specification, governance, management, delivery and quality assurance of youth services.
  - Secure appropriate and coherent youth work provision through coherent partnership arrangements.
  - Take a leading role in representing youth service interests at local, regional, national and European governmental levels.
  - Provide high quality youth work in settings where the local authority is uniquely placed to make direct provision; and.
  - Ensure safe environments supervised by skilled and caring workers providing a facility, which the community has, the utmost confidence in.

### **What should be provided locally?**

7. The guidance sets out that the following should be provided locally:-

#### **(a) *Pledge to Young People***

It is recommended that local authorities develop a pledge to young people at a local level. It should be developed and owned locally and include clear statements concerned with services which young people can expect from their local authority and be underpinned by a local commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

At present, the Youth Service does not have a pledge and the development of one is included in the Improvement Action Plan.

(b) ***Mainstreaming Equal Opportunities and Diversity***

The Youth Service have completed an Equalities Impact assessment in accordance with corporate requirements to achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

(c) ***A Curriculum for Youth Work***

The Youth Service should have a clear curriculum statement the goals of which should include helping young people to explore the issues which affect them, to make responsible choices; to encourage social interaction and comparison; to promote self-acceptance through offering positive feedback; and to act on their understanding. There should be an emphasis on promoting active citizenship and engagement with democratic and political processes.

A priority contained within the Improvement Action Plan is to further develop the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of young people in Darlington. Key actions include:

- Appoint a senior manager to take responsibility for the development, implementation and review of the curriculum document.
- Develop the curriculum document to ensure that it is informed by the needs of young people and key partners and clearly articulates learning outcomes to be achieved and incorporates the international aspect of youth work.
- Strengthen curriculum activity in centre provision.
- Increase opportunities for accredited learning.
- Strengthen monitoring and review arrangements.

(d) ***Health and Safety and the Protection of Young People***

The service must have clear policies and practices for the protection of children and young people which are understood and in place and support voluntary sector youth service partners to adopt policies and practices of a similar standard wherever practicable.

The Improvement Action Plan includes an action to develop and implement service specific policies and plans in a number of key areas, including child protection, equality and diversity and race relations.

(e) ***Contributing to Connexions***

Local Authorities should clearly identify resources at their disposal for providing youth work to the Connexions Service and ensure that all youth work with the 13-19 age range is integral to the Connexions Service, its objective and is a key partner in delivery.

(f) *Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector*

Local authorities should support and invest in the voluntary youth work sector and work in partnership to develop approaches to planning, funding and service delivery.

With regards to e and f, the improvement priority contained within the Improvement Action Plan is as follows:

- Develop a whole authority Youth Strategy ‘The Teenage Years 13-19’ in partnership with key partners, local authority representatives and the voluntary and community sector.

**Resourcing a Sufficient Youth Service**

8. To demonstrate the importance the Government has placed on the Youth Service and its contribution to promoting social inclusion and assisting young people at risk, from 2003/04 it separately identified a Youth and Community sub-block within the Education Formula Spending. The sub-block has its own distribution formula. It allocates the resource to local authorities using a formula based on numbers of 13-19 year olds and information representing local needs. The formula allocates a range of values for each local authority, per head of 13-19 population, ranging from £79 to £348. The target for 2005, set by the Government is at least £100 per head per annum (with additional funding for intensive work and disadvantage, including scarcity) should be spent by local authorities. Current spending in Darlington is £62.25 per head. The Government is keen that when local decisions are made about youth service budgets, that resources ensure increased investment in the youth service.
9. The Government also provides separate grants to support the development of Youth Services by way of the Transforming Youth Work Development Fund (£10 million for 2005/06). The Government has set specific standards with respect to the provision of a youth service which includes amount spend per head of 13-19 population. These standards are outlined in the following section.

## Measuring Standards

10. The Government has set specific standards for local authority youth services so that improvements in performance can be measured. The Government expects local authorities to work to the standards of service of youth work provision in the context of their resource allocation and it is expected that all local authorities reach the following standards by 2005.

No	Standard	Target	Darlington's Performance 2004/05	Comments
1	Clear definition of target groups, by age and any other relevant characteristics, including ethnic diversity.	13-19 years and to those targeted groups in the 11-13 and 19-25 age ranges.	Prioritising 13-19 years. 11-13 and 19-25 target groups include BME, Travellers, disabled and those at risk.	
2	Clear specification in a planning framework, of the needs and of the range of opportunities for personal and social development to which young people in the target group have access (to include cultural activities, counselling, international and residential experiences, sport and outdoor adventure, voluntary action).	3 Year Youth Service Plan and annual Delivery Plan.	Youth Service Plan 2003-05 and annual Delivery Plans monitored by GONE.	
3	A defined curriculum framework document which links YS and YS2 in 90% of the provision secured by the local authority.	90%	100%. Restructure of service has FT worker responsibility for ensuring curriculum delivery.	
4	% of youth population within a safe 30 minute journey time to youth work provision.	85% in Unitary Authority areas.	Due to small geographical area Darlington will meet this target.	

<b>No</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Darlington's Performance 2004/05</b>	<b>Comments</b>
5	Opening hours of provision. All youth provision per 1,000 youth population is accessible for a minimum of 4 hours per week. 90% of larger youth provision are open at least 24 hours per week. 80% of larger youth provision is open for 80% of school holidays and weekends.		Due to worker capacity 2 youth clubs are currently opening only one night a week for 2 hours.	This target falls short.
6	80% of youth access points which are open more than 10 hours per week have access to on-line youth information services.	80%	No youth provision open for 10 hours, however, 6 out of 8 clubs have internet access.	Standard not being met.
7	Number of contacts per thousand youth (13-19) population	25% of total youth population.	34%	
8	Number of individuals involved at least four times per month	15% of total youth population.	19.5%	
9	Number of individuals worked with intensively.	5% of total youth population.	6%	
10	Satisfaction with youth services offered.	85%	Currently undertaking survey.	Satisfaction not known.
11	Self indication by the authority of its position on the LGAs Standards for Democratic Involvement (Hear by Rights LGA/NYA July 2001).		This has not been progressed.	

<b>No</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Darlington's Performance 2004/05</b>	<b>Comments</b>
12	90% of youth participants can identify own achievements and 10% gain a specific award.	90%  10%	Do not currently collect this data 22%	Recording mechanisms need to be established to collect this data.
13	% of sessions rated satisfactory or better by Ofsted.	90%	67%	Standard not met.
14	Youth Service spending per head of population aged 13-19 years.	At least £100 per head per annum (with additional funding for intensive work and disadvantage, including scarcity).	£62.25	Standard not met.
15	Number of qualified staff by 13-19 population.	1FTE per 400 of 13-19 youth population (8,770yp / 400 = 21.92 fte workers).	10.27 (includes Senior Management Team).	Standard not met.
16	Local authority spending on professional development of its staff.	5% of total youth service budget.	3.6% 04-05 (2.41% 03-04).	Standard not met.
17	Local authority spending on initial training for volunteer for 13-19 age group.	£100 per person.	£200 per person.	
18	Authorities must have formal arrangements in cash or in kind which define the youth work contribution to key youth policy areas. 18 – the assisted (voluntary sector). 19 the connexions service. 20 crime and disorder and community safety strategies. 21 Schools and colleges.		18 SLAs 19 Local Partnership Agreement 20 Informal arrangement 21 Informal arrangement	Need to formalise arrangements.

No	Standard	Target	Darlington's Performance 2004/05	Comments
19	Authorities must secure an authority- wide review and scrutiny group for young peoples' issues usually within a local strategic partnership.		Children's and Young Persons Strategic Partnership.	

33. It can be seen from the table that Darlington falls short in a number of key standards, which have a significant impact on the quality of the Youth Service being provided. In particular Youth Service spending per head pa of population aged 13-19 years by Darlington is £62.25. This falls significantly short of the Governments minimum standard of £100 per head of population aged 13-19 years by 2005. In addition Darlington significantly falls short in the number of qualified Youth Workers per head of population. The Government would expect nearly 22 full time workers should be employed. Darlington currently only has 10.27 FTE which includes the Senior Management Team, a shortfall of nearly 12 FTE qualified youth workers.
34. Recent comments made by GONE following the Assistant Directors overview of the benefits of the Youth Service transferring in Leisure are as follow *“Steve Thompson talked about sharing resources rather than an increase of funding but that will not increase your staff team and it does appear that you need more bodies on the ground”*.
35. The lack of spend per head and qualified youth workers in turn impacts on other standards. For example, inability to meet the following:
- (a) The standard for opening hours of provision e.g. all youth provision per 1,000 youth population is accessible for a minimum of 4 hours per week. In Darlington's case due to worker capacity 2 youth centres are currently opening only one night a week for 2 hours.
  - (b) 80% of youth access points, which are open more than 10 hours per week, have access to on-line youth information services. In Darlington no youth provision is open for 10 hours, however, 6 out of 8 clubs have Internet access.
  - (c) 90% of sessions rated satisfactory or better by Ofsted – Darlington's satisfaction rating is 67%.
36. If we are to make significant progress with improvements to the Youth Service and implement the Improvement Action Plan, it is essential that the resource base is increased. In order to fully meet the Government's minimum standards on spend per head and full-time workers, an additional £340,000 pa is required. For any lesser amount it is unclear as to the impact this will have on how GONE assess the ability of the Action Plan to deliver the necessary improvements.



37. With respect to youth work for 2005/2006 the Government have amended BV 33 -Youth Service expenditure. Past performance against this target puts Darlington in bottom quartile performance (top quartile performance for 2003/04 is £99.71) and replaced it with BV221a, b the definition of which are:
- (a) BV221a- The percentage of young people aged 13-19 gaining a recorded outcome compared to the percentage of young people in the local authority.
  - (b) BV221b- The percentage of young people aged 13-19 gaining accredited outcomes as a result of their participation in youth work.

### **Impact on CPA**

38. It should be noted that performance against BVPI's will form a significant part of CPA service block scores and the Youth Service forms part of the Children's Service block which is a Level 1 Service which has a higher weighting than a level 2 service such as Leisure and Arts. However the degree of weighting of the Youth Service for the Children's Service block is not yet known.

### **Financial Implications**

39. If the Council is to meet the £100 per head target additional revenue funds of £340,000 per annum are required. Earlier in this report reference is made to Government resources provided in the Grant settlement via the FSS calculations for the Youth and Community of the overall Education FSS block. The FSS is designed to allocate grant resources to each Council but it does not mean that the funds are predicated to specific services and Councils can take their own spending decisions as they see to fit to meet local priorities within some fixed parameters. Darlington currently spends at FSS for Education therefore previous decisions have meant that the Youth and Community "resources" have been channelled elsewhere in the Education service to fund other priorities.
40. If the Council is to increase funding for Youth provision it has two options, reallocate Education funding to Youth provision or fund it from resources outside Education by releasing funds from lower priority areas. The Education Funding system is currently undergoing a radical review and therefore it is a time of financial uncertainty within the Education Service and it is not possible with any certainty to identify resources for Youth Provision at this time. Following the grant settlement in December there will be more certainty. In terms of resources from other areas, work has been started on reviewing finances to look at the potential to free up funding for priority areas. In the medium term it may therefore be the case that a rebalancing of resources between services is possible as well as addressing what is currently a challenging MTFP in terms of the budget gap to be faced. However, there are currently reasonable revenue balances which allow some flexibility to pump prime the additional funding requirement while the review of finances is completed.

41. It would be prudent to delay any decision on committing additional resources to Youth provision until the full picture is available following the new grant settlement however this would mean delaying a final decision until March 2006. Such a delay would mean that improvements in the service would be delayed until Summer/Autumn 2006 after allowing for the recruitment of new staff. This delay may well not be acceptable to Members, if this is the case they could allocate the additional resources, covering them from revenue balances in 2005/06, and accept that this will put additional pressure on the MTFP which will need to be addressed as part of the MTFP revision in March 2006.

### **Developing a Borough Wide Young Persons Strategy**

42. GONE are keen that the Youth Service develops a strategic vision for the Youth Service as part of developing a Young Persons Strategy. The vision for the Youth Service needs to underpin the vision outlined in the Government's recent consultation paper 'Youth Matters' published on the 18 July 2005. This paper builds on the ambition of 'Every Child Matters' which promotes the idea that all young people should achieve five outcomes of being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being. Youth Matters aims to radically reshape services for young people to improve outcomes for all young people through better integration of services, with a particular emphasis on those who are disadvantaged. The Youth Matters vision is *"to see services integrated around young people's needs helping all teenagers achieve the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes to the greatest possible extent."* The Youth Matters consultation document address four key challenges:
- (a) Empowering Young People: Things to do Places to Go
  - (b) Young People as Citizens: Making a Contribution
  - (c) Supporting Choices: Information, Advice and Guidance
  - (d) All Young People Achieving: Reforming Targeted Support
43. A Steering Group comprising representatives from the Council and external agencies such as the PCT, Police, Connexions and DDYCA has been established to oversee the development of a Borough wide Youth Strategy by March 2006. The first meeting was held on 28 July 2005. The group agreed that the purpose of the strategy is to 'Improve outcomes for all young people while recognising provision may need to address targeted and specialist need'. The vision for the strategy will be developed in partnership with Young People. The scope of the strategy will cover 11- 25 year olds with a core cohort of 13 – 19 year olds and it will be structured around the five outcomes of 'Every Child Matters' and the four challenges identified in 'Youth Matters'.

44. To help inform the strategy a mapping exercise of young peoples provision throughout the town is being undertaken and is due for completion in November 2005. In addition a review of all current young person's consultation has started and an overview of the themes emerging will be presented to the Steering Group at the end of September 2005. The Steering Group will then decide if any further bespoke consultation is required. A stakeholder conference to discuss the development of the strategy is planned for November 2005.

### **Progressing the Improvement Action Plan**

45. The draft Improvement Action Plan must be signed off by the GONE and be fully resourced. There are a number of actions outlined in the plan where insufficient resources are currently identified, as shown in **Appendix 1:-**
46. If resources are not allocated, the draft Improvement Action Plan will need to be changed to remove the unresourced elements and as such it is unlikely that this will achieve sign of by GONE.
47. A considerable amount of progress has already been made in implementing the draft Improvement Action Plan in response to Ofsted's recommendations and the following has been undertaken:

#### ***Ensure that sufficient resources are available and are effectively deployed to secure sustainable improvements to the service***

- The resource implications to meet the above recommendations have been outlined within this report.

#### ***Improve the overall quality of youth work practice***

- Youth Service practices have been reviewed and staff have received updated training. A Quality Assurance framework has been established throughout the Youth Service and senior managers are undertaking audits of youth service practices in youth clubs. The service is now working towards Charter Mark accreditation. A young persons inspection team has been established to assist in quality assessments and the young people are currently undergoing training.

#### ***Involve young people more effectively in the overall development, management and evaluation of the service***

- A young persons inspection team has been established to assist in quality assessments and the young people are currently undergoing training.
- A perception survey has been drafted and will be circulated in July for completion by young people to establish their satisfaction with the youth service and to identify how they would like to be involved.

- Meetings have been arranged with the secondary schools in the town and Darlington College of Technology for the Youth Service to deliver 12 week accredited training programmes for young people in Youth Councils encouraging more young people to become involved in the decision making process.
- Following a review of communications with young people, a worker has been appointed to develop and maintain youth web based projects and develop the Youth Service website and improve communications with young people. The Youth Service launched the TextVibe initiative in June which enables young people to find out what is going on in Darlington via their mobile phones. The scheme allows any young person who is registered to receive information about events in Darlington as well as the chance to have their say about life in Darlington and how it could be improved.
- Accredited learning opportunities have been extended and the Duke of Edinburgh Award has been introduced in 4 youth clubs and the scheme will be introduced in the remaining four by September 2005.

***Review and strengthen the management structure and clarify roles and responsibilities***

- A review of the Youth Service section has been undertaken and the Head of the Youth Service has been appointed and commenced work at the beginning of September 2005. Senior staff have been given clear responsibilities for developing the curriculum and for policy development.

Further develop the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of young people in Darlington

- A review of curriculum activity has taken place and the revised curriculum document is currently out to consultation with young people and key partners.

***Review the quality assurance arrangements and ensure consistent implementation across the service***

- Youth Service practices have been reviewed and staff have received updated training. A Quality Assurance framework has been established throughout the Youth Service and senior managers are undertaking audits of youth service practices in youth clubs. The service is now working towards Charter Mark accreditation.
- Improve the availability and reliability of management information
- A review of the Youth Base MIS system has been completed and staff have undergone training in data collection systems to ensure compliance.

***Develop and implement service-specific policies and plans in a number of key areas, including child protection, equality and diversity and race relations.***

- A senior manager has been given the role of developing and implementing specific policies and plans in the key areas identified above. A review of all the above will commence shortly with immediate attention to child protection.

## **Other Improvements**

48. It should be noted that the draft Improvement Action Plan specifically deals with the issues arising from the Ofsted inspection of the Youth Service. There are also a number of other improvements being developed alongside the Action Plan. Since the transfer to Community Services of Community Safety and the Youth Offending Service/Early Intervention Team, progress has been made in integrating the programming, practices and procedures of the sections associated with the engagement of young people. Within current resources, programmes of activities for young people and activities have been directed to known problem areas where anti social behaviour has been evident. Progress has also been made in improving the breadth of provision through a virtual Youth Service by engagement of external partners and voluntary organisations. A whole town mapping exercise is currently being carried out to identify activity that already exists. This work incorporates provision from the private sector, voluntary sector and other public sector organisations, including Connexions and the Extended Schools programme. This will more effectively join up young peoples entitlement to services.

## **Outcome of Consultation**

49. Consultation has been undertaken through the Steering Group for developing the Young Persons Strategy, which comprises a number of external partners, which has identified all the issues. Further consultation with young people and other stakeholders will be undertaken as the Strategy is developed.

## **Legal Implications**

50. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

## **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

51. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is considered that the contents of this report will have a positive impact arising from a significant increase in investment in the Youth Service.

## **Council Policy Framework**

52. The issues contained within this report are required to be considered by Council.

## **Conclusion**

53. This report has highlighted particular weaknesses of the Youth Services and how it falls short of the Youth Service Standards that the Government expects to be achieved by 2005. The draft Improvement Action Plan seeks to specifically address the weaknesses highlighted by the Ofsted inspection. However, while good progress has been made within existing budgets, additional resources and staff, are needed to achieve the full breadth of improvements. This in turn may impact on the Councils ability to achieve the required CPA service score block of Children's Services, helping ensure that Darlington retains its Excellent Rating.

## **Recommendation**

54. It is recommended that:
- (a) The draft action plan be approved subject to final negotiations with GONE.
  - (b) The additional budget requirement for the Youth Service of £340,000 in a full year (£90,000 for the current financial year) be approved.

## **Reasons**

33. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
- (a) The service performance against BVPIs will form a significant part of CPA service block scores and the Youth Services forms part of the Children's Services block, which is a Level 1 service.
  - (b) Unless appropriate resources are in place, we will fail to achieve the full breadth of service improvements that the Government expects to be achieved by 2005.

**Cliff Brown**  
**Director of Community Services**

Cliff Brown : Ext 4401  
SL