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**YOUTH MATTERS**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. This paper advises members of the Government's Green Paper 'Youth Matters' setting out proposals for the development of an integrated youth support service.

**Background**

2. On 18 July 2005 the Government published the Youth Green Paper, Youth Matters, addressing how we support and challenge our teenagers. Building on the ambition of Every Child Matters and its five key outcomes for all young people (being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being), Youth Matters aims to radically re-shape services for young people.
3. The consultation sets out a comprehensive package aimed at improving outcomes for all young people, with a particular emphasis on those who are disadvantaged. The paper is not just about providing more opportunities for young people but sets out a new strategy of challenges and support to young people.
4. While the paper focuses on teenagers (13-19) some of the proposals are also relevant to young people slightly older than 19 or younger than 13. The proposals in the paper reinforce wider policies steering young people towards the right study and employment options, encouraging healthy lifestyles, enriching the curriculum, increasing volunteering and recognising their achievements.

**Information and Analysis**

5. A summary is provided on the key proposals and where clear, the potential implications for local authorities, following each summary is a set of consultation questions to consider. The consultation period ends on 4 November 2005.
6. Youth Matters acknowledges that there is much that is good about services for teenagers, but that there is a lot that could be better. In particular:
  - Services do not always meet the need of individual young people.
  - The various organisations providing services and help for young people do not work together as effectively or imaginatively as they should, with the result that money and effort are waste.
  - Not enough is being done to prevent young people from drifting into a life of poverty or crime.

- Services are failing to exploit the full potential of the internet, mobile phones and other technologies and
- Teenagers and their parents do not have enough say in what is provided.

### **Vision, Aims and Principles**

7. The Government's vision for reform is to create an integrated system which is responsive to the needs of the individual and which supports all teenagers to achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes and which strikes an appropriate balance between supporting and challenging young people. To do this, the Green Paper poses four key challenges: -
  - How to engage more young people in positive activities and empower them to shape the services they receive?
  - How to encourage more young people to volunteer and become involved in their communities?
  - How to provide better information, advice and guidance to young people to help them make informed choices about their lives?
  - How to provide better and more personalised intensive support for each young person who has serious problems or gets into trouble?
8. The underlying principles are to: -
  - Make services more responsive to what young people and their parent's want - the aim is to give teenagers and their parents a real voice in the decision making process and increasingly put spending power in their hands.
  - Balance greater opportunities and support with promoting young people's responsibilities - in order to have a system in which young people have a clear expectation of the support and opportunities available to them, but a clear understanding that these benefits are not unconditional - young people also have responsibilities and that poor behaviour is not acceptable. It will be important to outline what is unacceptable and drawing on evidence of what is practical and what works - sanctions should be used in response to breaches.
  - Make services for young people more integrated, efficient and effective - the aim is to have a system that is more responsive to teenagers and which allows greater freedom for the frontline and more scope to innovate. To have joined-up services focused on and matched to individuals' needs. To cut out duplication and merge funding streams and to encourage funding to be used flexibly and imaginatively to free up resources to reinvest in local services and improve outcomes for teenagers.
  - Improve outcomes for all young people, while narrowing the gap between those who do well and those who do not - in line with Every Child Matters, to create a system that works for all young people. Also, to overcome challenges faced by young people in accessing services particularly those living in deprived areas and those who are homeless or in care or who have poor mental health.

- Involve a wide range of organisations from the voluntary and community and private sectors in order to increase choice and secure the best outcomes - the public sector alone cannot make these reforms happen alone and can only be achieved by taking the best from the public sector, the private sector and the voluntary and community sector. The Government wants to see children's trusts at the heart of these developments, orchestrating a mixed economy of services and opportunities for young people.

### Summary of the Main Implications

9. This section provides a summary of the main implications for the development of an integrated youth support service taking each of the four challenges in turn.
10. *Challenge 1 - Empowering Young People: Things to Do Places to Go*: The first challenge in the consultation paper is how to engage more young people in positive activities and empower them to shape the service they receive. This will be achieved by:-
  - Giving local authorities the powers, working through children's trusts, which will enable them to have a key role in commissioning and providing activities for young people. The Government are going to legislate to clarify the duties of local authorities to secure positive activities for young people and they want to see a focus on young people who are disadvantaged or who are not currently participating in positive activities.
  - Introducing a new set of national standards for positive activities as follows:
    - *Access to two hours per week of sporting activity.* This includes formal and informal team and individual sports; outdoor and adventurous sports and other physical activities such as aerobics and dance.
    - *Access to two hours per week of other constructive activities in clubs, youth groups or classes;* This includes activities in which young people pursue their interests and hobbies; activities contributing to their personal, social and spiritual development, activities encouraging creativity, innovation and enterprise, study support; informal learning; and residential opportunities.
    - *Opportunities to contribute to their communities through volunteering.* This includes leading action, campaigning and fundraising).
    - *A wide range of other recreational, cultural, sporting and enriching experiences.* This includes less structured activity that contribute to a rich and varied life outside schools and work, such as somewhere safe to hang out with friends, travel within the UK and abroad and visits to music, arts, heritage and sporting events.
    - *A range of safe and enjoyable places in which to spend time.* Evidence highlights the importance that young people and their parents place on safe spaces where young people can hang out and socialise as well as taking part in activities. Many local areas are exploring alternatives to the traditional youth club approach for example by investing in mobile facilities and youth shelters. These sorts of facilities are undeveloped and their provision is not always in line with what people actually want.

- Re-invigorating youth work by building on the ideas set out in *Transforming Youth Work* and recognising its vital role in engaging young people.
- Putting buying power of service and activities directly into the hand of young people through:
  - *Opportunity Cards* - these will give young people discounts on activities and it is proposed that young people, parents and local authorities could top them up. The Government intends to contribute a subsidy to top up cards of disadvantaged 13-16 year olds. However, subsidy would be withdrawn where behaviour is unacceptable.
  - *Opportunity Fund* - the Government intends to make this fund available to each local authority to be spent at young people's discretion on projects to improve things to do and places to go.
- Introduction of £40m capital funding over 2 years from April 2006 to enable local authorities to develop new approaches to strategic investment in youth facilities particularly in disadvantaged wards. The fund will help pay for up upgrading existing places to go for young people and provide new facilities where none exist.
- Establishing a network of Youth Support Development Managers to address low level of participation in sports beyond the age of 16 and to ensure that all 16-19 years olds can be offered a minimum of two-hours sport physical activity.

11. The expectations of local authorities will be to:

- Develop a Local Offer - Local authorities working through children's trusts will be expected to develop an annual local offer within existing resources and communicate clearly the national standards to young people and the range of activities locally.
- Undertake an analysis of provision and need in developing the local offer and through this process local authority services that are shown to be unpopular should be closed or refocused. Where gaps are identified the children's trust should be expected to commission the appropriate activities from the best of public, private and voluntary sectors.
- Schools playing an important part in the local offer. By 2010 it is expected that every secondary school will be open 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. on weekdays, including school holidays, offering a range of things for young people to do.
- Involving all young people in all stages of service design, development, delivery and evaluation.

### **Consultation Questions**

- What do you think of the emphasis in the proposals on empowering young people themselves to shape local services? What other options are there for achieving this?
- What should be done centrally to support the development and delivery of local opportunity cards? How should opportunity cards be developed so the maximum number of young people can benefit?

- Which activities do you think have the most benefits for young people? Do the proposed national standards cover the right areas? Are they achievable and affordable within existing resources?

12. *Challenge 2 - Young People as Citizens : Making a Contribution:* The second challenge is how to encourage more young people to volunteer and become involved in communities. The Government have established a new body that will implement the recommendations of the Russell Commission on volunteering and have pledged £45m over three years from April 2005 to support the expansion in volunteering opportunities for young people. The proposals include:

- Encouraging more peer mentoring - young people supporting other young people.
- Exploring how to expand longer-term volunteering opportunities.
- Promoting more volunteering and active citizenship approaches to schools, colleges and universities.
- Encouraging more volunteering in public services.
- Considering options relating to financial support for volunteers.
- Developing more flexible approaches to volunteering.
- Celebrating further young people's positive achievements in the community and
- Exploring the role rewards can play in encouraging volunteering and affirming young people's positive choices.

#### **Consultation Questions**

- Will our proposals, taken together with those of the Russell Commission, lead to increase mutual respect between young people and others in the community?
- What more can we do to recognise and celebrate young people's positive contributions to their communities?
- Would the opportunity to earn rewards motivate young people to get involved in their communities?
- How can we ensure that young people from the diverse range of communities that make up today's society are effectively engaged by service providers?

13. *Challenge 3 - Supporting Choices Information and Guidance:* The third challenge is how to provide better information, advice and guidance (IAG) to young people to help them make informed choices about their lives. The Government have identified clear minimum expectation of IAG for young people and their partners. The Government intend to transfer the responsibility for commissioning IAG and the funding that goes with it from the Connexions Service to local authorities working through children's trusts, schools and colleges. It is expected that children's trusts, schools and colleges will work in partnership to commission IAG locally. But if provision is poor then schools and colleges will have the right to commission services directly.

14. It is also intended to have a clear minimum expectation of the IAG that each young person and their parents receive as follows: -
  - At age 11-12 (year 7): an introduction from a variety of people, including other pupils, to what is on offer within secondary schools.
  - At age 13-14 (year 9): support in considering post - 14 choices and a personal session with an advisor of they or their parents need or want it. This will complement plans for a local 14-19 learning prospectus.
  - Throughout the teenage years: better help to think through post - 16 options, personal social and health issues and career choices.
  - An easy to access, innovative and independent ICT service through which young people can access national and local information from a variety of sources, including through an easy navigable website, online advisers and a helpline.
  
15. A further proposal is to explore the development of a set of quality standards for IAG to give further impetus to the quality and impartiality of IAG and have the new arrangement in place by 2008 following a phased approach from 2006.
  
16. Other proposals involve: -
  - Improving the responsiveness of the health service to young people and are working towards 'Your Welcome' a set of standards for health care outside of hospital to be adopted in all local health services so that everyone including all young people - feel welcome.
  - Exploring the scope of offering 12-13 year olds a 'personal health MoT' when going through the transition from primary to secondary school.
  - Investing £140m from 2006 over two years to test the effectiveness of personally negotiated agreements in re-engaging 16-17 year olds who are outside of learning or work. £60m of this will be used to test 'activity agreements and allowances' for 16 and 17 year olds who have been out of education, training and employment for more than twenty weeks across eight Connexion areas. The remainder will fund a related pilot, which will offer similar incentives to young people and to employers to encourage 16 and 17 year olds in jobs without training to take part in learning.
  - Making available £20m from April 2006 to be invested to improve information to parents when their children start secondary schools.
  
17. The expectations of Local Authorities will be to: -
  - Work in collaboration with schools and colleges to commission IAG.
  - Be responsible for commissioning as part of an integrated youth support service, IAG for young people who do not attend school or college.

## Consultation Questions

- What kind of help and support is most important for young people?
  - How can we ensure that information, advice and guidance provided to young people is comprehensive and impartial challenges rather than perpetuates traditional stereotypes?
  - What do you think of our proposals to devolve responsibility for information, advice and guidance to children's trusts, schools and colleges?
  - Do you agree that it is important to have minimum expectations of the information, advice and guidance received by young people? Are the proposed expectations correct for each age group?
  - Do you agree there is case for quality standards for information, advice and guidance? If so what should they cover? How can they be made affordable without putting pressure on financial or workforce resources?
  - Would quality standards for information, advice and guidance help to ensure high quality and impartiality?
  - Do you think a 'personal health MoT' for 12-13 year olds would be an effective way of helping young people make a successful transition to the teenage years and to secondary education?
18. *Challenge 4 - All Young People : Achieving : Reforming Targeted Support.* The fourth challenge is how to provide personalised intensive support for each young person with serious problems or who gets into trouble. It is proposed to:
- Reform and simplify the current system for teenagers most at risk for receiving targeted support. This will lead to targeted support being planned and commissioned as part of an integrated process covering all services for young people and provided as part of an integrated youth support service at a local level. This will mean putting local authorities, working through children's trusts in charge of working with all the relevant agencies and stakeholders to deliver more personalised integrated and efficient support for teenagers.
  - Children's trusts will have the freedom and flexibility to address young people's needs by using their resources most effectively.
  - Main funding streams will be merged for targeted youth support and separate management information arrangements removed.
  - Place responsibility with local authorities for leading action on teenage pregnancy and young people not in education, employment or training (with shared accountability with schools) while contributing to further progress in tackling drugs and youth crime in keeping their existing responsibilities and with their existing duty under section 17 of

the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

- Reduce the number of separate assessments experienced by young people and simplify the assessment process.
- Consider transferring accountability for children and young people's drug misuse services to Directors of Children's Services or their equivalents.
- In recognition of the considerable success that Youth Offending Teams have had in delivering targeted youth crime prevention programmes with a strong performance culture, this role will be maintained in the current spending review. The Government want to explore the scope of devolving to Local Authorities working through Children's Trusts those budgets that support prevention including those relating to youth crime and substance misuse.

### **Expectations for Local Authorities**

- Children's trusts will define the structure that best suits local circumstances and decide which of their existing services needs to remain in place to delivery statutory duties and link with other professional. It is expected that this will involve streamlining accountability, collapsing management chains and merging the functions of separate services, which currently focus both on supporting young people and on the provision of activities.
- Local authorities will be encouraged to set up an integrated youth support service. Targeted youth support teams will provide wrap around support and preventative work for young people who need additional support or intervention including universal available activities to identify and engage young people with additional need.
- Front line youth support teams, are expected to focus on prevention and early intervention, which should be able to address problems and change behaviour through support and challenges.
- The Government will encourage co-location of services within schools, voluntary drop-in and health centres and universally available youth facilities and advice shops.
- Schools will be seen as key partners in the delivery of targeted support for young people.

### **Consultation Questions**

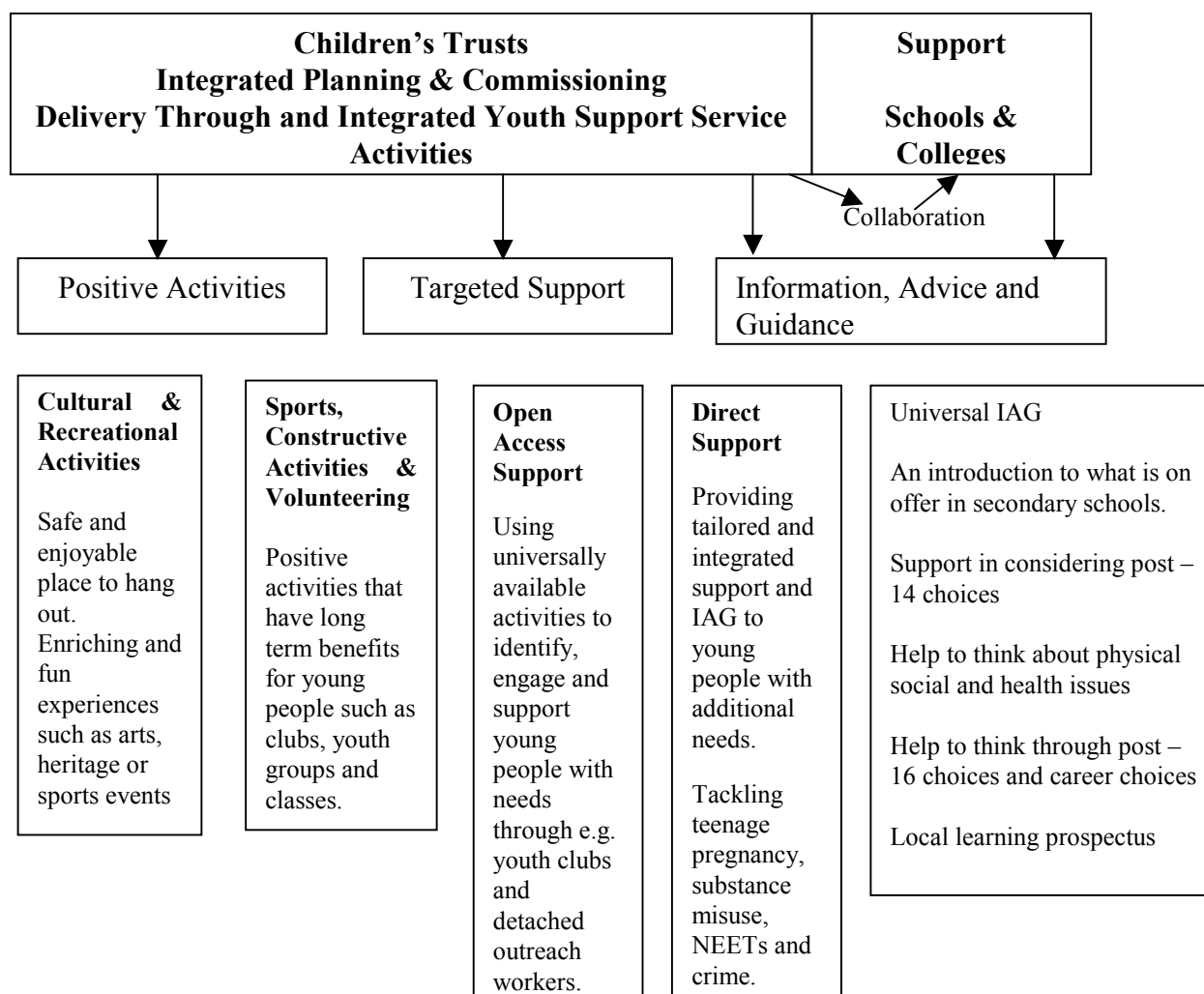
- Do you think there is a good case for bringing together within children's trusts responsibility for commissioning different services, which provide support to young people with additional needs?
- How can we ensure that people facing particular barriers, for example those who are disabled, are effectively engaged by service providers?
- How can we ensure that the new lead professional role is successful in coordinating the delivery of targeted support to young people who need it?



- What more could be done to help older teenagers make a smooth transition to support from adult services, when they need them?
- At what stage(s) of their children’s lives would parents find it most helpful to receive information about how they can support their teenage children?
- On which issues would parents of teenagers most like support? How, or through whom should information be delivered?
- How could schools help parents remain involved with their teenager’s learning and future education opportunities?

### Delivering the Proposals

19. The Council working through children’s trusts will take the strategic lead for youth policy and in delivering the Green Paper proposals. They will receive the necessary funding and accountability and be given a revised statutory duty to come into force in September 2006.
20. The diagram below describes commissioning arrangements in the reformed system, with children’s trusts having primary responsibility for commissioning activities and support service. Further, building on progress with extended schools, how schools and colleges would commission information, advice and guidance for young people.



21. The Government expects to see the development of an integrated youth service ranging from universally available activities to specialist targeted support. As a result of the reforms there is an expectation that teenagers and their parents be much more involved and given the opportunity to influence services and activities.
22. The Government proposes to reduce the number of individual grants to allow local authorities to use funding more flexibly, efficiently and creatively. It is expected that local decision making will be devolved to teenagers, parents and schools and colleges where appropriate.
23. The responsibility for establishing the direction and pace of change and communicating this effectively to local partners and managing the process will be the responsibility of local authorities through children's trusts.
24. It is proposed that a phased approach towards implementation will take place and be operational in all areas by 2008. However, children's trusts may wish to move faster taking on responsibility from Connexions in 2006 or 2007. Local Authorities will be encouraged to keep the Connexions brand.
25. During the transition period and beyond local authorities will also need to work closely with organisations in the voluntary and community sector and with the Russell Implementation body.
26. The Government is undertaking a number of pilots to test out the proposals on the ground. Following on from this as part of the transition to improve services for young people the Government will make available resources (2006-2008) to help with transition costs and assist with change management.
27. In addition the Government is developing Big Lottery Funding.
28. There will be one performance management system for evaluating progress against Youth Matters, the Every Child Matters Outcomes Framework.

### **General Consultation Questions**

- What do you think are the most important issues facing young people now? How are these issues different for younger (13-16) compared to older (17-19) teenagers?
- Are there issues faced by particular groups of teenagers that are not addressed in this document? If so, what are they?
- Do you know of any projects or initiatives, which have been outstandingly successful in tackling the challenges covered in this document?
- How can we encourage young people to take their responsibilities seriously? What should the incentives be for good behaviour and what sanctions should be applied for poor and disruptive behaviour?

- What more could be done to divert young people from risk taking behaviour, like smoking, binge drinking and volatile substance and illicit drugs misuse?
- What practical benefits and challenges will there be in developing an integrated youth support service?
- How can the Connexions brand be used to best effect within the reformed system?
- What more can we do to ensure that reformed services are focused on achieving the improved outcomes we all want to see?

### **Workforce Implications**

29. It is anticipated that the vast majority of front line Connexions staff will be needed to deliver services set out in this paper. Implications for the IAG workforce will depend on the nature of the collaborative arrangements and whether schools and colleges are commissioning or providing services directly. With regard an integrated service this will mean changes for many of the workforce currently located in Connexions, Youth Service or in targeted support programmes.
30. Local authorities will need to agree the right balance between targeted and universal support and make clear the distinctive roles for each professional and services engaging with and supporting young people. This will entail looking at the skills mix compared to the local analysis of what young people need. The wide skill set of many Personal Advisers in Connexions provides an important model for the integrated youth support service.

### **Conclusion**

31. This report has identified the Government proposals to reform services for young people. The reforms are proposed from an understanding that, while existing services, Youth Service, Connexions, mainstream services, and a wider range of targeted support have a crucial contribution; they do not amount to a coherent, modern system of support. While it is expected that local authorities develop an integrated youth support service, the Government are not advocating any particular approach. The consultation period for the Youth Matters green paper ends on 4 November 2005.

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### **Background Papers**

Sharon Brown : Extension  
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