

## **Strategy for Young People's Services in Darlington 2009-2012**

*We are committed to enhancing the life chances and opportunities for all young people in Darlington. Young people today face many challenges and choices and we need to work together to enable those challenges to be faced without fear and the very best choices to be made.*

*This strategy will deliver the universal and targeted support which a range of agencies will provide to help improve outcomes for young people aged 11-19 years in Darlington. This strategy supports the delivery of One Darlington; Perfectly Placed and supports the Darlington Children and Young People's Plan's 5 key priorities.*

*This strategy builds on existing good practice about the best and most effective way to deliver effective, co-ordinated, and integrated services. Our opportunity is to provide real coherence between services for young people creating a more unified and integrated approach to the delivery of frontline services. A key theme throughout is one of empowering young people and the acknowledgement that lasting and positive change will only be achieved if they are placed at the centre of our services, policies and governance.*

*This strategy is for all young people aged 11-19 in Darlington. We will seek to ensure that strong universal services including 'places to go and things to do' are available to young people and that information and support is available where and when they need it in order to help them through what is an exciting but often challenging time of their lives. This will offer a broad framework whilst ensuring that appropriate activities and opportunities are developed for different phases of teenage years.*

**Cllr Chris McEwan**  
**Chair of Darlington Children's Trust Board**

# Strategy for Young People's Services in Darlington 2009-2012

## 1. Statutory Framework

- (a) The Government published its first ever Children Plan in December 2007 which puts the needs of families, children and young people at the centre of everything we do and sets ambitious new goals for 2020.
- (b) The published vision for *young people* is that they should:
- Succeed in education and learning
  - Develop resilience and wider social and emotional skills
  - Make a real contribution to their communities and wider society
  - Be physically, mentally and emotional healthy and
  - Grow up in a safe and supportive environment.
- (c) A significant number of strategies and policies have been developed in recent years with respect to all aspects of services for young people. This culminated in the development of the Children's Plan; this overarching plan contains some specific expectations for service delivery i.e.
- By 2015 all young people are expected to stay on in education or training to 18 or beyond and when they leave they are expected to have the skills they need to prosper in a high skills economy.
  - All local areas are expected to ensure all young people have the opportunity to participate in positive activities.
  - The delivery of targeted services with the development of the Youth Alcohol action plan and the Drugs' strategy.
  - The Children's plan also expects services to work together to prevent crime.
  - The commitment to enable all young people to take part in enjoyable and constructive leisure time activities and to give them high quality services and places to go.

## 2. How will this legislative framework shape the development of youth provision in Darlington?

- (a) A **coherent and integrated approach to the delivery of services for young people** is now a priority both nationally and locally. It is recognised that a diverse range of provision is being provided to the young people of Darlington, however, it is vital that this is reviewed to ensure that all services who support young people are 'fit for future'. We have completed a comprehensive audit across of existing youth provision and across all services delivering positive activities to young people including youth work, sports and leisure, extended services and youth arts and music projects.
- (b) We will **bridge any gap between public expectations and perceptions of young people and youth provision** and develop consensus

regarding the delivery of services for young people. This will be facilitated by seeking the involvement of a wider audience of partners in this process. The findings following the Community Survey identified “teenagers hanging around on the streets” as a ‘very big or fairly big problem’ for 42.6% of respondents which represents an increase of 5.3% from 2005.

- (c) This strategy includes a **universal integrated youth offer across the Borough and swift and easy access to targeted services** to ensure the services have an enhanced role in early intervention and prevention. The services we fund and those we work in partnership with must be accessible to all young people and must have a coherent process for young people to engage with more targeted or specialist services.

### 3. Local context

- (a) Partners in Darlington have long recognised that young people are our future, most visibly through the pilot LAA of 2006-09. Our Community Strategy, ‘One Darlington: Perfectly Placed’ is driven through 5 delivery themes: Prosperous Darlington, Aspiring Darlington, Healthy Darlington, Greener Darlington and Safer Darlington. Aspiring Darlington, delivered through the Children’s Trust, has the responsibility for ensuring that young people’s services meet statutory requirements, deliver the change agenda and provide high quality services. It builds upon the good work already completed.
- (b) One Darlington: Perfectly Placed also recognises and describes the vital role of partnership working in realising this aim. This vision will drive improvements in life chances and wellbeing for all and tackle inequalities where they exist.
- (c) Recent inspections of services for children and young people in Darlington highlighted some excellent practice and endorsed the strategic objectives and prioritisation within services for young people.

*Major strengths across partner agencies are the shared understanding of key priorities; good allocation of resources to priorities; excellent leadership by senior officers; effective financial management and well-established performance management, which has improved outcomes. [JAR report 2008]*

*Arrangements to make the move from school to college or work-based learning easier for young people are excellent. [JAR report 2008]*

- (d) The re-inspection monitoring report of the Youth Service in 2008 found that progress on a number of key areas has been good for example; there has been an increase in the annual revenue budget for the service and good progress to improve the quality of youth work practice. (Ofsted 2008)
- (e) The Youth Offending Services was inspected in 2008 and the inspectors commented: ‘we were pleased to find a forward thinking YOS that had

*many strengths, some outstanding features and with evidence of positive outcomes being achieved. However, there were issues identified in relation to access to education, training and employment and some specialist health provision’.*

*Actions taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, prevent offending and to reduce re-offending by children and young people are good. The safer schools project has been successful in targeting those at risk of offending and has resulted in a reduction in anti-social behaviour and the high rate of pupils excluded from secondary schools. [JAR report 2008]*

#### **4. What we want to achieve**

*‘We want all young people to enjoy happy, healthy and safe teenage years that prepare them for adult life and help them to make the most of their talents’*

- (a) Most young people enjoy their teenage years without encountering any serious difficulties. Some experience temporary setbacks at school or in other aspects of their lives which they can overcome with help from their families and others. However a minority can get into serious trouble including offending and anti-social behaviour and this not only damages young people’s lives but the communities we live and work in.
- (b) It is vital that all partners work to ensure Darlington develops imaginative new approaches to the delivery of youth provision to ensure young people can access a universal offer of positive activities together with the support they need when and where it is needed including if things start to go wrong for them.
- (c) **In developing the core offer of services for young people in Darlington, we will:**
  - Listen to what all young people say
  - Publish and maintain a central directory of things to do and places to go.
  - Ensure information is available to everyone – young people, parents, practitioners and providers of services.
  - Develop a predictable and consistent offer of services – in terms of when and where they are available.
  - Develop the role of ‘trusted adult’ or champion, to support and guide young people and families at every opportunity.
  - Listen to young people’s feedback on their experience of services and use this information to improve services when and where needed.
  - Address issues which might prevent young people accessing services – whether this relates to disability, cost or transport.
  - Ensure the opportunities offered to young people have a positive impact on their lives.
  - Ensure that a comprehensive range of services are available at a universal level and that young people can access swift and easy access to additional services.

- Ensure quality of delivery is consistent across any/all providers.
- Develop our workforce.

## 5. What does the data tell us?

### (a) The data tells us:

- There are 10,173 11-19 year olds living in the local authority area and of these, 32% of 11 to 16 year olds live in the 30% most deprived wards.
- 28.9% of pupils receiving free school meals gained 5A\*-C at GCSE level compared to the national figure of 35.5%.
- NEET levels in Darlington continue to fall – these have reduced from 9.1% in 2006 to 7.7% in 2008 – although they still remain above the national figure of 6.7%. However, 99.8% of 16 and 17 year olds received the ‘September guarantee’ in 2008 – an offer of a place for work, training or education – the highest offer made in the country.
- Almost 40% of eligible young people voted in the election for the Youth MP and Darlington had the highest participation rate of any authority in the country in the Young People’s Democracy Week activity of “I’m a Councillor, get me out of here”.
- First time entrants into the Youth Justice System have reduced over the last four years from 311 in 04/05 to 212 in 07/08. Anti-social behaviour caused by young people has reduced by 13% in the first 6 months of 2008/09 compared to the same period the previous year. However, there is also a need to consider the increasing proportion of young females becoming involved in crime.
- The number of conceptions among girls under 18 per 1000 remains higher than the national figures– trend data confirms that this has been the case throughout the period 2000 – 2006.
- Information is now collected with respect to levels of obesity among our children and young people.- data released this year confirms that 21% of 11 year-olds in Darlington are obese – which is higher than the national figure of 17.5%.
- The Young People’s Substance Misuse service (SWITCH) was established in 2004 and since then has continued to show substantial increase in numbers accessing Tier 3 drug and alcohol treatment. Of particular concern are the levels of alcohol specific hospital admissions of young people.

- (b) Each year, the DCSF commission a national survey of the views and experiences of young people. In 2008, the Tellus3 survey of 629 pupils in Darlington showed that: 59% of young people aged 13-16 have been involved in helping a charity, local voluntary group, a neighbour or someone else in the local area and that 72% rated their local area as a fairly good or very good place in which to live. A higher percentage of our young people (31%) stated that having “fewer young people hanging around “would make their area better to live in compared to the national figure of 27%. Investments made previously in the local area were well-received. 53% of our young people have used the local swimming pool compared to only 46% nationally and 11% of young people aged 13 to 16

have given their views to our local youth parliament compared to the national figure of only 8%.

- (c) The Community Survey 2006 asked respondents for their views about the quality of life in their area and those things which need the most improvement. In 2006, 37.9% rated activities for teenagers as most important compared to 43.2% in 2005; however, when asked what needs most improving, 46.7% rated activities for teenagers as the top priority compared to 44.7% in 2005.
- (d) As referred to above, Darlington held, for the first time this year, the 'I'm a Councillor Get me Out of here' event which was aimed at improving the relationship between young people and local government. The results demonstrated a very high level of engagement of young people in this event compared to national figures. In fact, Darlington on average had 5 times more people ringing the chat line than any other Council. The event confirmed young people's biggest priority was around the improving local facilities in Darlington.

## 6. What services will we provide in Darlington and what will be the offer to young people?

- (a) In considering the national expectations for the development of services for Young People these can be captured in 6 key intended outcomes.
  - Places to go – in terms of a network of safe and accessible locations in which to spend time
  - Things to do and opportunities which promote social and personal development – positive activities, volunteering opportunities and experiences which develop knowledge and skills
  - Engagement – a meaningful voice for young people in decision-making about all services to young people
  - Confidential and impartial information and advice – support in addressing a wide range of personal issues and challenges
  - Specialist guidance on jobs, careers and the labour market – help young people access employment, training or learning opportunities making a successful transition to adult working life
  - Targeted support for more vulnerable young people – support for young people with particular and specific needs.
- (b) It is possible to articulate an 'Offer' to young people around 6 key components. Activities to deliver each of the 6 outcomes will include, as a minimum:

<b>Places to go</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A network of centres and access points</li> <li>• Engage young people</li> <li>• Relevant policies and procedures to safeguard young people</li> </ul>
<b>Things to do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the Click web site</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a wide range of relevant and appropriate opportunities, activities and events</li> <li>• Develop new and innovative practice</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A network of Areas Forums operating across the Borough</li> <li>• Engage young people in planning, delivery and evaluation of services</li> <li>• Operate The Dosh and retain young people at its heart</li> </ul>
<b>Info/advice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide access to a qualified professional as ‘someone to talk to’</li> <li>• Advocate on behalf of individual young people</li> <li>• Provide information and advice in line with national standards</li> </ul>
<b>Specialist guidance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the delivery of careers education and guidance</li> <li>• Maintain the client management system (CCIS)</li> <li>• Provide access to vacancies and work based learning opportunities</li> <li>• Tracking and maintaining contact with young people</li> </ul>
<b>Targeted support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aware of and able to use the CAF</li> <li>• Deliver interventions and activities to vulnerable individuals and groups</li> <li>• Where appropriate take on the role of the Lead Professional</li> </ul>

## 7. How will we work in partnership to deliver this agenda?

- (a) The local authority currently provides a Youth Service and a Connexions Service as a result of historical arrangements. The Connexions Service, responsible for the statutory provision of information, advice and guidance to young people, was previously delivered by a private provider but has been returned to local authority control in line with national changes. The Youth Service and the Connexions Service are both managed by the same Head of Service and will increasingly seek more efficiencies in service delivery through this integrated management. Both current services have specific functions and remits and both also need to interface with a wider range of strategic drivers, core services and partner agencies. The role and duties of the Head of Service (to be known as the ‘Head of Young People’s Services’ who will lead the Young People’s Service) also reflects this internal and external function.
- (b) The Young People’s Service provided by the local authority will have three main strategic roles:
- To be lead delivery agents – particularly for positive activities, information/advice/guidance and elements of targeted support

- To be a strategic/policy lead – specifically within these fields and wider in terms of young people and the Youth Matters/Aiming High agenda and where provision is commissioned from the private, voluntary and community sectors. This area will also cover quality assurance, training and development
- To align with other functions located elsewhere but covered by the statutory targets and indicators; for example, Young Caretakers project/staff; Prevention Workers (YOS).

(c) As the newly integrated service develops it will also need to determine how it 'fits' with the range of other strategies/policy drivers including (in particular):

- 14-19 reforms (diplomas, IAG standards, careers guidance)
- Attendance and attainment
- Extended Services
- Play Strategy
- Youth Crime/Anti-Social Behaviour
- Health;

And with other service provisions collectively designated as targeted youth support:

- Specialist services – Looked After Children; Teen Pregnancy; Drug and Alcohol Action Team/Substance misuse; Youth Offending Service; Learning Disabilities and Difficulties; Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender; Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services etc.

(d) As well as direct delivery to young people, the newly integrated service would seek to bring together the 'best' provision, be responsive to the needs of young people and link other agencies and departments into collaborative work.

## **8. Processes and systems**

(a) All staff working within young people's services and all services commissioned by the service or by the Children's Trust must have regard to common systems and processes, for example and including:

- Common Assessment Framework
- ContactPoint
- Information/data sharing (and due protocols)
- Lead professional
- Team Around the Child (TAC)
- Duty of Care
- Referral processes
- Locality Working

(b) This is a challenging agenda and it is vital that we enhance and harness capacity to improve the life chances and opportunities of young people in the



Borough.

- (c) Darlington Children's Trust will support the development of young people's services by :
- Understanding the local supply and demand for children's services, considering the range of existing provision and what families, young people and communities are saying.
  - Commissioning from the full range of statutory, voluntary, community and private sector partners, and from schools where they wish to take on this role.
  - Working closely with all schools, helping them to meet the full range of pupil needs and offering them effective support with the most challenging pupils.
- (d) The Children's Trust will explore possibilities of commissioning the third sector to seek opportunities to deliver:
- Major events
  - A range of universal activities
  - Out of hours activities to support extended schools

## **9. How will we know if we are making a difference?**

- (a) It is vital that there is an effective reporting process to support the Sustainable Community Strategy –***One Darlington: Perfectly Placed*** as young people are key to the future success of the Borough. It is clear that as we improve services for young people in Darlington this will impact on all aspects of the SCS. It will be appropriate, therefore, to report certain aspects of progress to a number of themed groups and to other Boards.
- (b) We will use the national indicators in **PSA 12 and 14** to monitor our performance, reporting through the Children's Trust and the Local Strategic Partnership.

## **10. Actions which will be reported against between 2009 and 2012 (including the statutory plan which drives the action).**

### **(a) Positive Activities and Improving Outcomes**

**We will:**

- map and publicise what provision is already available for youngsters (**Youth Taskforce Action Plan**).
- ensure that activities are open at the times and places when they are most needed (**Youth Taskforce Action Plan**).
- bring young people and communities together to actively shape and drive activities in their local area (**Youth Taskforce Action Plan**).

- make the most of the opportunity provided by capital investment to make the best use of existing buildings or facilities and ensuring that other potential partners like private bodies and third sector organisations are involved (**Youth Taskforce Action Plan**).
- roll-out extended schools providing out of school activities for young people and from September 2008 increasingly subsidising access for disadvantaged young people (**Aiming High Implementation Plan**)
- locally implement the **PE and Sports Strategy**, providing 5 hours per week of sporting opportunities for 5-16 year olds and 3 hours per week for 16-19 year olds (**Aiming High Implementation Plan**)
- offer all children and young people access to a wide range of cultural opportunities in and out of school. This will be led by a new Youth Culture Trust (**Aiming High Implementation Plan**).
- implement **14-19 reforms**, so that by 2015 all young people have access to a wide ranging curriculum offer and stay on in education or training to 18 and beyond (**Aiming High Implementation Plan**).
- Increase opportunities for volunteering and intergenerational volunteering (**Aiming High Implementation Plan/Youth Taskforce Action Plan**).

(b) **Supporting active participation of young people and their families in the commissioning, design and delivery of services.**

**We will:**

- Implement systems to enable the views of young people, their families and carers to shape local services at every level – in the strategic planning, commissioning and decommissioning of services, as well as in the design and delivery of particular services, and in the one-to-one support they receive (**PSA 14 Delivery Plan**).
- **Devolve an increasing proportion of the Youth Service budget for positive activities to young people's influence** – up to 5% of the budget for youth services in 2010 and 2011, with an aspiration of 25% by 2018 (**Aiming High Implementation Plan**). The Darlington's Children's Trust will seek to develop early processes to enable this to happen through opportunities offered in commissioning services.
- Increase participation of the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups including but not limited to:
  - (i) mapping young people's experience of the services they access
  - (ii) Identifying priority services and engaging front line staff, young people and parents to define together what makes a 'good service'.
  - (iii) expanding existing arrangements that give young people power over the way some funds for them are spent, and the responsibility to run some provision;
  - (iv) work more closely with groups with particular needs, such as young people in care, young carers, young offenders, young people with a disability and ethnic or religious minority groups
  - (v) increasing meaningful interaction between young people from different backgrounds and faith groups
  - (vi) work more closely with third sector organisations – both at a strategic and delivery level – to engage the most disadvantaged and

disaffected young people (**PSA 14 Delivery Plan**).

(c) **Removing barriers and supporting access**

**We will:**

- Continue to improve the information we hold and publicise on local activities and facilities for young people including the harnessing of technologies
- Seek to remove financial and physical barriers including transport to access activities and facilities (**Aiming High Implementation Plan**).
- Ensure that our responsibility for the provision of Information, Advice and Guidance is fully discharged and national standards met (**PSA 14**).
- Co-ordinate the delivery of the 'September Guarantee' ensuring that all 16 and 17 year olds have an offer to continue in learning (**PSA 14**).
- Work with schools and colleges to ensure the provision of high quality and impartial careers education and guidance (**PSA 14**).
- Reaching out and targeting young people and families who are hard to engage and/or at risk of offending behaviour (**PSA 14**) including:
  - (i) Using child protection legislation to remove young people from the streets at night and take them to a safe place (**Youth Crime Action Plan**).
  - (ii) Using street-based teams of workers to tackle groups of young people involved in crime and disorder (**Youth Crime Action Plan**).
  - (iii) Tackling anti-social behaviour and disorder at school closing time by increasing after-school police patrols where needed (**Youth Crime Action Plan**).
  - (iv) Placing Youth Offending Team workers in police custody suites so that young offenders can be assessed and directed to appropriate services at the earliest opportunity (**Youth Crime Action Plan**).
  - (v) Making young offenders feel the consequences of their actions by expanding YOT reparation schemes during their leisure time, including on Friday and Saturday nights (**Youth Crime Action Plan**).
- Through the provision of advice and practical support to parents help tackle anti-social behaviour (**Youth Taskforce Action Plan**) including:
  - (i) Developing Family Intervention Projects to work with the most vulnerable and problematic families with children at risk of offending, with non-negotiable elements and sanctions for a failure to engage (**Youth Crime Action Plan**).
  - (ii) Implement the 'think family' reforms to provide an integrated and appropriate service response to all families at risk by the end of the funding period (**Youth Crime Action Plan**).

(d) **Developing the capacity of our workforce**

**We will:**

- Roll-out a pilot leadership and management programme to support the development of skills, knowledge and behaviour for leaders and

managers across all those working with young people (**PSA 14/Aiming High Implementation Plan**).

- Develop and implement an Integrated Workforce Reform Action Plan (**PSA 14/ Aiming High Implementation Plan**).

**(e) Targeting support when and where it is needed**

**We will:**

- focus on early intervention and prevention, by providing systematic and targeted support for young people and their carers, including those who may not meet traditional thresholds for statutory or specialist services (**PSA 12 & 14**).
  - Through effective multi-agency and locality working we will:
    - (i) Involve young people, their families, carers and communities in the case for change and their own support packages
    - (ii) Identify vulnerable young people early
    - (iii) Build a clear picture of individual needs
    - (iv) Intervene early via universal settings
    - (v) Establish effective lead practitioner practices
    - (vi) Establish appropriate settings for service delivery
    - (vii) Provide effective support across transitions
  - use ContactPoint to allow services to be clear who is working with a vulnerable young person (**PSA 14**)
  - work creatively to ensure effective outreach to the most disadvantaged communities and young people, and to build the capacity of communities and parents to support young people and to provide effective role models and opportunities (**PSA 14**)
  - identify coordinated actions to promote mental health and early intervention in universal and mainstream services and develop more targeted support services and CAMHS in local CAMHS action plan and CYPP (**PSA 12**)
  - implement our parenting strategy (**PSA 14**)
  - Increasingly pool our budgets and resources as the integration of preventative services and the roll-out of locality working develop (**Aiming High Implementation Plan**).
-