



Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

20 October 2010

Report from the Director of Children and Families

For Information

Wards Affected:
ALL

Report Title: Review of Youth Service Provision

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides information about the Interim Report produced as a result of the Service Review of Services for Young People. This report also provides information about changes to service structures and developments since the Interim report was completed in February 2010.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the Review Report and the developments since the Interim report was completed in February 2010

3.0 Background

- 3.1 This report is produced by the Head of Brent Youth and Connexions Service and outlines the main findings and recommendations contained in the Interim Report produced as a result of the Service Review of Services for Young People. This report also describes key developments since the Interim report was completed.

4.0 Context

- 4.1 The new administration's Corporate Strategy includes a commitment to review our youth service to ensure that all parts of the borough have access to a relevant and engaging range of activities for young people.
- 4.2 This Review of Youth Services builds on the work carried out by a Youth Strategy Task Group comprising Members and senior officers from the Council which met between 2008 and 2009 to discuss issues relating to youth provision. The review was completed before the reductions in funding streams announced subsequently. For example, provision of Positive Activities for Young People, the Youth Opportunity Fund and the Youth Capital Fund are all funded via the Area Based Grant and have therefore needed to make significant in-year contributions to savings. There have

also been consequential delays in all three programme areas whilst the scope of the savings was finalised.

4.3 The future funding of youth provision, including the funding for the Big Lottery funded re-build of the Roundwood Youth Centre through the My Place project, is not likely to be known until after the announcement of the outcomes of the Public Spending review, expected in late October. However, it is likely that funding for youth provision will come under increasing pressure.

4.4 In September 2010, following his announcement about changes to 16-19 commissioning on 19th July, the Secretary of State for Education established a Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) to develop new guidance that will replace the National Commissioning Framework. This group now has an extended remit to report on the future role of Local Authorities across a number of children's services. The MAG will work through three sub-groups, the first of which will report on the future local commissioning of education and youth services, with a remit to make sure that the best provision that meets the needs, choices and ambitions of local parents, children and young people is in place. The outcomes will inform the government's schools White Paper which is expected to be published at the end of October. Any legislation required to implement changes is due to be announced at the end of November.

5.0 Objectives of the Review

5.1 The Council's Youth Strategy Task Group, comprising Members and senior officers from the Council, highlighted a number of areas for improvement to be looked at as part of the review including:

- Strategic Coordination of cross council services aimed at young people.
- Strengthening the commissioning and monitoring of voluntary sector partners.
- The need for sustainable funding.
- Performance against targets relating to the Youth Service.

5.2 Specific objectives of the review were to make recommendations on:

- Proposals for future service development, including strengthening the Youth Service's contribution to the Targeted Youth Support agenda.
- More effective coordination of services, programmes and budgets across the Council and with partners.
- Development of a future "Local youth offer".
- Refocusing the priorities and objectives for the Youth Service.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Overview

The Interim Report makes twenty two recommendations in respect of youth services in Brent, grouped under two areas with six main headings:

(a) Cross-cutting areas which impact more than one directorate or the Brent Children's Partnership as a whole. These are:

1. Strategic Coordination (6.2.1)
2. Joint Needs Analysis and Commissioning (6.2.2)
3. Funding and Programmes (6.2.3)

(b) Improvement areas which specifically relate to the Youth Service. The most significant areas to address are:

1. Strategic Performance Management (6.2.4)
2. Service Delivery Model (6.2.5)
3. Equality of Access (6.2.6)

6.2 Specific Recommendations

6.2.1 Strategic Co-ordination

1. Duplication in Service Delivery

Recommendation 1 - Establish a Youth Strategy Steering Group with a remit for positive activities and information and advice for young people. Responsibilities of the group could include: sharing information and intelligence about needs and demand; agreeing priority target groups and geographical areas, developing and implementing a Brent Youth Offer and joint commissioning of positive activities

Recommendation 2 - The Sports and Youth Service Teams should consider merging their summer university activity brochures.

2. Marketing and Communication

Recommendation 4 – The Youth Offer should be effectively marketed and promoted increasing participation and access for all young people

Recommendation 5 - A corporate communications plan should be developed and a campaign launched to publicise positive activities for young people across the borough. The campaign should be targeted at young people and parents and carers of young people

Recommendation 6 - A range of communication channels should be employed in addition to the website, including Brent Magazine, posters, leaflets, and SMS

3. Complying with Legislation and Statutory Guidance

Recommendation 7 - The Council consult on and publish a Brent Youth Offer covering all forms of youth provision and providers from different sectors

4. Setting Joint Targets

Recommendation 8 - All service areas responsible for delivering or commissioning positive activities for young people should set out measurable contributions to the National Indicator 110 Participation of Young People in positive activities. Each relevant service areas should include specific contributions to the NI 110 within their service area plans

6.2.2 Joint Needs Analysis and Commissioning

1. Joint Planning

Recommendation 10 - The Council should conduct integrated research audit of demand for and supply of provision for positive activities and a borough-wide survey of young people should be carried out covering public, private and third sector providers.

Recommendation 11 - The results of the needs and mapping analyses should be clearly set out as part of the next the local children and young people's plan together with a summary of actions to deliver the local offer.

2. Strategic Commissioning

Recommendation 12 - The Council consider how best to bring together current strategic commissioning functions and budgets for youth provision within CFD. It should also develop a joint commissioning framework or plan for positive activities informed by the audit of needs and supply

Recommendation 13 - Investigate the feasibility of transferring management responsibility for the Children and Young People strand of the Main Programme Grant over to CFD following completion of the current three-year MPG funding cycle in 2010/11

6.2.3 Funding and Programmes

Recommendation 14 - A report examining the risks and impact of funding cuts to programmes should be produced. The report should set out contingency plans to minimise the impact of funding discontinuation and service disruption including alternative funding and delivery arrangements

Recommendation 15 - CFD should investigate the potential to pool and align funding aimed at the delivery of positive activities across the Council

Recommendation 16 – As part of a concept paper and business case the Council should investigate and appraise alternative options for providing access to positive activities, for example youth opportunity cards and pre-paid cards which are being used in Tower Hamlets and Camden as a means of providing greater choice and spending power for young people and engaging them in positive activities (See appendix 8)

6.2.4 Strategic Performance Management

Recommendation 17 - BYS should review current its objectives/priorities with the aim of developing fewer but more outcome-focused objectives/priorities. Lower priority projects should be identified and stopped in line with One-Council objectives.

Recommendation 18 - Enhance strategy and policy development capacity and capability within the Youth Service. An option is to designate a post within the youth and Connexions Service with specific roles for strategy/service development and strategic coordination.

Strategic Priorities and Planning

Recommendation 19 – BYS should review its performance management framework and incorporate outcome-focused measures aligned to CYPP and Corporate priorities. The performance standards should be revised and reflect the new Quality Standards for Positive Activities recently published by the Department for Education.

6.2.5 Service Delivery Model

Recommendation 20 - The Youth Service's commissioning and provider functions should be separated. A target should be set to externalise an increasing proportion of services currently directly provided by BYS over the next two to three years.

Recommendation 21 - The Youth Service could be reshaped so that its organisational structures and service delivery arrangements are fully aligned to the five localities model

Recommendation 22 -The Connexions, Youth Offending Service and Targeted Youth Support services should be included within the scope of any future project or service models options to maximise opportunities for eliminating overlaps in backroom support eg performance management, quality assurance and administration, integrating the Connexions and Youth Services and to achieve increased cost savings and efficiencies for instance by rationalising delivery of duplication in preventative programmes between PAYP, the Youth Justice Improvement and Community Support Programmes.

6.2.6 Equality of Access

Recommendation 24 - The Youth Service should develop/commission services and set clear targets for reaching communities of groups of young people under accessing mainstream provision

6.3 Developments since the publication of the Interim Report

6.3.1 There have been a number of developments since the original report. These are detailed below and are referenced to the recommendations within the review.

6.3.2 The new Youth and Connexions Service team was established on 1 April 2010, with the Head of Service taking up post from the same date. The new Service Unit comprises the Youth Service, Connexions, the Gordon Brown Outdoor Education Centre and the vtalentyear full-time volunteering project. The Connexions Service had been out of the scope of the service review. However, going forwards the proposals and solutions will need to take account of the new configuration of services.

6.3.3 Strategic Co-ordination

The Youth and Connexions Service is accessing data available through the Council's Evidence Base, through Connexions and Locality teams to develop a robust needs analysis to support the deployment of resources and future planning. There are existing structures to support the development of Information, Advice and Guidance for young people via the 14-19 Strategic Steering Group and the Brent NEET Strategy Group.

The B my voice website and social networking sites have largely replaced printed brochures owing to budget pressures and in response to the changes in the way young people access information (Recommendations 1 and 2).

6.3.4 Marketing and Communication

The development of B my voice and the use of social networking sites are becoming increasingly significant as the major methods of raising awareness of informal learning opportunities available via the youth service. SMS text messaging is used widely for youth groups such as Brent Youth matters2 and is used extensively via the Client Caseload Information System (CCIS) and Electronic Youth Service (e-ys) databases.

The Assistant Director (Achievement and Inclusion) has met with the lead Children and Families Communications Officer to discuss the development of a Communications Strategy. The lead Children and Families Communications Officer has also attended a meeting of the new Youth and Connexions Senior Management team to support the service in developing the profile of the Youth and Connexions Service within the Council and the local community (Recommendations 2. 4, 5, 6 and 7).

6.3.5 **Complying with Legislation and Statutory Guidance**

The B my voice website is now live as a vehicle to promote activities, opportunities and the Brent and wider London Youth Offer. <http://www.bmyvoice.org.uk/> (Recommendation 7).

6.3.6 **Setting Joint Targets**

There is a strong track record of young people's involvement in commissioning through the Youth Opportunities Fund, Youth Capital fund and Connexions (Recommendation 12).

6.3.7 **The recommendation (14) that a report examining the risks and impact of funding cuts to programmes has been in part overtaken by events, although a report looking forwards from the current position would be helpful in planning future delivery to minimise the impact of reductions in funding to support delivery.**

£137,132 has been contributed by the youth service to the Departmental post reduction exercise in 2010/2011. These posts include youth workers delivering the Brent Community Friends project for young people in care, a youth worker delivering the Learning 4 Life project for young people with disabilities and the Eton Summer School project.

Of the £1,145,168 PAYP element of ABG for 2010/2011, a further £263,000 has been contributed to savings resulting from the recent Area Based Grant reductions, with a remaining allocated budget of £445,674 of which £161,315 is allocated to externally commission activities. Commissioning has been delayed owing to these uncertainties arising from the in-year reductions in ABG. The future of PAYP funding beyond March 2011 is unknown currently, but is likely to be under increasing pressure. Additional LDA funding (£159,000) ceased in March 2010.

The reduction in PAYP funding used to commission activities for young people also affects performance and the volume of external commissioning that has been undertaken by Brent Youth Service.

Four FTE Targeted Youth Support Workers funded through PAYP, representing 50% of the Service's dedicated resource for targeted youth support work in the context of universal youth provision, transferred to the Early Intervention Locality Service, with a budget transfer of £130,000 for salaries. The PAYP Team Manager took Voluntary Redundancy on 31 March 2010, resulting in efficiency savings and a budget reduction from Positive Activities for Young People funding of £31,449 (Recommendations 14, 15 and 16).

6.3.8 **Strategic Performance Management**

The three main youth centres are in areas of high levels of identified needs (Chalkhill, Harlesden and Kilburn) and all three satellite centres are now Council owned. The Wembley Centre is working with high numbers of young people in an area with increasing levels of deprivation and increasing numbers of young people in the NEET group. Similarly, the St Raphael's satellite centre is providing a valuable resource in an area where young people have concerns about travel to other available centres. (Recommendations 17 and 18).

There is a pre-existing Service Plan for Brent Youth Service for 2010 2011, also a Connexions Service Plan, incorporating vtalentyear and the Gordon Brown Outdoor Education Centre.

6.3.9 **The newly established Youth and Connexions Service is currently investigating the feasibility of applying as a Youth and Connexions Service for National Youth Agency accreditation for Integrated Youth Support Services and will apply the new Quality**

Standards for Positive Activities recently published by the Department for Education. (Recommendation 19).

6.3.10 **Service Delivery model**

The new Youth and Connexions Service has been established under a single management structure with effect from 1 April 2010.

This has already helped the development of joint working, utilising the respective skills of trained and qualified youth work professionals and Connexions Advisers. Some examples of recent initiatives are:

- Connexions staff supported outreach via the Equipped 2 Go Youth Bus over the summer period for a number of sessions in Kensal Green, Neasden, Queensbury, Wembley and Queens Park, adding to the range of Connexions access points for young people.
- Twenty members of Brent Youth Matters2 Group used the Gordon Brown Outdoor Education Centre in September 2010 for their planning and activity week-end, supporting a venue within the new Service Unit.
- The youth service has no dedicated young people's Information and Advice Centre. The bringing together of the teams is ensuring that youth workers are aware of the resources and range of information advice and guidance available to young people via the Connexions Centre.
- Connexions Advisers will support Youth Workers in developing their links with schools. The service intends to give each worker a link responsibility for a Secondary or Special School.

- 6.3.11 The newly established Youth and Connexions Service management team has allocated a lead responsibility for each of the five localities model. Youth workers have joined the Connexions locality meetings, led by a manager, where practitioners consider the information about young people who are either in the NEET Group or whose current activity status is not known. This joint working approach has been highly successful in focussing resources to move young people into positive outcomes and has resulted directly in Brent being graded 'Green' in the 14-19 progress review (Recommendation 21).

The Head of service is currently examining structure models in place in other authorities. Re-structure will need to be informed by the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review in the autumn.

- 6.3.12 The Youth and Connexions elements of the new service currently operate two distinct national databases. These are the Client Caseload Information System (CCIS) which holds a range of information on young people aged 13–19 in order to assess progress in local areas on a range of measures, including cutting the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and Electronic Youth Service (e-ys), a database system for the recording and reporting of youth activities. e-ys also allows for the planning and evaluation of youth projects and sessions as well as the recording of young person, staff and volunteer attendance. Both systems support the production of management information and performance data and currently CCIS data populates e-ys. CCIS is already operated on a West London basis by Ealing Council on behalf of the 6 Boroughs. CCIS also operates at a pan London level. From September 2010, e-ys is now also West London database. The newly established Youth and Connexions Service has extended the arrangement with Ealing Council to also cover e-ys, resulting in an efficiency saving of 1 FTE Monitoring Officer post and also a reduction in duplication. As part of the consultation paper for the Wave 1 Tranche 2 post reductions, the administrative support functions have been brought together for Youth and

Connexions and it is proposed to remove 1 post of Senior Admin Officer from the structure. (Recommendations 20 and 22).

6.4 **The Next Steps**

The Review of Youth Services is a Tranche 3 One Council Project, linked to the following four of the eight efficiency strands:

- Service transformation/reviews
- Better commissioning and contract management
- Stopping Lower Priority activities
- Independent Review of Structure and staffing

The project is scheduled for completion during 2010 to 2011 and has a savings target of £200,000.

A Project Concept Paper detailing high level plans for the implementation of the recommendations will be presented to the Project Board on 13 October 2010.

Background Papers

Service Review Services for Young People Interim Report Version 0.3 (Draft) 19 February 2010

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