

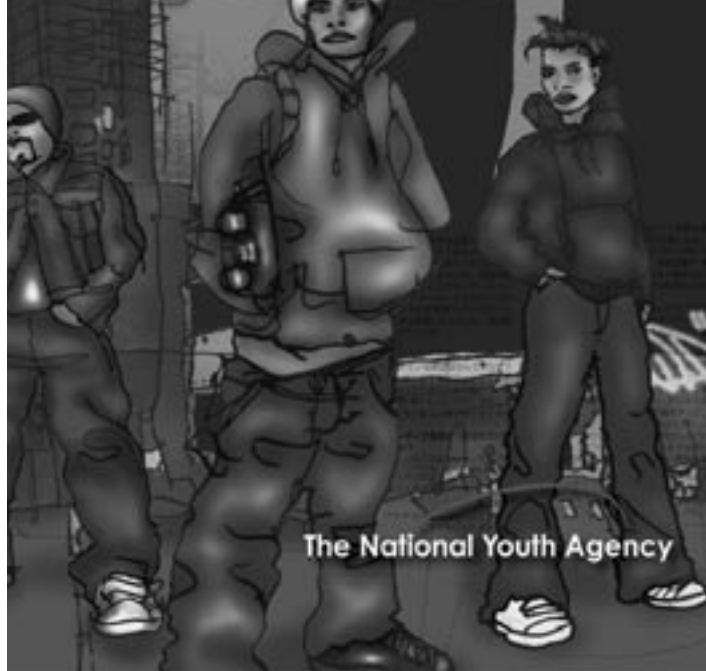
# Managing for better outcomes in youthwork

An illustration in a sketchy, hand-drawn style showing three young people in an urban environment. The person in the center is a young man wearing a white beanie, a dark hoodie, and cargo pants with a bag slung over his shoulder. He has a serious expression. To his right is a young woman with short, dark hair, wearing a dark hoodie and pants, looking towards the viewer. On the far left, another young man is partially visible, wearing a dark jacket and pants. The background features a building with scaffolding and a dark, shadowy figure in the upper center. The overall color palette is muted, with greys, browns, and a touch of red in the title and a curved line above the agency name.

The National Youth Agency



# Managing for better outcomes in youthwork



The National Youth Agency

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# Introduction

1. Youth work has long made a contribution to combating social exclusion and to building social capital. With others, it endeavours to enable young people to secure good jobs; live in a safe environment; build strong social networks; pursue healthy activities and manage their lives effectively. In short, to develop their capacity for autonomy.
2. But youth work has not always been effective in demonstrating the benefits of its particular ways of working in achieving such outcomes. 'Its credibility with young people lies essentially in the processes it adopts to engage with them, which reflects its core attachment to 'non-formal' learning methodologies. These, when discharged professionally provide a quality of learning opportunity but the specific learning outcomes can be elusive. Yet the credibility of youth work with politicians who control the purse strings lies in the delivery of outcomes, which can be difficult to detach and demonstrate in concrete, measurable forms.' (Williamson, 2002). This set of papers aims to help with the task of demonstrating such benefit, of seeking to place a value on what is gained through good youth work both with individuals and for the wider community. While government and other funders are the principal claimants for such measured outcomes, young people themselves also deserve to know what benefits they can expect from engagement in youth work and staff wish to see the value of their work.
3. This collection contains three papers:

The first, by Professor Peter Jackson of Leicester University, sets out some of the key theoretical underpinning for performance measurement (and performance management), especially in public services.

The second, by Tom Wylie of The National Youth Agency, suggests some outcomes and related performance indicators for youth work. It has been refined through dialogue with colleagues at a national seminar facilitated by Kevin Ford of FPM and by comments from Howard Williamson of Cardiff University.

The third, by Carolyn Oldfield of The National Youth Agency, draws together some recent research and evaluation studies to offer evidence of 'what works'.
4. The overall aim of these papers is to contribute to the debate about the effectiveness of youth work and, in particular, to move beyond a simplistic consideration of its costs into an attempt to ascertain its value. With greater clarity about the benefits to young people and their communities can come a closer relationship with strategy and with performance management towards ends which are both clear and helpful.



# **Paper 1**

## **Measuring Performance in Youth Services: A Note**

*Peter M Jackson*

### **Introduction**

Measuring and managing performance is central to much of the “new public sector management”. Central government departments and agencies are commissioned to secure “value for money” (vfm) in the delivery of their services and are required to demonstrate it through value for money auditing and the production of metrics such as performance indicators. Local authority services are managed to achieve “best value” and the Audit Commission has proposed performance measures which enable local authorities to demonstrate this value.

Whilst performance measurement has been an essential element of financial management in both the public and the private sectors for many years, the new range of measures transcend simple financial measures and now incorporate performance measurements for the quality, consumer satisfaction, human resource and operational dimensions of organisational life. This extended range of measures are increasingly being assembled into “balanced scorecards” (BSC). For example, rather than simply focusing upon teaching and overhead costs per pupil, new measures will consider the amount of time spent on exam preparation; the number and quality of GCSEs passed; the numbers who progress to further and higher education.

The audit society in which we now live has gone well beyond the simple activity of bean-counting and now enquires more deeply about the quality of beans, what they are used for and with what consequences for general economic and social well being.

The issue is to demonstrate that public money has been put to good use. This deceptively simple statement disguises a number of deep problems. For example, who is to define “good use”, or to put it another way, whose values are to count when we define value for money or best value?

### **What is Performance Measurement?**

As the phrase suggests, performance measurement is about employing a series of metrics that will provide managers with information that will enable them to better manage some dimension of the operation for which they are responsible.

A number of questions immediately follow from this:

- a) What is to be measured?
- b) Why do we think that which is measured is of any importance?
- c) How is it to be measured?

- d) What if it cannot be measured accurately?
- e) What if no metrics exist?
- f) How are people likely to respond to being measured?
- g) Does measurement mean intrusion and surveillance?

It is necessary from the outset to make it clear that it is not the performance of “individuals” per se that is being measured; this is left to personal performance appraisal. Rather, what is being measured is the performance of an organisation or a department or unit within that organisation.

## Why Measure Performance?

- ▶ If you don't measure results, you can't tell success from failure;
- ▶ If you cannot see success you cannot reward it;
- ▶ If you cannot reward success you run the risk of rewarding failure or mediocrity by default;
- ▶ If you cannot see success you cannot learn from it;
- ▶ If you cannot see failure you cannot correct it;
- ▶ If you cannot demonstrate results (vfm) then it is difficult to win public support.

(modified from Osborne and Gaebler (1992) *Reinventing Government*)

## What is to be Measured?

All managers, whether they are in public, private or charitable organisations, manage in order to create value for their organisations. They are in the business of adding value. In practice many managers, through their actions, actually destroy value. What is required, therefore, is a set of metrics that will demonstrate whether or not value is being created, destroyed or not changing.

Having considered whether or not value is being created the next question to be addressed is, value creation for whom? Who in an ideal world should enjoy the benefits of the value that is created? To answer this requires some knowledge about the organisation's stakeholders i.e. those individuals or groups of individuals who have an interest or a “stake” in the value of the organisation. Examples of stakeholders are the customer/client of the service and the organisation's employees. In a private sector organisation the shareholders would also be amongst the stakeholders. Central or local government as sponsoring agencies (and ultimately tax payers as voters) is a stakeholder for particular organisations and for wider youth services.

In the case of multiple categories of client/customer there is a real management issue about how the value created should be distributed amongst the different clients. For example, are some clients more deserving than others? Questions about rationing amongst competing claims are not easy to answer. The same issue arises in respect of the distribution of added value amongst different stakeholders.

One potential benefit of performance measurement is that it enables managers to draw a clear distinction between who “should” benefit from the added value and who are the beneficiaries. In practice who appropriates the added value and is this a fair/just distribution?

From the questions that have been raised it is readily appreciated that performance measurement for the

purpose of performance management is not the simple mechanistic exercise that is often supposed. What we measure and how we measure has profound implications for how managers of a service carry out their managerial tasks. The measurement system is not neutral with respect what gets done and who will benefit from the pool of added value.

Performance measures are not a substitute for active management. They do not perform the task of management nor do they render managers into automata of the system. Management judgement is heightened as a result of a performance measurement system because problems that require the exercise of judgement are thrown into clearer relief. Where there are not adequate performance measures judgement is everything if decisions are to be made. Where performance measures do exist judgements are better informed.

Performance measures do not make decisions for managers. They are an aid in the decision-making process.

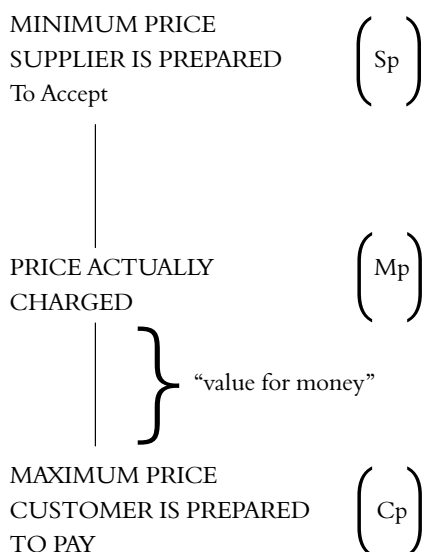
## What is Value?

The basic purpose of management is to create and, thereby, add value to the organisation. Definitions of what constitutes value abound. Clearly, if we are to seek to measure value created, best value, or value for money then it is necessary to have a good idea of what value is and, therefore, what has to be measured and managed.

The most straight forward definition of added value is that it is the difference between the maximum price that a consumer/client is prepared to pay for a service and the minimum price that a supplier is prepared to accept. The differences between these two prices is what is meant by added value. The difference between the price actually charged and the maximum price that the customer is prepared to pay is “value for money” (vfm) or in another context “best value”.

Whilst this definition appears to be deceptively simple, once it is unpacked it provides many clues about what needs to be measured and what needs to be managed.

These ideas can be illustrated as below:



What is the minimum price that the supplier is prepared to accept ( $S_p$ )? Clearly it is that price which will enable the producer to cover all costs, including the costs of capital.

The maximum price that the consumer is prepared to pay ( $C_p$ ) reflects the consumer's perceptions of the benefits that are to be obtained from the service.

How then is value to be managed? The difference between  $S_p$  and  $C_p$  is maximised if costs are minimised and consumers' perceptions of the benefits of the service are heightened.

### **Strategic Cost Management is achieved by:**

- operational efficiency: improvements in input/output ratio
- elimination of waste
- introduction of "activity based costing" (ABC)
- identification of cost drivers and activities
- managing the factors that determine costs
- benchmarking

### **Consumers' Perceptions reflect:**

- the consumption experience
- encounters and moments of truth
- quality of the service
- customer relationship management

### **Principles of Performance Measurement**

The principles of performance measurement are easily remembered as FABRIC. These principles form the basis of the design of an effective performance management system.

- ▶ **FOCUS:** on the organisation's aims and objectives
- ▶ **APPROPRIATE:** the measures must be useful for the stakeholders who are likely to use them
- ▶ **BALANCED:** they should cover the main areas of the organisation's work and not just focus on financial metrics
- ▶ **ROBUST:** they should be able to withstand organisational changes and should not be sensitive to individuals leaving
- ▶ **INTEGRATED:** they should be part of the organisation's business planning and management processes
- ▶ **COST EFFECTIVE:** the benefits accruing to management from using performance metrics should outweigh the costs of collecting and processing the information

## Performance Measures, Indicators and Targets

Often the terms performance measures, performance indicator and performance target are used interchangeably. This can result in confusion. The agreed (reasonably) definitions are:

- ▶ *Performance Measure (PM)* – an unambiguous metric relating an activity to achieved results i.e. a clear input / output relationship. This implies some degree of precision in the measure which is derived from empirical data relating actual performance to managerial actions. The implicit assumption is that such relationships are stable and will continue in the future.
- ▶ *Performance Indicators (PI)* – this is a more ambiguous metric which gives an indirect indication of performance. In practice, performance is dependent not simply upon the relationship between inputs and outputs but upon the prevailing conditions in the service environment. Performance is, therefore, contingent upon a number of external factors, many of which are beyond the control of management. Indicators perform the function as the name suggests of signalling something about performance. They have been described as whistles and bells which indicate that to understand what is happening to performance it is necessary to carry out further investigation.
- ▶ *Performance Targets (PT)* – these metrics are what an organisation aims at. They tend to be precise quantifiable magnitudes which are intended to influence the behaviour of employees. The main problem is that the targets are very often not unambiguously related to outcomes. It is a case of aiming for A whilst hoping for B!

## Some Requirements of a Performance Measurement System

Robust PMs/PIs/PTs are difficult to obtain. The criteria normally used to judge performance metrics are:

- ▶ relevant – does the metric capture success in one of the organisation's objectives?
- ▶ avoidance of unwanted behaviour – does the metric create perverse incentives that result in unwanted behaviour?
- ▶ attributable – is it clear who is accountable for doing something about influencing the metric?
- ▶ non-ambiguous – is the metric unambiguous – is it well defined – is it understood – is it acceptable by others (employees) as a measure / indicator of performance?
- ▶ timely – does it produce information on time that can be actioned?
- ▶ comparable – can the metric be used to allow comparisons with other relevant metrics over time and across space?
- ▶ verifiable – can the data and the underlying input / output relations be verified?

When judged against these criteria many performance metrics are found wanting. Nevertheless, provided that their limitations are well known they do perform the function of informing management judgements.

## Value for Money Auditing

The National Audit Office established a vfm auditing framework in the 1990s which has become the established model.

A distinction is drawn between:

*Inputs* – the resources used to produce the service i.e. staff, materials, capital, etc

*Outputs* – the service provided to the public in terms of actions and results achieved

*Outcomes* – the actual impact of the service – that which is valued by the various stakeholders

These concepts – Inputs/Outputs/Outcomes – are linked through “the three Es” of the vfm audit framework:

*Economy* – acquiring inputs of a suitable quality at least cost (spending less)

*Efficiency* – producing the maximum output for the minimum inputs whilst maintaining quality standards e.g. “cost per unit of activity” (spending well and doing things well)

*Effectiveness* – achieving the stated outcome(s) of the organisation (strategic objectives). Is the service actually achieving what it is set up to achieve? (spending wisely and doing the right thing)

These can be brought together into cost effectiveness measures. How much does it cost to achieve a specified level of effectiveness?

When devising performance metrics it is useful to keep in mind the following:

- ▶ determine who the performance measures are for. Which stakeholders or combination of stakeholders are interested in them?
- ▶ measure what is to be valued – don’t just value what is measured. That which can be easily measured is not necessarily the most relevant metric. Beware that the measurable can drive out the immeasurable and that, what gets measured tends to get done. This means that often the most important dimensions of performance get ignored because they are difficult to measure.
- ▶ because some items are difficult to measure this can result in resources becoming skewed to those areas that are measured. This results in an imbalanced service.

## **Balanced scorecard**

The many imbalances created by simplistic performance management systems can be minimised using scorecard systems such as the balanced scorecard (BSC). The BSC was introduced by Kaplan and Norton (see ‘Licking the Balanced Scorecard to Strategy’, California Management Review, July 1996).

The balanced scorecard enables an organisation to align their resources and their goals. It needs to be tied into the overall strategy and is a means of translating vision and strategy into a set of comprehensive performance metrics. The BSC is more than a measurement system – it is a management system. By providing feedback from a number of different dimensions of performance it contributes to continuous improvement by enabling *organisational learning*.

The BSC suggests that we view the organisation from four perspectives:

- ▶ the learning and growth perspective
- ▶ the business process perspective
- ▶ the customer perspective
- ▶ the financial perspective

The BSC builds on many key concepts that have been recently introduced into modern management practice. These include:

- ▶ total quality management (TQM)
- ▶ customer defined quality
- ▶ continuous improvement
- ▶ employee empowerment

An example of a balanced scorecard as it applies to youth work is in the paper by Tom Wylie ‘Outcomes in Youth Services’.

## **What Next?**

These notes serve as a brief introduction to the foundations of performance measurement. The next thing to do is to operationalise them by creating a set of metrics and processes that will provide you with management information to enable you to move to a higher level of performance.

The questions that need to be considered are:

1. What are your organisation’s strategic objectives?
2. What values shape the behaviours in your organisation?
3. What are the outputs and outcomes of your organisation / department?
4. What are the principal metrics that reflect:
  - efficiency
  - effectiveness
  - cost effectiveness?
5. What metrics would you use to populate the balanced scorecard?
6. What would you need to do to create a learning organisation?

## **What is performance measurement?**

- ▶ Actual behaviour compared to some target
- ▶ Comparisons with an absolute target
- ▶ Comparisons between similar units
  - Hospitals
  - Local Governments
  - Relative Performance
- ▶ Comparison with own behaviour over time (trends)

- ▶ Performance Measurement
  - Performance Indicators
- ▶ Performance of Departments
  - Performance of Individuals
- ▶ Internal Performance
  - External Performance

### **Purpose of performance indicators**

- ▶ USED FOR INTERNAL MANAGEMENT
  - planning – looking ahead – what do we wish to achieve?
  - reviewing – looking back – what did we achieve?
  - benchmarking – how do we compare?
- ▶ USED TO INFORM DECISION MAKERS
  - justification for resource bids
  - basis for accountability
- ▶ USED TO INFORM THE PUBLIC
  - demonstrate value for money
- ▶ USED TO INFORM EXTERNAL WATCHDOGS

### **Benefits of a pi/pm system**

- ▶ Measurement focuses minds on improvements
- ▶ Measurement triggers curiosity/investigation
- ▶ Measurement identifies problems/issues
- ▶ Measurement aids learning
- ▶ Measurement gives “voice”

### **Value for money**

#### **3Es**

- ▶ Economy
  - spending less
- ▶ Efficiency
  - spending well – doing things well
- ▶ Effectiveness
  - spending wisely – doing the right thing

#### **Beyond the 3Es**

- ▶ Equity
- ▶ Excellence
- ▶ Entrepreneurship

- ▶ Effort
- ▶ Empowerment
- ▶ Expertise
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Europe
- ▶ Electability

### Characteristics of performance indicators

- ▶ they are directly related to strategy
- ▶ they use many non financial measures
- ▶ they vary between geographical locations
- ▶ they change over time as needs change
- ▶ they are simple and easy to use
- ▶ they provide fast feedback to operators and managers
- ▶ they are intended to foster improvement rather than just monitor

## Appendix 1

<b>MEASURES FOR MEASURES CRITERIA FOR GOOD PERFORMANCE MEASURES</b>	
<b>Evaluate each measure to see if it is:</b>	<b>If so, then it will be:</b>
Objective-linked	Directly related to clearly stated objectives for your programme
Responsibility-linked	Matched to specific organisational units that are responsible for, and capable of, taking action to improve performance
Organisationally acceptable	Valued by all levels in the organisation, used as being “owned” by those accountable for performance
Comprehensive	Inclusive of all aspects of programme performance; for example, measuring quantity but not quality provides incentives to produce quickly, but not well
Credible	Based on accurate and reliable data sources and methods, not open to manipulation or distortion
Cost-effective	Acceptable in terms of cost to collect and process
Compatible	Integrated with existing information systems
Comparable with other data	Useful in making comparisons; for example, performance can be compared from period to period, with peers, to targets
Easy to interpret	Presented graphically and accompanied by commentary

## **Critical success factors for performance indicators**

Performance indicators must be:

- ▶ Relevant and directly related to strategy
- ▶ Timely and change over time as needs change
- ▶ Demonstrate benefits to users for planning, reviewing, comparing
- ▶ Owned
- ▶ Provide feedback and further improvement rather than just monitor
- ▶ Easily understandable and easy to use
- ▶ Accurate
- ▶ Viewed in context and vary between settings

## PAPER 2

# Outcomes in youth services

## Policy contexts

Policy for youth services is not made in a vacuum. It is currently being driven by two key concerns – social exclusion and social capital.

### Social Exclusion

Social exclusion may be defined as ‘what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown’ (SEU 2001).

Poverty and disadvantage have a strong geographical dimension in the UK. Migration by the more affluent from larger cities and towns to suburban or rural living has left concentrations of poorer people in cities where problems are compounded by a declining infrastructure, poor housing and fewer jobs (Bate et al 2000). The most deprived areas of the UK have much higher concentrations of people suffering unemployment, benefit dependency, ill-health and fear of crime than more affluent neighbourhoods (SEU 1998). Persistent poverty creates and sustains educational underachievement and poor health.

Social exclusion operates in different ways. Some factors are particularly prevalent and affect large numbers. Others affect fewer people, but have a more intense effect and profound implications for those affected. About 30 per cent of the population are on a low income. Approaching 10 per cent suffer significant problems. For example, 10 per cent of 16 – 18 year olds were not in education, training or work in 2001. A fraction of 1 per cent of the population is affected by the most extreme forms of social exclusion such as rough sleeping, teenage pregnancy, or exclusion from school (SEU 2001).

Education is particularly crucial. The children of the poor do worse at school. This attainment gap is evident from an early age; persists throughout compulsory schooling; is widening; and is reflected in access to higher education. Low attainment is a powerful predictor of subsequent life chances and labour market opportunities, creating a cycle of disadvantage that is difficult to break. A pattern of worklessness in early adulthood and thereafter often reflects lack of skill: poor formal qualifications; some personal barriers such as drug misuse. The vagaries of local labour markets compound the personal vulnerabilities of individuals (Bynner et al 2002).

Certain types of risky health behaviour reinforce social exclusion, but are also partly a consequence of being socially excluded. Problem drug use, for example, is associated with low educational attainment and school exclusion, family disruption and social deprivation (Lloyd C 1998). Many drug users typically suffer from multiple problems, including homelessness. Drug use is becoming normalised among the young and serious drug dependency is prevalent in young offenders (Hammonsley et al 2003).

Young people displaying risky behaviour who have multiple and entrenched problems are often referred to as having chaotic lifestyles. They often had low levels of attendance at school and have low levels of basic literacy. They can be particularly hard to engage and help. Young people are not just individuals: their life-course trajectories are also shaped by their families, their neighbourhoods and by their peer groups.

## **Social Capital**

Social capital refers to those features of neighbourhoods and social organisations “such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit” (Putnam 1995). Social networks have value: who people know, and what they do for each other result in levels of trust, reciprocity, information, and co-operation. Social capital is to some extent a measurable phenomenon: it can be seen in exchanges of information, in collective action and in identification with groups – a ‘we’ mentality rather than an ‘I’ mentality. In a study of the performance of local governments in Italy after their introduction in 1970, Putnam concluded that ‘the stock of social capital in a region, for example as measured by the density of citizens’ participation in such community organisations as choral societies, and soccer leagues, turned out to be the best predictor of local government performances.’ This performance was measured in terms of ‘...day care programmes and job-training centres, promoting investment and economic development, pioneering environmental standards and family clinics...’

Communities with high levels of social capital function better than those without. The concept of ‘community vibrancy’ is currently proposed by the Countryside Agency as a reflection of ‘opportunities for shared activities (that) make an important contribution to and/or reflects community cohesion and vitality’ (Countryside Agency, 2001).

Those regions where citizens were traditionally engaged by public issues, where social and political networks were organised horizontally, not hierarchically, and where social issues were perceived to be everybody’s business, not just the responsibility of those in power, were found to correlate strongly with higher local levels of community participation and trust than those where these were thought to be somebody else’s problem (Putnam 1995). This has important implications for policy; for the way services are provided; and for how political and social institutions are organised.

Groups and inter-personal connections can play an important role in linking individual young people with each other, across generations and within wider community. But not all groups are benign: a gangland culture can be the dark side of social capital. An important task for youth work is to build positive neighbourhoods in which young people are enabled to play a full part. Such building requires long-term investment.

## **Outcomes, Indicators and Strategies**

Young people expect to benefit from their engagement in youth work. Youth workers and their managers wish to know that their work is worthwhile and is contributing to young people’s development.

Government, both local and national, expects youth work to be able to demonstrate its effectiveness, often in terms of outcomes for young people and their communities.

In this context, we may define the key terms as follows:

- ▶ Outcomes (sometimes results or goals) are statements of well-being for young people.
- ▶ Indicators are numeric measures that help to quantify the achievement of an outcome.

As Peter Jackson has done in the accompanying paper, a distinction can be made between Performance Indicators and Performance Measures:

‘Performance indicators (PI) are observable changes or criteria that suggest certain types of performance are taking place. PIs are likened to signals that require further contextual information before a satisfactory explanation can be offered. Examination results are taken as an indicator of a school’s overall performance, but will require more information to tell you whether a school is doing as well as it should.’

Performance measures (PM) are a type of performance indicator, which show an unambiguous causal link between an activity and a change in performance. You can draw an analogy with dials on a machine that give a clear reading about what is happening, such as your speed when driving or the amount of electricity consumed over a given period. It is the undeniable output of a particular input and process – in this case the conversion of fuel to energy.’ (Ford et al 2002).

In respect of work with young people, general outcomes:

- ▶ Need to be stated positively and clearly e.g. ‘Young people choose healthy behaviours’
- ▶ Should be developmental in tone ‘All young people can....’ rather than focusing on negatives.
- ▶ Should encourage interdependent and collaborative action
- ▶ Should be measurable by standard indicators and hence be comparable over time and between locations. For example:

Children are Ready for School

- Rate of Childhood Lead Poisoning or Asthma
- Rate of Participation in Preschool programmes

Young People Succeed in School

- School Attendance Rate
- Academic Attainment
- Rate of Student Exclusions
- Percent of students with Special Education plans

No single indicator is a ‘keystone’. Just as people are multidimensional, so is community well-being. Rather than investing too much energy in single indicators, paying attention to patterns of multiple indicators is more important (Hogan et al 2002). All indicators and measures need to be viewed in context: there are often explanations for particular results. Performance indicators are an aid to judgment, not a substitute for it.

## Outcomes expected by government

In its green paper *Every Child Matters*, the government identified five key outcomes for children and young people:

- ▶ **being healthy:** enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle

- ▶ **staying safe:** being protected from harm and neglect and growing up able to look after themselves
- ▶ **enjoying and achieving:** getting the most out of life and developing broad skills for adulthood
- ▶ **making a positive contribution:** to the community and to society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour
- ▶ **economic well-being:** overcoming socio-economic disadvantages to achieve their full potential in life.

Turning from these general expectations to the outcomes of particular services, in its landmark document “Resourcing Excellent Youth Services”, it noted that “only the youth service has as its primary purpose the personal and social development of young people” (DfES, 2002). It went on to identify a set of specific requirements on local authorities. In this document and subsequent guidance it said local authorities should target their youth services on the 13-19 age range and aim to be in contact with (‘reach’) 25 per cent of this population each year and secure the participation of 15 per cent in youth work programmes. Of those participating, 60 per cent should secure a recorded outcome and 30 per cent an accredited outcome. To achieve these ends, local authorities would need to maintain a balanced range of provision, deploy appropriately trained and qualified staff and have a capacity to respond to new demands and needs of young people.

## The place of youth work

Youth work offers particular ways of learning characterised by processes which encourage personal and social development through voluntary participation in programmes which not only respond to what they want (music, sport etc), but also address their needs and issues of importance if they are to secure a positive place within the wider society. It has often focused its endeavours on the more disadvantaged. What it offers is based on analysis not only of an individual’s personal and social development but also wider social issues – the skills and knowledge needed for their longer-term health or employment, including basic skills in literacy and numeracy; the power of groups and communities to insert limiting contours around an individual’s growth.

As has been noted above, ‘a significant minority of young people are losing out in multiple ways. Youth policy invariably places a key emphasis on maintaining and promoting inclusion, but this is most explicit when it is ‘problem oriented; rather than ‘opportunity oriented’. Yet when we look at young adults who have navigated youth transitions most successfully, it is relatively easy to discover that they have benefited from what might be called a ‘package of entitlement’ – within which a good education remains paramount, but not exclusively so. The package also includes strong parental and family support, access to information and new information technologies (and the ability to make use of them constructively), away from home experiences (including foreign travel), and other opportunities and experiences. Much of this has been acquired almost organically, without much need for public support. Yet some young people, significantly those who are anyway most at risk, struggle to access such opportunities. They have simply not been available.’ (Williamson 2002).

It is not, however, simply the availability of opportunities and experiences, but the quality and attributes engendered through them that help build a capacity for life management in the economy and civil society. Youth work’s broad curriculum goals include helping young people to explore the issues which affect them; to make responsible choices; to encourage social interaction and compassion; to promote self-acceptance through offering positive feedback; to act on their understanding (Merton and Wylie 2002).

It encourages young people to become agents in managing their own lives – an increasingly important task if

they are to be more than passive recipients of education, health or justice systems.

## **Outcomes for individuals in youth work**

Such broad goals need to be expressed in a set of more specific outcomes for individuals if they are to be helpful in planning and in practice. The more clearly the ends are identified, the better the means for achieving them can be.

What might one expect a personally and socially developed person to be? What capacities would we expect a 19-year-old to display? They should at least be able to do the following:

- ▶ Function independently and effectively at home, school/college, at work and in the community;
- ▶ Make informed choices and decisions and take responsibility for their consequence including planning for their own futures;
- ▶ Express themselves clearly and vividly;
- ▶ Use their initiative to tackle problems and social issues;
- ▶ Apply what they know, understand and can do in different situations;
- ▶ Establish and maintain positive relationships with peers and family and respect the lifestyles and values of others; and
- ▶ Demonstrate the skills and attitudes needed to make an active contribution to their community's cohesion and development (Merton and Wylie 2002).

The nature of the curriculum development to achieve such ends in youth work is introduced in “Towards a contemporary curriculum in youth work” (Merton and Wylie 2002).

## **Service-Level Outcomes for Youth Work**

Such outcomes for individuals are sought within the many different kinds of units which engage in youth work. Working in such units will have their own specific goals and identify the activities and outcomes which are appropriate for particular individuals and different settings. This paper does not attempt to identify possible outcomes at the unit level.

Youth work covers a wide range of activities and services. No single outcome measure or indicator can be expected to capture provision as diverse as youth counselling, voluntary action, youth centres, youth arts; or for such a wide and diverse age cohort; and across the variations associated with social/economic location.

Moreover, the specific benefits of youth work interventions can be hard to disaggregate from overall maturation and socialisation processes, the quality and nature of schooling and the local economic and social environment. These considerations point to the need to have specific policy impact assessment of particular interventions and programmes.

The table over page proposes key youth work inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes at the level of a total service, not primarily that of an individual unit or of specific programmes.

PAPER 2 – Outcomes in youth services

<b>Inputs and Processes</b> (by Youth Services)	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Outcomes</b> (for young people)
Youth Services: facilities, funding and staffing based on needs identification.	<p>Range, quality and scale of youth provision based on ‘Pledge’ and ‘Standards’ published by DfES</p> <p>£ devoted to different forms of youth work, including innovation and citizenship.</p> <p>per cent of sessions rated by Ofsted as satisfactory or better for young people participating.</p>	Quantitative participation rates in youth services and qualitative feedback by young people on learning gained.
Range of experiences offered for personal and social development	per cent young people in cohort engaging in personal development via music, sport, adventure, drama, international exchange, personal development programmes	per cent of those who participate who demonstrate learning in decision-making; planning and teamwork; relationships formation and development; self-efficacy and coping skills
Providing specific learning programmes in basic skills, financial literacy and social skills e.g. NYA-NSF programmes or ‘Getting Connected’	<p>Number of young people engaging in focussed learning programmes on life skills</p> <p>per cent who make gains in learning and secure accredited achievement</p>	<p>per cent of participants who demonstrate learning in specific competences.</p> <p>per cent who re-engage in more formal education or training or employment</p>
<p>Securing a range of opportunities for civil engagement and voluntary action</p> <p>Structures, resources and processes for involving young people in decision-making.</p>	<p>per cent of young people in cohort participating in voluntary and community organisations and engaging in decision-making activity within them.</p> <p>Number of young people developing own peer-led activities and organisations.</p> <p>Evidence of policy change affecting young people for better.</p>	<p>Numbers demonstrating enhanced ability to advocate for selves or others; to exercise rights and choices.</p> <p>Numbers demonstrating involvement in civil society organisations and enhanced skills in decision-making and action.</p>
Providing information on various topics, support systems and statutory bodies	Use of variety of media to communicate with young people.	<p>Numbers demonstrating capacity to access and use information and social networks.</p> <p><i>continued on pages 23</i></p>

Supporting young people on choices.	<p>Number of different access points for information, advice and counselling.</p> <p>Number of staff trained to help young people access information.</p>	
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## Youth work's contribution to wider social policies

Youth work also contributes to areas of wider social policies. It does this through its involvement alongside other partners in schools, Connexions service, youth offending and through making available youth work's distinctive contribution of group association, individual support and non-formal learning. Such learning often focuses on social and emotional competence as expressed, for example, in 'Getting Connected' (NIACE/NYA 2002) and 'Step It Up' (Youthlink, May 2003). In such contexts the targets and outcomes are shared across various partners – see below – and youth work will need to identify its specific contribution, often with associated outcomes.

Theme	Target
Employment 16 – 24 years	High participation rates
Those not in Education, Employment and Training aged 16 – 18 years	Low Numbers
Health-related behaviour	Specific targets in respect of young people's sexual, mental and drug-related health
Attainment at school and beyond	National Learning Targets. Basic Skills targets
Exclusion from school	Lower – and re-entry to learning
Crime	Reduction in numbers offending and incarcerated.
Active Citizenship	Numbers involved in voluntary action programmes, youth councils etc, elections.
Homelessness	Reduced street and hidden homelessness

## Into Practice

Various tools contribute to the implementation of an outcomes-led approach within youth work. These include:

- ▶ Long-term planning
- ▶ Quantitative thinking – using data as an energiser, to propel reflective and evidence-based practice

- ▶ Funding which is sustained and focused on outcomes
- ▶ Co-governance at local level across sectors and which involves young people in design and delivery of services and programmes
- ▶ Focussed energy by personnel at all levels on achieving outcomes. Such focusing will include the development of particular programmes targeted on specific themes (Murphy et al 2002). But it also requires attention to the building of overall capacity with individuals, units and the service overall and the identification of a particular set of developmental experiences, usually with associated assessment (see Merton and Wylie 2002).

## The balanced score-card

The outcomes sought for young people need to be blended with those for the management and financing of a service to produce a balanced score-card by which managers can take a comprehensive overview of the work. As Peter Jackson suggests in the accompanying paper, such a scorecard has various components. As applied to youth services, the elements of such a score-card could include:

- ▶ Involvement in Learning and Development
  - Percentage of 11 to 25 cohort reached
  - Percentage of 13 to 19 cohort reached
  - Numbers of different young people participating in a particular ‘project’ or ‘service’ and specific developmental experiences (arts, outdoors etc)
  - Numbers gaining recorded outcomes and accredited awards
- ▶ Financial perspectives
  - £ spent on service overall
  - £ spent per head of target population (and other forums of unit costs)
  - £ support to voluntary and community sector
  - £ spent on diversification/non youth centre based provision
  - £ secured from external sources
  - Capital investment per annum
- ▶ Business process/operating perspectives
  - Full-time equivalent staff per head of target youth population(s)
  - Hours of face-to-face work per worker, per £
  - Number of new initiatives successfully introduced
  - Number of qualified staff
  - Staff training days provided and average per staff member
- ▶ The customer perspective
  - Percentage of units/services meeting specified standards
  - Percentage of ‘projects’ with user board or similar
  - Percentage of projects securing structured feedback from users or clients
  - Percentage of users judging services good/very good
  - Percentage of projects securing staff consultation in structured way

## The national architecture for effective youth services

Attention to outcomes is only one aspect of performance management. In its document ‘Resourcing

Excellent Youth Services', the DfES created a new architecture for youth services in England (DfES 2002). The document sets out the duty on local authorities to secure an adequate and sufficient Youth Service, in partnership with the voluntary sector and young people themselves. It specifies standards and levels of provision which have to be met everywhere in England by 2005. It sets out Performance Indicators and arrangements for quality assurance, backed up by external inspection by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). This ground-breaking government document addresses the issues of social inclusion for young people, particularly those who may not be achieving in formal education, and shows how their self-understanding and active citizenship may be advanced through youth work. It establishes a national framework within which local authorities and voluntary organisations can most effectively operate and indicates how systemic performance towards achieving outcomes can best be managed.

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## Paper 3

# Examples of evaluation reports on how youth work meets national priorities

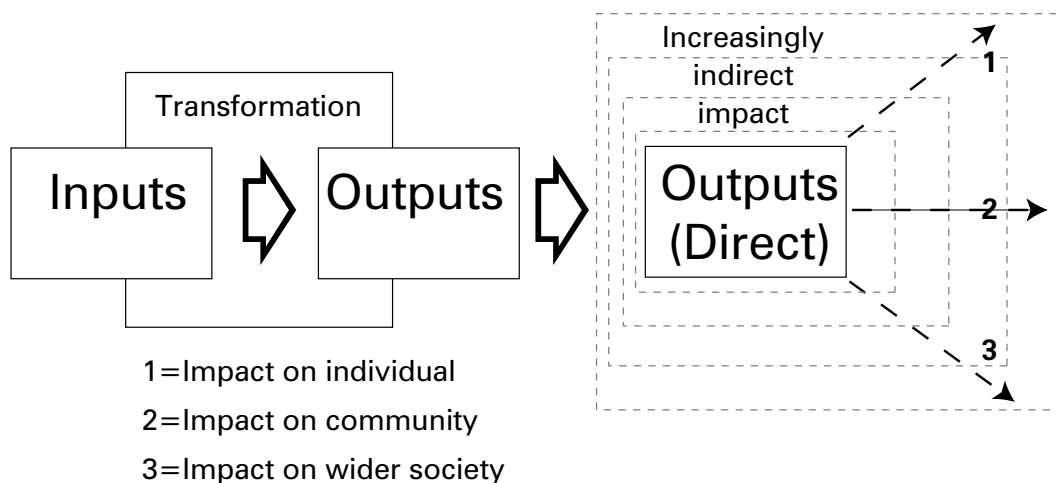
Carolyn Oldfield

### Introduction

A growing evidence and practice base demonstrates the ways in which youth services and youth work contributes to priorities set by government. Youth services provide or contribute to programmes addressing a range of issues and concerns, including raising achievement, tackling anti-social behaviour and crime, promoting healthy lifestyles, building community cohesion and promoting citizenship and community engagement. Youth work approaches are central to a wide range of inter-agency initiatives, as demonstrated by the demand for professionally trained youth workers in sectors such as health, community safety, schools and further education colleges, advice and guidance, and libraries. This paper draws together some recent evaluation and research findings on the impact and outcomes of youth work. Where sources are identified, the information has been provided by the organisation themselves.

### Outcome to impact

Kevin Ford suggests that youth work needs to be clearer about the multi-faceted nature of impact, as shown in the diagram below



*fpm*

Youth work is getting better at measuring its outputs and its direct outcomes, such as young peoples' achievement.

As the spotlight moves to outcomes which are further from control (increasingly indirect) it is increasingly difficult to measure impact. Even if it can be measured, it may be difficult to demonstrate a clear connection between youth work and the outcome that is measured. When it comes to measuring impact on communities as a whole, it can become hard to demonstrate how the work of a youth work organisation has led to the results seen. Ways forward include social auditing, assessing changes in "social capital", reviewing the perceptions in the community.

## **Raising achievement**

Research into alternative education commissioned by the DfES reviewed six Education Initiatives, including one predominantly staffed by youth workers (5 out of 7 staff). This had a strong focus on accreditation, particularly through ASDAN. Comments from staff and students included:

*'I was fortunate enough to come last year and see the prize giving day. Some of the young people that gained certificates, had never had anything in their lives and never been told they were good at anything. It was brilliant, just looking at their faces tells you enough, its like 'wow, look what I have got' (project staff, member).*

*'Well at school I couldn't be bothered to learn, but here I like coming and so probably it has helped me with my reading and my writing and all that' (young man).*

*'Well, when I left school, they didn't think I would be able to do anything else and that but they have got me a place a sixth form college and everything and I can do my GCSEs again, so it is all looking alright now' (young woman).*

Evaluation highlighted the post-programme support offered by project: 'Another interesting area of pre-college, but post-programme support was available to those youngsters who had been accepted into college at the beginning of the autumn term. These summer programmes ensured that youngsters were not 'lost' over the summer period, prior to them starting college in September. This post-programme support maintained a crucial link with the provision over the summer and was viewed by staff as increasing the likelihood of successful progression on to further education. These were young people who could easily become disengaged over the summer period, six weeks was deemed to be a long time for them not to have anything to do.'

Young people were interviewed on what they liked about the project. The main area was their relationship with staff: 'young people preferred the way in which staff operated by conveying a sense of equality. In terms of reasons for change, eight interviewees attributed change to the fact that staff were 'on the same wavelength', the 'same level'. Half of these interviewees came from an AEI staffed by youth workers, which is perhaps indicative of the profession's approach to working with young people.' (Kendall et al 2003)

Study support – young people's voluntary involvement in out-of-school hour activities – aims to raise young people's achievement and develop their self-esteem and motivation. A survey into the faith work contribution to study support found that youth service involvement broadened the profile of young people involved in study support, since most youth services were working with the most disadvantaged and 'most profoundly non-achieving' young people. Most youth workers were involved in the personal development aspects of

study support, drawing on their youth work training, skills and experience. A previous NFER evaluation of the effectiveness of Study Support had demonstrated the benefits of out-of-school hours learning for academic achievement (The NYA, 2000).

GFS Platform Great Yarmouth adopts a holistic approach to work with young women who are either pregnant or who have children. It offers a range of ante-natal, post-natal, outreach and nursery services, which enable young women to participate in educational and social pursuits that reduce social exclusion. Project also offers sexual health services and education, varied education programme and supported housing. Evaluation concluded that education at the project enables young women, including those who have underachieved at school, to make something of their lives, and that the work undertaken by the project was valued and respected by young women and outside agencies. (Cawthorne and Desira, 2002)

## **Neighbourhood Support Fund: NYA programme**

The NYA NSF supported 98 projects in phase one across England which work with a wide range of young people aged 15+, including disabled young people, young carers and young parents. Each project offered a range of activities, including drama, music and video; IT; peer education; sports and volunteering.

Between July 2000 and September 2003, over 8,000 young people benefited from The NYA programme, with thousands of other young people using the projects for occasional advice and guidance. The NSF programme actively encouraged young people to be involved in directing their own learning. In addition, young people are also members of the project management board and local community forums.

The recognition of young people's informal learning and achievements is integral to the programme. Since April 2002, young people involved have gained almost 4,400 certificates including local youth service and internal project certificates, OCR-OCN accredited awards and Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Almost 5,000 young people have left the projects since the programme began, 62 per cent of whom have progressed onto education, training and employment. 31 per cent of leavers went back into full or part-time education. Over 90 per cent of young people are still in their positive destination 3-6 months after leaving the project.

**Fairbridge** works in partnership with schools to provide programmes to tackle disruptive behaviour and low attendance. The national estimated rate of return for excluded pupils is just one in seven; in 2002 one in two of the young people known to be truants or excluded from school returned to education following involvement with Fairbridge.

## **MITWOW (Moving Into the World of Work), Oldham**

Project aims to fill the gap between mainstream training and create opportunities for disaffected young people, through a team of youth and community workers mentoring young people through individual programmes of support and guidance. It is a 13-week education and learning programme targeting young people aged 16-25. One to one mentoring is used to address the barriers, identified by young people themselves, that have led to

social exclusion and being marginalised. Literacy and numeracy difficulties are addressed, self-esteem raised and skills learnt that allow young people to progress into education, training and employment. Programme has a completion rate of nearly 90 per cent, most young people leave having achieved accreditation, and the regular ‘drop-in’ by young people highlights the impact of the project on their lives.

**Coventry Youth Service – Schools Early Intervention Project.** Interdisciplinary team intervenes in five Coventry schools, targeting years 7 to 9, aiming to reduce offending, exclusion and non-attendance and increase achievement. 80+ young people have been referred to project (+ 500 non-referred young people). Project is considered to be particularly successful in improving students’ ability to understand and manage behaviour, re-engaging young people with learning are strengthening interagency practice, and has had some success in aiding transition from primary school. (NYA 2003b)

**Devon Youth Service – Chances Project.** Project works with disaffected young people within the mainstream education system. It provides a period of ‘time out’ to allow participants to address behavioural and other difficulties and to prepare for reintegration into their schools. Some older pupils (predominantly year 11) stay at Chances until they reach school-leaving age. Funding for 2002-03 comes directly from schools inclusion budgets – £94k for 28 full-time places (£3,917 per head). Out of 120 pupils involved between April 2000 and January 2003, 46 per cent were fully integrated into school, 3 per cent were partially integrated, and 4 per cent had transferred schools. 18 per cent were currently at Chances full-time. 15 per cent had achieved GCSEs before leaving Chances. 9 per cent had been permanently excluded, and 4 per cent had left the project for various reasons.

**Derbyshire Youth Service – Connect 2.** Programme works with 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment or training who have been identified by Connexions Personal Advisers as requiring additional support through the E2E programme, making life skills provision with specific brief to focus on motivation, confidence and self esteem. The Adult Learning inspectorate found that in 2000-01, 96 per cent of (356) learners achieved a positive outcome by progressing into a job with training or into further training opportunities and/or by fulfilling their personal development goals. Retention rate was 89 per cent, described as ‘exceptional’. 241 young people (65 per cent) achieved the targets on their individual development plans. In 2000-01, 37 per cent of learners achieved a recognised qualification. From November 2002 all trainees are offered an opportunity to participate in Youthtrain, an OCN accredited package of learning.

**Liverpool – Speke Young Persons’ Opportunities Project.** Project works with young women and men from the age of 13 who are at risk of being excluded from mainstream education, in order to promote social inclusion through early intervention. It offers educational classes leading to qualifications in business administration and childcare, computing, provides an onsite creche and manages work experience placements. Over a nine-month period, 29 project users gained 72 certificates across 12 categories of qualification. Most participants achieve a 100 per cent attendance rate.

**Cornwall Youth Service – the WILD Project.** Countywide project seeking to improve the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of young parents and their children through targeted learning and support opportunities. The work focuses on increasing confidence and self-esteem, reduction of post-natal illness, and improvement in community involvement and positive parenting, offering one-to-one support and advocacy with disadvantaged young mothers and fathers who have not achieved academically, and their children under 4. Use of Youth Achievements Awards is a central feature. 85 per cent of young parents who stay with the project for more than five months move on to further and higher education, employment, self-employment or voluntary work. Many report involvement in the award schemes as a motivating factor in this process. Learners

also identity participation in WILD as helping them raise their career aspirations – e.g. teacher training rather than classroom assistant, midwifery training rather than care assistant.

**Gloucestershire: ASTRA (Alternative Solutions to Running Away).** Multi-agency initiative managed by Youth and Community Service, providing support, advice and information to young runaways, most aged 14 to 15. Since start of project, number of repeat runaways in city reduced by 60 per cent. Other young people involved with project have modified behaviour – e.g. by contacting project at crisis times, or using keeping safe strategies while away from home. Due to its success, the project has now expanded to cover whole county.

**Cirencester – Step Project.** Project – partnership between Cirencester tertiary college and youth service – aims to provide ‘joined up support’ to the small number of young people with multiple difficulties in what is generally an affluent rural area, through providing confidence building, individual learning needs assessment, basic skills support, IT skills development and access to vocational training. 80 per cent of young people who make more than a single contact with the project have progressed either into employment or into further training. Virtually all have gained confidence and improved self-esteem. For example, two young women felt unable to access training in Gloucester (20 miles away), but gained sufficient confidence through STEP to take up college places. 38 young people have successfully gained employment, 29 have started college courses, 2 have gone to university. 18 have gained an ASDAN bronze award.

## **Crime/anti-social behaviour**

### **National Programmes**

**Positive Futures** – national sports based social inclusion programme managed within the Home Office Drugs Strategy Directorate. Based on the principle that engagement through sport and the building of mutual respect and trust can provide cultural ‘gateways’ to alternative lifestyles, it is currently delivered through 67 project partnerships, with a further 37 due to come on stream. A typical Positive Futures local partnership is made up of 10 statutory and voluntary agencies including Youth Offending Teams, Police, Education Services, schools, Youth Services, and other local bodies. More than 26,000 young people have taken part, with 7,383 currently attending regular activities, approximately 2/3 male, 95 per cent aged 10-16.

Emerging evidence suggests that Positive Futures is impacting positively on three key areas:

- ▶ Young people: It has helped them relate better to others, raised their aspirations, increased their skills and competencies, encouraged change in attitude and increased awareness of their abilities and difficulties;
- ▶ Local community: It has contributed to improving young people’s relationships with adults, to less anti social behaviour and fewer young people hanging around;
- ▶ Partners: It has helped partners to share information, to be more aware of other partners’ work, to be more able to help young people, to have better access to other resources and expertise, and to have better awareness of target group needs.

Evaluation of Positive Futures revealed an important role for youth services and youth work. Youth services are an important partner for delivering the programme, and as a source of referrals of young people, particularly ‘at risk’ young people. A survey of partnerships highlighted the importance of youth work skills. 18 per

cent of those interviewed were youth workers/officers/managers – the single most frequent category. When asked to identify the qualities needed in a good project worker, respondents identified the ability to deal with challenging behaviour and to motivate young people, having personal drive and enthusiasm, understanding young people and having empathy as the most important qualities. Coaching and sporting ability were identified as the least important skills, leading the evaluation to conclude that ‘the role of sport in the project is a subtle one, providing the focus for workers to challenge negative behaviour patterns, motivate young people to channel energies constructively, and help to address their problems with empathy and understanding.’ (Home Office 2003)

**Splash 2002** – over 15,000 young people took part in Summer Splash in 2002, a programme designed to offer young people (most aged 13-17) in deprived areas positive recreational activities during school holidays, and so divert them from crime. The Splash 2002 evaluation report states ‘The Youth Service was a key agency, either as the main delivery agent or in partnership with other deliverers.’ Youth service involvement has increased as ‘there was now greater recognition that schemes for intervention and diversion do not have to conflict with the voluntary ethos of the Youth Service. There is a greater understanding that Splash can enhance the work that is already in progress.’ Total crime in the areas that ran Summer Splash fell by 7.4 per cent from June to August 2002, compared to a 2.9 per cent increase in 2001 during the same period, while juvenile nuisance increased by 0.1 per cent compared to a 13.2 per cent increase in 2001 during the same period. Nearly one million young-person hours were delivered throughout the year, at an average cost of £1.63 per hour of activity.

The expansion of Splash provision to cover more weeks throughout the year has been widely cited by schemes as beneficial in developing and maintaining relationships between workers and young at-risk individuals, and allowing schemes to offer more developmental activities. Some Splash schemes found that the combination of increased worker contact, continuity in provision and developmental activities had long term direct benefits, for example in encouraging young people to return to education or find employment. The report concludes that ‘It is unlikely that every young person found their behaviours and attitudes to have significantly changed after attending a Splash event, but there is a wealth of individual examples where the schemes are shown to have a real impact on the lives of at-risk young people.’ (Splash National Support Team, 2003)

## **Local initiatives**

**Hampshire Youth Service- Award Project:** project piloting Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scheme with young offenders and young people at risk of offending. The project worked with a total of 173 young people – 33 received certificates (reflecting 13 weeks of activity). Comparison of reoffending rates, through comparing final warnings received by group members with a sample group of final warnings from the previous year found that group members received less than 1 per cent, compared to 23 per cent for the previous year’s sample. (NYA, 2003b)

**Dudley Youth Service – BLAST:** summer programme with year 11s who have no clear idea about future training or work routes. Over 100 young people completed activities and achieved challenges through Youth Achievement Awards. 73 progressed to further education, 14 into vocational training, 5 into full-time employment. Six young people were still undecided, but still in contact with project workers. Youth Work and Youth Crime (NYA, 2003b)

**North Yorkshire – Youth Service Alternative Trip:** diversionary activities involving 95 young people aged

11+ during half-term and holidays. Police reported a 50 per cent reduction in nuisance behaviour during 2001 half-term compared to the previous year. (NYA, 2003b)

**Lambeth Youth Council:** is run by young people aged 11 to 24 for young people and exists to highlight issues of concern to young people; allow young people to influence policies that affect them; make a difference by initiating special projects; and train young people to make a positive effect in their communities. Specific initiatives are focusing on:

- ▶ teenage pregnancy – developing plans for PSHE lessons, using peer education. The borough's teenage pregnancy coordinator has funded a full-time post to take forward this work
- ▶ stop and search – through which members have developed materials and workshops to train police officers on how to conduct stop and searches sensitively. The project's work on Stop and Search has received national recognition. In June 2003, the Metropolitan Police awarded the youth council £20,000 to develop a stop and search training video for distribution to police forces across England.

**Angels in Exile Youth Project,** an estate based project targeting young people aged 11 to 16. It offers a range of sessions from Fridays to Mondays, including drop-in youth centre, alcohol education and skateboarding. The project has run for five years, has contributed to breaking cycle of anti-social behaviour, through consistent work with young people, short term targeting of specific problems e.g. working with 400 young people during summer holidays to divert them from skateboarding in unsuitable areas, resulting in reduction of police time taken up with dealing with complaints. Around 250 young people are involved, including a group of around 20 senior members who now play a significant part in the leadership and running of the project. (NYA, 2003a)

**Nuneaton and Bedworth summer programme,** targeting young people aged 11 to 25 perceived by the community as a nuisance in 'hotspot' areas, contacting 70+ each day. Young people were consulted about desired facilities, e.g. youth shelters. Specific outcomes: During July and August 2001 there were 349 crimes committed in Nuneaton and Bedworth by offenders aged 8 to 24 (where offender age is known). In July and August 2002 the comparative figure was 207. Fewer crimes were committed by 14 to 16-year-olds. Almost all categories of crime fell, particularly vehicle crime, burglary, shoplifting – which fell by 60 per cent among 8-24 year olds. (NYA, 2003a)

**Tameside Youth Service – PODS initiative:** Joint youth service/police project started in 1997 in response to complaints about young people causing nuisance. Eight steel cabins – one in each township – are located in areas identified by the police as having high rates of nuisance and police call-outs. Each POD can accommodate 15 to 20 young people, and is staffed by youth workers. They offer a full range of youth work curricular opportunities, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Youth Achievement Awards and residential work, to young people in areas where there is otherwise no youth provision. PODS were originally intended to remain in each area for three to six months, but this has been extended to up to a year, and an exit strategy is developed. Youth workers also work with both young people and local residents to improve relationships, for instance by supporting practical projects bringing together young people and adults. Police records confirm the success of PODS in reducing complaints about youth nuisance and anti-social behaviour, with an average drop of around 30%. The initiative won the British Community Safety Awards in 2000.

**Mentoring Plus (Crime Concern):** year long mentoring and development programme for groups of 15 to 25 young offenders and young people excluded from school, first developed at Dalston Youth Project, then rolled out to other locations. External evaluation of DYP has found that benefits for young people completing the programme include:

- ▶ reduced delinquency: levels of offending amongst the young people who completed the first programme at DYP decreased by more than 60 per cent, compared to an increase of nearly 240 per cent among those attending only the residential course;
- ▶ educational/vocational progress: almost three-quarters of participants on the first two programmes secured full-time education or training places or a job;
- ▶ enhanced personal qualities (self-esteem and sense of direction) and social skills: this included a marked improvement in the relationships with their families.

**Bristol Youth Service – Southmead Youth Project:** runs broad range of initiatives including music project and award-winning sports development initiative, established to engage young people at risk of drug taking . It focuses on locally agreed sport development action plans, involving the police, health authorities, social services and local residents. Sports project had impact on crime figures, with a 3 per cent increase in crime replaced by a 15 per cent drop, with juvenile arrests reduced by 43 per cent. (Cabinet Office press release 17/4/2000)

## Health issues

*Preventing drug use.* Research into drugs prevention through youth work concluded that ‘The youth service is well placed to deliver drugs prevention interventions because of its privileged access to young people. With appropriate training, youth workers can offer the capacity for reaching and working with ‘hard-to-reach’ groups of young people, including those experimenting with or currently using drugs.’ It found that for most young people, ‘drugs education and drugs interventions may be best delivered as a component of generic youth service provision....Taken together, both non-centre based and centre-based projects are likely to be most efficient as mechanisms for the delivery of drugs prevention as a component of generic youth work, with drugs specific projects targeted to young people at ‘high risk’ of problematic drug use or currently involved in drug use. Outreach projects may be most likely to be effective when specifically targeting those using drugs and those in need of advice associated with their drug use rather than as a means of primary drugs prevention among young people in general’. (Ward and Rhodes, 2001)

*Sex and relationships education.* An Ofsted report noted that ‘Schools generally make good use of support from a wide range of individuals and agencies when planning and teaching Sex and Relationship Education. Nurses, general practitioners, health promotion units, LEA staff, theatre-in-education teams, youth workers and peer-education teams all make significant contributions. The involvement of these external agencies can give the pupils access to a wealth of experience and expertise, new resources and different approaches to learning.’ (Ofsted, 2002)

## Specific initiatives

**The Tic-Tac Centre at Paignton Community College, Torbay,** was identified by Ofsted as an example of effective practice providing ‘excellent support and guidance for pupils’ The centre aims to ‘provide a service that: focuses on teenagers’ needs and includes counselling, listening and health information; is relevant to teenagers’ needs and is easily accessible, confidential and non-judgmental; and is user-friendly, promoting health in a friendly atmosphere. The centre is staffed by a multi-disciplinary team of general practitioners, practice and school nurses, health visitors and other health and youth workers, all effectively co-ordinated by an experienced youth worker.

During TIC-TAC's second year, the staff provided over 1,300 consultations compared with 592 in the previous year. There were a further 6,000 drop-in visits. Consultations have covered a range of issues, including body image and eating disorders, relationships (including bullying), sexual health (including contraceptive advice and services) and general health and well-being. The centre's facilities are being used as much by boys as by girls. Without exception, pupils are very positive about the centre. They are confident that they can go and talk to someone if there is a need. They feel good about being able to discuss matters with adults who do not make judgements about them.' (Ofsted, 2002)

**Nottingham Outreach Contraception and Sexual Health Projects.** Projects based at three local youth centres, through a partnership between city youth service or voluntary sector youth project, and Nottingham City Primary Care Trust. They offer an informal drop in, health education provided by youth work staff, and access to specialist advice on sexual health issues, as well as confidential support and quick referral pathways from specialist nurses. Projects are based in areas with of significant disadvantage, the 14th highest unplanned pregnancy rate in England and high rates of STIs. Since the start of the projects, conception rate for under-18s across the city has reduced by 15 per cent.

## **Community cohesion**

**Young Leaders in the Community:** programme is £1.2 million apprenticeship scheme funded by DfES as demonstration project, delivered as partnership between Connexions Black Country, Community Education Development Centre and youth service. It provides the first stage towards a professional qualification in community work and high-quality work experience for young people as well as supporting voluntary groups. The three-year programme was launched in 2002 with 39 young leaders. Participants undertake two days a week training, and spend the rest of the time on placements working with a range of local community and voluntary groups. 90 per cent achieved NVQ Levels 2 or 3 and 29 went on to further employment or training.

**Bradford Youth Teams:** The Youth Team programme has been developed to train and equip a team of young adults aged 18-25 years, who work full-time in areas of greatest need throughout Bradford to develop activities for younger people. The trainees gain experience and qualifications over two years to use as a stepping stone to university/college or employment. The initiative was developed through the city's strategy to reduce youth crime and involve young people in the regeneration of their communities. Each Youth Team works across estates and communities drawing young people together into activities, sharing experiences and breaking down boundaries.

## **Citizenship and community engagement**

**Millennium Volunteers.** An evaluation of Millennium Volunteers (MV) – the UK-wide volunteering programme for young people aged 16 to 24 -commissioned by the DfES concluded it has succeeded in attracting young people with no previous experience of volunteering, offering a mix of variety and quality of opportunities, and recognising and rewarding volunteers. Young people had benefited from their involvement in MV, with over 80 per cent citing increased confidence and sensitivity to the needs of others. Most MVs believed that they had gained transferable skills, and two-thirds thought that MV had increased their chances of employment. Almost all – 95 per cent – described their experience as enjoyable. They also valued the personal recognition of the programme.

Youth ownership was seen as an important defining principle of MV, and the evaluation noted that this was most successful in projects with a youth service background, which were more comfortable with youth-led approaches than those from more traditional volunteer placement backgrounds. (DfES, 2002)

**Staffordshire – Speakout.** SpeakOut is Staffordshire County Council’s process for consulting and involving young people on county issues and encouraging young people’s participation in community action. Speakout has interlinked youth councils at county, district and in some districts, at area levels. Specific issue youth action groups are set up wherever young people need them so they can make an impact on their community. As a result of Speakout, the council has allocated £400k to create e-magine centres in each district of the County. Other outcomes include a successful campaign for changes to bus route and reinstatement of school bus, improved relations between police and young people, establishment of under-18 discos, provision of a youth shelter and creation of two skate parks.

**Worcestershire – Youthcomm.** Multimedia project offering a free confidential telephone information, resource and support line (Youthline), 24/7 internet radio station, live fm broadcasts in the field, interactive website and sophisticated text messaging service for young people aged 11 to 20 in Worcestershire. The three elements of the service are operated by trained young volunteers aged 16+. The project aims to reduce rural isolation and promote integration of young people in both urban and rural communities, involve young people in managing the project, enable young volunteers to gain qualifications, and provide opportunities to ‘showcase’ young people’s creative talents.

## Conclusions

From the above selection of evaluation and practice examples, it is evident that youth work is making a valuable contribution to a range of policy objectives. Professionals in allied sectors – including formal education, the police and HM inspectorates – as well as the wider community, attest to the value of youth work approaches within inter-disciplinary partnerships, particularly in engaging those young people described as ‘hard to reach’, whose experience of other agencies may be predominantly negative. Through their engagement in youth work which is responsive to their individual circumstances and needs, and which regards them as equal partners in learning, young people return to education, gain greater insight into and ability to manage their own behaviour, and re-engage with local communities.

## Reading list

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