Positive for Youth discussion papers
July 2011

Introduction

In the months up to July 2011 the Department for Education published a number of discussion papers on youth issues.[1] In July it published an *Overarching narrative for the youth policy statement.*[2] **The narrative paper brings together the themes of the individual discussion papers.**

This briefing paper summarises the overarching narrative, then sets out the key points of the discussion papers that relate to young people and the voluntary and community youth sector (VCYS). It includes details of the questions which the papers invite discussion on. It is intended to inform our members and help them to respond to the discussion papers.

Cross-Government policy statement on services for young people

The Department for Education is developing a new cross-Government policy statement on services for young people aged 13-19 which will build on the outcomes from the Positive for Youth summit.[3] There will also be a cross-department strategy on how to maximise the participation of 16-24 year olds and tackle the long-term consequences of young people not in education, employment or training. These will be published in the autumn.

The Government has worked with stakeholders to co-produce a series of themed discussion papers. The *Overarching narrative* brings together all the issues from the individual discussion papers. It recognises that young people's experiences outside formal learning "crucial in enabling them to form and pursue their ambitions and prepare them for adult life."

The Government welcomes comments and views on the issues and questions set out in these papers. The papers also ask for examples of good practice or innovative delivery of services for young people. NCVYS is working with our members to produce a response to the statement – contact Faiza Chaudary (faiza@ncvys.org.uk) for further details. The deadline for submitting comments to DfE (Positivefor.Youth@education.gsi.gov.uk) is 15 September 2011.

---

[1] *Positive for Youth discussion papers*, Department for Education (July 2011)
http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/positive%20for%20youth/b0077531/positive-for-youth-discussion-papers
[2] *Positive for Youth discussion papers: Overarching narrative for the youth policy statement*, Department for Education (July 2011)
http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/doc/y/overarching%20narrative%20for%20youth%20policy%20statement.doc
[3] *Positive for Youth summit*, Department for Education (March 2011)
http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/Positive%20for%20Youth/a0075356/positive-for-youth-summit

Overarching narrative for the youth policy statement

This paper sets out for comment an overarching narrative for the policy statement on services for teenagers. It includes sections on:
- Young people today;
- A vision for a society that is **Positive for Youth**;
- Opportunities for all;
- Better support when needed; and
- A fresh approach to service delivery.

The narrative covers publicly funded services, and those provided by charities and others independent of public funding. The Government will respond in September to the recommendations of the recent Education Select Committee report on Services for Young People, and take them into account in developing the autumn policy statement. This paper also underlines the Government's commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Government says that it will work with national youth organisations to ensure this narrative is debated by young people. This will include a national event in the autumn led by young people.

The paper invites views on:
- Do you agree with the vision and narrative set out in this document and the individual themed discussion papers? Are there gaps? Does the evidence point to a different approach in any area?
- What more should be done to improve support and services for young people aged 13-19? Ideas which avoid additional pressures on public spending or regulatory requirements are particularly welcome.

Young people today

This section notes that young people "have stressed in discussion that their lives are shaped by different social, cultural, and economic factors and personal choices and that they should not be pigeon-holed by any one of these." Examples of the different things that impact on teenagers and their lives include their interests, families, health and responsibilities. An additional paper, *Young People Today*, sets out facts and data on today's young people.[4]

The section provides some evidence on brain development, which shows that young people are more likely to undertake risky behaviours. (*See the paper E summary and link below for further details.*) It shows that some young people have an increased susceptibility to depression and mood swings which may affect their ability to pay attention and their academic performance. It notes that families and parents are very important influences for young people, and that particularly for older teenagers, friends and peers are too. Trusted professionals and other significant adults are also important influences – teachers, youth workers, religious leaders, and role models (celebrity, sporting, cultural).

The section notes that young people want to be listened to and have their views heard, appreciated, respected and acted upon – alongside and equal to adults. Young people:
- want more support from schools to inform them of the pathways needed to achieve their goals;
- want support from their parents, and adults to recognise the modern world;
- want services to be accessible, welcoming, and respectful;
- feel like they are negatively stereotyped in the media; and
- are concerned about potential debts from higher education and future employment and career prospects.

The section also sets out parents' views, and finds that most parents feel confident in their ability to support their child's learning and development, but that many want some support too. (*See the paper D summary and link below for further details.*) It concludes that "the vast majority of young people, whatever their immediate concerns, have high hopes for their future. But there is still a long way to go before our society offers everyone the same opportunities to fulfil their potential."

---

[4] *Young people today: Statistics on young people's lives*, Department for Education (July 2011)
http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/doc/y/young%20people%20today%20statistics%20on%20young%20peoples%20lives.doc

A vision for a society that is Positive for Youth
This section sets out how "a society that is *Positive for Youth* values young people as a vital part of the fabric of our society and helps them make the most of their lives." (*See the paper A summary and link below for further details.*)

The section notes that public perceptions and expectations of young people must change to achieve the *Positive for Youth* vision. It recognises that:

- young people and those who work with them frequently worry about negative perceptions of young people, and the perceived role of the media in damaging how young people are viewed;
- inaccurate media reporting can distort social norms, for example around levels of early sexual activity or alcohol use, which can put additional pressure on young people to conform with what they think their peers are doing; and
- the Government has a role to play in addressing negative stereotyping and will take all opportunities to celebrate the contribution young people make to society through their education, volunteering, hobbies, skills and ideas, and will challenge unhelpful and misleading stereotypes wherever they appear.

It adds that "the Government will provide support for stronger arrangements for representing the voice of young people in media debates, building on the work of the UK Youth Parliament, Young Advisors Charity and the British Youth Council."

Opportunities for all young people
This section notes that "the essential foundations for all young people and for a society which is *Positive for Youth* are: supportive parents and families; an excellent education and training system; wider personal and social development opportunities; support to become active and empowered citizens; and encouragement and support to lead healthy and safe lives."

The section states that "the most important opportunity for young people is to benefit from a good education" and refers to the White Paper *The Importance of Teaching* which sets out the Government's reforms to the school system. It states the Government's commitment to funding full participation by 2015. It says that "Higher Education reforms aim to ensure students get better information before they apply, better teaching at university, more feedback on their work and better preparation for the job market." It states the Government's "continued commitment post-18 to fund specific areas of education and training for young people, with priority placed on providing skills training for those who need it most." The Departments for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), Education (DfE) and Work and Pensions (DWP) are developing a cross-government strategy for the participation of 16-24 year olds in education, training and work, which will be published in the autumn. (*See the paper K summary and link below for further details.*)

It sets out how the Government will support personal and social skills development. It notes that "most young people get access to experiences which help their personal and social development through their families, their education and in their wider communities. Good schools and colleges are an important source of extra-curricular development activities for the majority of young people, particularly those from low-income families." It recognises that "some groups, particularly those not having the advantages of positive parenting or good experiences of school, may need to be targeted for extra opportunities or support. Many of these activities will not need state support, but others will represent a sound investment of public funds." It adds that the National Citizen Service (NCS) and an increased emphasis on competitive school sport will offer additional personal and social development opportunities. (*See the paper N summary and link below for further details.*)

It notes that being *Positive for Youth* also means recognising the importance of giving young people - and their parents - a voice in improving services for young people across the country. It states that "young people should be directly involved in local decisions about services and opportunities that affect them and their local area." (S*ee the paper B and C summaries and links below for further details.*)

It notes that the Government wants young people to learn about healthy behaviours to make informed healthy choices. Government recognises that "many services are not very youth friendly, or are inaccessible at times when young people most need them. Judgmental attitudes and stigma continue to deter some young people from seeking early advice on sexual or mental health issues. Young people with chronic health conditions, disabilities and/or SEN need better support, especially in the transition to

adult services." It notes that young people's health is not the sole responsibility of professionals in the National Health Service and that the schools and college workforce, youth workers and other professionals working with young people all have a part to play. (*See the paper L summary and link below for further details.*)

Better support when needed
This section notes that "some young people are particularly vulnerable and find these [physical and emotional] changes much more difficult for a variety of reasons, and engage in behaviour that has further-reaching consequences." It recognises that "just as the problems that some young people face are connected, effective solutions need also to be cross-cutting. Services to support young people into long-term education or employment, and those which tackle broader issues such as housing or family support (including for example help for families with managing debt or with relationship breakdown) may be just as relevant as youth offending or substance misuse services." (*See the paper M summary and link below for further details.*)

It states that "effective targeted services are those that intervene early through a structured evidence-based approach to address the underlying causes of problematic behaviours. Where there are multiple problems, key workers and lead professionals can play a vital role in co-ordinating interventions, increasing young people's access to a wide range of services, and reducing the duplication of resources. Particular attention is needed to ensure that young people around the age of 18 do not fall into gaps between children's and adults' services. And services need to be as alive to their safeguarding responsibilities for young people, as they are to younger children."

It argues that "previous attempts to coordinate youth services have been confused by competing national targets, overly prescriptive funding streams, issue-specific strategies, action plans and guidance documents." It proposes moving away from such an approach and devolving funding decisions and responsibility increasingly to the local level. It recognises that "such changes increase the opportunities to better join-up services and to adapt to local priorities [but that] there is a risk that some of the expertise built up around specialist services is lost." It notes that central Government retains responsibility "to set out the ambitions for improved outcomes for vulnerable young people" and to support local activity and ensure that national policies are complementary, enabling effective local action.

A fresh approach to service delivery
This section "proposes a new approach to open access services such as youth centres and clubs for sports, arts and other interests, and to targeted services aimed at preventing disengagement from learning, involvement in crime or anti-social behaviour, and teenage pregnancy, alcohol or drug misuse or obesity." It notes that "changes must be led locally, but the Government will work with the youth and local authority sectors to support reforms. It will also encourage partnership working with other providers of services for young people".

It states that "raising young people's aspirations and attainment is the most important thing for helping them reach their potential" and sets out sets three main roles for services. (*See the paper G summary and link below for further details.*)

It suggests that the following principles, connected to local people solving the problems they face, should drive reform to services to young people:
- a more positive place and active role for young people in society;
- a greater sense of responsibility in communities, including business communities, for the engagement and wellbeing of their young people and the sustainability of local provision;
- a stronger focus for public funding on evidence based targeted intervention with greater flexibility and responsibility for local areas; and
- a more contestable market for publicly funded services, with a greater role for the voluntary and community sector and a stronger focus on results. (*See the paper H and I summaries and links below for further details.*)

It suggests that local authorities will want to consider:
- how they involve young people and parents in shaping services;
- how they can build the capacity of community groups to offer clubs and other personal and social development opportunities not publicly funded;

- how available resources can best be targeted – including the potential role of open access youth centres in deprived areas including Myplace centres; and
- what funded services can best be provided by other bodies and which should remain in-house.

It notes that "Government will encourage all providers to measure the impact of their services." It also notes that youth VCS organisations need better access to capital to invest in their long term growth. It recognises that businesses and charities could engage with each other more effectively. It notes that "businesses and youth VCS bodies believe that specific high-quality brokerage is needed to attract more businesses and match them successfully into a sustained relationship." The Government will therefore consult on what sort of brokerage service would be most effective and will then publish a specification and seek proposals to provide such a service and award a grant for the period to March 2013. (*See the paper J and Q summaries and links below for further details*.)

It notes that "young people need adults who work with them to be skilled and confident and who can be role models. The majority are volunteers and the Government will work to encourage more volunteers to come forward." It adds that "there will continue to be important roles for professional youth workers such as providing targeted support to young people at risk of poor outcomes, leading and managing youth facilities and services, and delivering personal and social development programmes." (*See the paper O summary and link below for further details.*)

It argues that "since service delivery will be locally driven the Government believes that a centralised approach to youth workforce development is unlikely to have more than limited impact. As responsibility sits with employers, the Government looks to them to work together to develop and deliver a strategy for workforce development... To enable voluntary sector employers to play their role as the new arrangements emerge, the Government is funding a two year programme of workforce development activities proposed by the Catalyst consortium, led by NCVYS."

Themed discussion papers

A. A Vision for a Society that is 'Positive for Youth': An overall vision for what society as a whole would look like if it were 'positive for youth'

The Government's vision of a society that is '***Positive for Youth'*** has young people with:

"Strong ambitions
Young people have the energy and enthusiasm to shape and change the world, and their worlds, in innovative and exciting ways. Our positive vision is for a society in which young people develop their own ambitious and pragmatic goals to:
- succeed in learning and work, and learn what and how they can achieve;
- be confident in their own identity, drawing on but not bound by the experiences of their families, peers and communities, with the confidence and resilience to make good decisions and manage risk; and
- make a contribution to society, through real and virtual communities, and with public and media recognition of their achievements.

Good opportunities
In a positive society every young person will have the opportunity to reach their full potential. This means:
- providing excellent teaching and high standards of education, courses that are respected by employers and universities, with additional resources supporting the attainment of those who are disadvantaged or would otherwise be excluded;
- encouraging volunteering and other personal and social development opportunities which build young people's skills and confidence to learn, make informed choices, and find work; and
- allowing young people to express their views and influence public decision-making.

Supportive relationships
At a time when their peers have increasing significance and influence young people need supportive relationships with adults they trust to help them develop good judgment, learn from experience, take responsibility, and manage pressures. A positive society will promote this by:

- recognising that parents and families remain the most significant influence in the lives of young people by not placing pressure on young people to grow up too quickly, and intervening to protect young people whose family situation puts them at risk;
- investing in excellent teachers and other professionals to inspire and support young people, with particular support for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged; and
- encouraging community activities where young people can develop relationships with trusted adults, experience social mixing with their peers, and enjoy spending time with older people."

B. Young people's role in society: How to help all young people to play a positive and active role in society

This paper considers the support the Government can give to help realise ambitions for all young people to have a positive place in society and to make a difference to the areas in which they live.

It includes the following questions for discussion:

1. Beyond formal decision-making processes, what are effective ways of engaging young people in the life of their communities?
2. How can volunteering by young people be effectively encouraged?
3. How can young people be involved more directly in the delivery of services?
4. What are the most effective ways to counter negative perceptions of young people?
5. How can young people best be supported to present their achievements and perspectives themselves?
6. Beyond formal decision-making processes, what are effective ways of engaging young people in the life of their communities?
7. How can volunteering by young people be effectively encouraged?
8. How can young people be involved more directly in the delivery of services?
9. What are the most effective ways to counter negative perceptions of young people?
10. How can young people best be supported to present their achievements and perspectives themselves?

C. Young people's involvement in decision making: How to support young people's participation in formal decision making at national and local level

This paper states that the Government wants to fund "a coherent package of support for central and local government" and it argues that existing "arrangements for youth representation have been diffuse and confusing for public agencies and young people." It suggests that central funding should, among other things, support national public bodies to "youth proof" their policies. It suggests that at the local level local authorities (LAs) should "identify and resource arrangements to ensure young people are engaged in designing and influencing policies which affect them."

It proposes to "retain a focus on 13-19 year olds but not excluding engagement of younger and older age groups where sensible to do so".

It includes the following questions for discussion:

1. What are the priority needs that should be addressed and what is the right balance between national and local focus?
2. What is the age range that should be covered by these arrangements?

D. The role of parents and families in the lives of young people: How to support parents and families of young people

This paper sets out the Government's commitment to early intervention and adds that "the Government also recognises that early intervention also needs to be available to older children." It proposes that "Local authorities and other commissioners may need to do more to ensure that services work together to meet the needs of families with teenagers. This might mean preventative work or more intensive support such as family interventions for those with multiple problems. All local authorities will have shadow Health and Wellbeing Boards in place by April 2012 – this should contribute to this process and

lead to patients and the public experiencing a more joined-up service from the NHS and local councils in the future."

It adds that "open access services such as youth clubs, mobile provision and youth centres can play an important role in providing young people with safe places for leisure as well as opportunities for personal and social development outside of the school environment, where they spend the majority of their time. Participation in positive activities can also provide a route for wider youth support services to reach out to disaffected or vulnerable young people. However we know that a significant proportion of teenagers fail to make use of these facilities, even when they are available".

It recognises that "young people, as well as their parents, should be involved in shaping and designing services that serve them and the Government would expect local areas to involve young people directly in assessing and inspecting the quality of local provision aimed at them, in the future."

It includes the following questions for discussion:

1. How can all services for young people work effectively with those providing services to adults and families to take account of the role of parents and the wider family context?
2. How can services for young people contribute to the support provided to families as part of the national programme for families with multiple problems?
3. How can services for young people work with schools and parents of teenagers to encourage them to take advantage of the support available?
4. How can services which support parents be better enhanced to meet the needs of parents of teenagers?
5. How can service providers involve young people and their parents in the design and delivery of services for young people?
6. What other examples are there of good or innovative practice of services for young people engaging with wider family needs?

E. Brain development in young people: How the brain continues to develop during teenage years and the implications of this

This paper looks at what we know of the development of the adolescent brain and seeks to identify key messages which have relevance to the Department's priorities and which may help promote positive brain development and outcomes.

F. Equality and diversity: How to ensure that young people's different circumstances are recognised and every young person offered an equal chance to succeed in life

This paper says that action "is needed on three levels:

- the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advancing equality of opportunity between people of different groups; and
- fostering good relations between people from different groups."

It includes the following questions for discussion:

1. What further action should the Government and other statutory agencies take to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation? Are there example of good practice which should be shared more widely?
2. What further action should the Government and other statutory agencies take to advance equality of opportunity between people of different groups? Are there groups that require particular support and whose needs should be prioritised?
3. What further action should the Government and other statutory agencies take to foster good relations between people from different groups?
4. Are there gaps in the issues identified and, if so, what can be done to address them?
5. Are there any particular opportunities to improve outcomes for disadvantaged young people which should be taken forward?
6. Are there examples of good practice in equality and diversity of services to young people which could be further disseminated?

G. Rationale and outcomes for services for young people: The outcomes of services for young people and the relationship between universal and targeted services

This paper seeks to identify the services which are the subject of the Government's reform strategy for youth services. It identifies the outcomes for young people which those services can influence. It examines the respective roles of universal and targeted services and how they relate to each other.

It sets out the details of the Government's approach to "services described as positive activities, youth services and early intervention services". It notes that, "LA [Local Authority] and other public agency staff are often in the lead in delivering these services, although voluntary and community sector bodies will usually deliver a minority and sometimes the majority of publicly funded services in an LA area. There is substantial provision of "positive activities" which is not publicly funded."

It says that "Government believes that raising young people's aspirations and attainment is the most important thing for helping them reach their potential. So it sees services for young people as having three main roles:
(i) to make sure young people at risk of dropping out or underachieving take part and succeed in learning;
(ii) to prevent crime and risky behaviours such as teenage pregnancy and substance misuse which can undermine young people's life chances and have a cost to wider society; and
(iii) to provide opportunities for those young people who don't otherwise acquire them to develop the personal and social skills they need for learning, work and transition to adulthood. These skills include self-regulation, relationship-building, and decision-making."

It notes that "nationally available local indicators which local areas can use to measure progress and benchmark against other areas include 16 and 17 year olds who are NEET, teenage pregnancy, first time entrants to youth justice system, data on those in drug and alcohol services and youth reoffending rates."

It includes the following questions for discussion:

1. Are these the right outcomes for local services to young people and are these the best indicators of progress?
2. What are the practical implications of focusing public funding on targeted support and greater diversity of providers and how these might best be addressed, including:
   (i) how can LAs and central government best enable community organisations to offer positive activities to local young people?
   (ii) what local arrangements for identifying young people who need targeted support are likely to be most effective?
   (iii) how can continuity of support be achieved for young people, particularly in the transition to adult services? and
   (iv) how can the expertise of youth workers and other professional staff and youth work approaches best be utilised?
3. How can local services best engage with parents and families to prevent poor outcomes for young people?

H. Commissioning services for young people: How to make best use of public funding through the commissioning of services for young people

This paper looks at how local authorities and other commissioners can make best use of available public funding for services for young people.

It includes the following questions for discussion:
1. How can we continue to drive up quality and performance in the commissioning of services for young people?
2. What are the barriers to a more competitive market for the provision of services for young people and how can they be overcome?

3. What models of local service delivery should commissioners consider to best support partnership, enable integration, release cost savings, and leverage additional funding and resources from communities and the private sector?

I. Growing the role of voluntary and community (VCS) organisations: How to create new opportunities for, and grow the capacity of, VCS organisations to play a greater role in the delivery of services for young people

This paper sets out the Government's view that more can be done to help voluntary and community organisations play a major role in the lives of young people. It says "some are already involved in delivering services funded by councils or other public sector bodies, but we think that this could happen more often."

It says that "the Government believes the state should do more to stimulate rather than limit social action in services for young people by individuals, communities, and the VCSO [voluntary and community sector organisations] and private sectors. As strategic commissioners, local authorities and other public bodies should facilitate the development of contestable markets, the growth of cross-sector partnerships, and the involvement of a wide range of bodies in needs analysis and delivering services. Youth VCSOs need to step up to the challenges ahead. They need to do more to demonstrate and communicate the impact of the services they provide and they need to make best use of better access to capital financing and other resources to develop and grow their innovative and successful approaches."

It includes the following questions for discussion:

1. What is the best way to support local commissioners to diversify delivery of out-of-school youth services and develop their local voluntary and community sector?
2. How should VCSOs develop and learn from current and best practice and how can they ensure that commissioners know about their successes?
3. How can national action best enable VCSOs to access sources of social finance?
4. How can we take advantage of the opportunity that NCS presents to strengthen the profile of youth VCSO organisations in delivering services to young people?
5. What examples are there of good or innovative practice leading to a greater role for the VCSO sector in delivering services for young people?

J. The role of businesses in supporting young people: How to engage more businesses in supporting young people and the organisations that work with them.

This paper looks at what role business can play in working with voluntary and community sector organisations and young people and how the Government can promote and grow this role and the number of businesses involved.

It includes the following questions for discussion:

1. What brokerage arrangements are already in place and how can we best build on them to increase significantly the number of businesses involved with out-of-school services for young people?
2. What else can be done to support more businesses to get involved, particular at a local community level, and to influence them to work collaboratively and strategically by area or region?
3. What is needed to increase the capacity of VCSOs to work with volunteers and to increase further the level of volunteering by private sector employees and those who have recently retired?
4. How can businesses and their employees be encouraged to develop a more positive attitude towards young people?

K. Helping young people to succeed in learning and find a job: How to support young people to succeed in education or training and to progress into higher education and sustainable employment.

This paper looks at what kinds of help young people need to do well in education or training and go on to get a good job. It says that "most 16-18 year olds are engaged in education or training, but there are some who are not in education, employment or training (sometimes referred to as NEET). These young

people are more likely to suffer from poor outcomes later on, like unemployment, low pay and depression, so we are particularly keen to prevent young people from becoming NEET."

It includes the following questions for discussion:

1. How well do services to support young people into learning and work fit together on the ground? We would be interested in any examples of good practice and areas of challenge, including on issues around referral mechanisms and information sharing.
2. Are there overlaps and gaps between services, particularly for those young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET? How best can these be addressed?
3. We want to ensure that services and support fit together for 18 year olds as they make the transition from young people's to adult services. How can roles and responsibilities be best aligned to support young people at this crucial stage?

L. [Young people's health and wellbeing](): How to improve further health and wellbeing for all young people as well as those in need of specialist services.

This paper looks at how the Government can improve young people's health and wellbeing for all young people as well as those in need of specialist services. It asks what has been successful– and what more needs to be done - to make progress in areas such as: access to services and information (including use of technology), tackling alcohol and substance misuse, improving mental health and reducing teenage pregnancy/improving sexual health.

It identifies a number of key issues including:

- A focus on young people in the health reform programme – recognising what has worked well in the past as well as the need to improve.
- Ensuring young people's voices are heard and their needs understood in the planning, commissioning and accountability of services – with their involvement going beyond tokenistic engagement.
- The importance of services being accessible – confidential, in the right location, open at the right times, with friendly staff and sensitive to the language and culture of the local population.
- The fact that the transition from child to adult services remains problematic especially for young people with mental health issues or long term conditions/disabilities.
- The proactive promotion of services to young people.
- The need for young people to be respected as individuals and have services, support and information that are specific to their age group.
- The critical role of school in providing high quality PSHE and RSE, with young people valuing external expertise and peer support.
- The preference of some young people to get information and advice from 'trusted non-judgmental' adults such as youth workers, rather than from GPs or clinics.

It includes the following questions for discussion:

1. How can adults better understand young people's way of life, how and when they want to access services and how professionals should treat them?
2. What are good examples of really good PSHE/SRE in schools and/or colleges?
3. Where have local areas heard young people's voices in the design, commissioning, delivery and assessment of services?
4. What are good examples of workforce training programmes - particularly those which have involved young people?
5. Which peer support programmes have worked well in schools, colleges or other youth settings?
6. How have local areas have made a real difference in young people's mental health. What have they done to address stigma? How have schools and colleges been involved? Where have local areas managed to bridge the gap between children's and adults services? What role has the voluntary sector played?
7. What have local areas done to make a real impact in reducing risky behaviours – for example bringing together support to reduce drug/alcohol misuse and risky sexual behaviour? How have

they done this and what impact has it had on young people? What were the key ingredients that influenced young people in the choices they made?

8. What should central government's role be in improving young people's health and wellbeing? What should government be doing to support young people themselves in looking after their health and making well informed choices? And how best can government support local areas in assessing and meeting the health needs of their young people?

M. Preventing youth crime and substance misuse: How to reduce youth crime and drug and alcohol use.

This paper states that most young people "are not involved in crime and do not misuse drugs or alcohol. We want to make sure that this is recognised and to improve the help that is available to those young people who are at risk from these problems."

It recognises that "Help needs to be available earlier, before problems get too serious. For example, young people who have problems with truancy or being excluded from school are more likely than others to go on to be affected by crime (including as a victim). Young people who are bullied are much more likely to have problems with alcohol and young people running away from home or from care can be a warning sign that something else is wrong."

It suggests that a number of areas need to change to achieve progress: including joining-up problems and developing effective commissioning. It sets out the Government's responsibility "to set out the ambitions for reducing substance misuse and youth crime, as well as taking those actions that can only be done nationally – for example through legislation or national policy changes."

It includes the following questions for discussion:
1. How can National Government best support local areas to commission integrated services?
2. What is the key learning from previous national or local programmes that needs to be preserved?
3. What other roles does National Government need to play in this policy area?
4. How do we best support schools to work more effectively with local substance misuse and crime prevention agencies?

N. National Citizen Service: The opportunities National Citizen Service (NCS) will offer young people and its fit with wider services to young people.

This paper sets out details of the National Citizen Service (NCS), a 6-8 week personal development programme for every 16 year old to undertake at the end of year 11. Initially around 11,000 young people will participate in NCS in Summer 2011 and around 30,000 will have the opportunity in 2012. From 2013, the Government wants to roll-out the programme so that eventually every young person will have the opportunity to participate.

It includes the following questions for discussion:

1. How can NCS be developed to best achieve the intended benefits for young people?
2. What are the mechanisms for ensuring all young people are able to participate in NCS, including those least likely to participate?
3. How can NCS best engage volunteers, businesses and wider society to contribute to enhance the NCS experience for young people?
4. How can we best capacity build the skill sets needed to deliver NCS, including delivery of personal and social development programmes to social mixed groups?

O. The young people's workforce: How to ensure that young people are supported by a workforce that is highly skilled, confident and committed

The paper looks at current arrangements for the training and development of adults working in services for young people. "It identifies the changes in Government policy and funding which make a difference to the things people working in these services need to know or do to be effective. It asks whether these changes have been accurately identified and what the other implications for training and development might be. It also asks for examples of where local authorities or providers have successfully changed their workforce development plans to meet changing needs. It sets out the principle that employers must

take the lead in identifying and meeting the training and development needs of their staff, and set out what the Government is doing to support the voluntary and community sector in doing this. Finally it seeks views on what more might be done to put effective employer-led national arrangements in place to support workforce development."

It identifies "a number of areas where greater clarity is needed to enable the implications for workforce development to be identified:
- what the public policy objectives are for services to young people and the roles of the people delivering those services following the change of Government;
- how the pattern of services delivered is changing in the much tighter public funding environment; and
- where the roles and responsibilities now fall for securing and supporting workforce development in these services."

It includes the following questions for discussion:

1. Do [the proposed] public policy objectives provide a clear and helpful context for workforce development?
2. Are these the key changes in service delivery which will impact on workforce development?
3. Is there any evidence of existing and emerging priority skills gaps and how can these needs be met?
4. Are there other implications for the training and development of the youth workforce?
5. What examples are there of providers and local areas adapting their own workforce development plans to address these changes and enhance their services?
6. Do you have views on what arrangements the sector needs to put in place collectively to support workforce development for the youth workforce?

P. [The role of capital infrastructure in services for young people](#): How to best provide the places in which to offer activities, support and opportunities to young people.

This paper explores the need for a capital infrastructure to support work with young people and how it can best be sustained.

It includes the following questions for discussion:

1. In what circumstances are dedicated youth facilities the best environment to deliver services to young people and how can they be viable and sustainable in the long term?
2. What are the benefits and limitations of delivering services to young people through multi-use facilities, and how can more community facilities be made attractive and accessible to young people?
3. In what circumstances can facilities on school or college sites offer attractive and sustainable environments for services to young people? and
4. What examples are there of innovative ways to deliver high quality sustainable facilities for young people?

There are also further papers now open for discussion:
Q. [Business brokerage](#): The priorities government funding should address to increase business involvement with services for young people

This paper includes the following questions for discussion:

1. Where are the gaps in provision and where should this funding best be targeted to help fill those gaps?
2. What type of brokerage services should be offered?
3. How would success be measured?
4. Providing ongoing, effective brokerage support can be expensive. Bearing in mind the limited amount of funding available, how can we best use this funding to ensure self-sustaining support?

R. [Sector-led support for local authorities](#): The practical support local authorities need on services for young people

This paper notes that "local authority–funded services to young people are facing significant budget pressures. There are immediate practical challenges to local authority decision-makers, senior managers and commissioners. The Local Government Group has a £900k support offer to local authorities, funded through a topslice of Revenue Support Grant. The Government is prepared to commit supplementary funding of up to £230k in 2011-12 and £550k in 2012-13 to ensure local authorities get the support they need. This support will be sector-led and through this note the LG Group and DfE are consulting the local government sector on the use of this additional funding."

The paper "invites local authorities to consider and specify their priority needs for support for delivery of services for young people, and how this would best be delivered."

The following two papers set out firm commitments the Government has made to implement proposals described in the Department for Education Business Plan.

S. Refocusing on early intervention: Proposals for supporting vulnerable young people by refocusing youth services on early intervention.

This paper includes the following questions for discussion:
1. How can the Government support the most vulnerable young people by refocusing services on early intervention?
2. How can the Government make best use of available funding?

T. Supporting a wider range of providers: Proposals for supporting a wider range of providers to offer services to young people.

This paper includes the following questions for discussion:
1. How can the Government increase contestability in the market for services for young people?
2. How can the Government grow the role of voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations?
3. How can the Government help youth organisations to prepare for and benefit from social investment?
4. How can the Government encourage a greater sense of responsibility among communities, including the business community, for young people and the sustainability of local community-led youth provision?

For more information on any element of this paper, please contact NCVYS's Policy Officer, Dom Weinberg, email dominic@ncvys.org.uk or on 020 7278 1041.

This briefing was produced by the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services as part of the work of the Catalyst consortium. Catalyst is co-ordinated by the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services with the National Youth Agency, the Social Enterprise Coaltion and the Young Foundation. It is working with the Department for Education (DfE) as the strategic partner for young people, as part of the Department's wider transition programme for the sector. Catalyst was formed to deliver three key objectives; strengthening the youth sector market, equipping the sector to work in partnership with Government and coordinating a skills development strategy for the youth sector's workforce.

For more information about Catalyst, please visit http://www.ncvys.org.uk/catalyst.html.