

OVERVIEW OF THE WORK OF HERTFORDSHIRE YOUTH SERVICE

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

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1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This paper is written in response to Member questions about a number of aspects of the Hertfordshire Youth Service.
- 1.2 It seeks to clarify issues relating to Youth Service standards, quality, property and the future direction of the Youth Service.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The report outlines the current performance of the Hertfordshire Youth Service following a request for information from the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of June 23rd
- 2.2 The report also identifies a number of challenges facing the service, both locally and in relation to the national agenda for Local Authority Youth Services.

3. Conclusion

The Panel is asked to comment on the report and the proposals within it.

1. Background

- 1.1 For many years Youth Services have been underdeveloped nationally. This has largely been because, although statutory, there has been no guidance for the scope of services other than for Local Authorities to provide or secure an 'adequate and sufficient' Youth Service.
- 1.2 Consequently Youth Services have in the past developed independently of any national overview with no common aims, objectives or funding framework. As well as creating a different kind of service in every authority, this has led to a wide variation in the level of funding and a general decline in services throughout the country at a time of great pressure on available resources.
- 1.3 In 2001/2002 the Government turned its attention to Youth Services as part of its review of all services to young people. As a result of its interest in this area, the 'Transforming Youth Work' agenda was introduced.
- 1.4 The first stage of Transforming Youth Work introduced external funding to assist all Local Authority Youth Services to develop a Common Planning Framework. It also provided valuable additional funding for the development of innovative youth work. The funding began in 2002-3 and ends in 2005-6.
- 1.5 The Common Planning Framework gave the Government information about how Youth Services were developing and formed the basis for 'Resourcing Excellent Youth Services' which was published in December 2002. This document provided guidance on standards for Local Authority Youth Services and also provided a set of service targets. These are described in more detail in Appendix 1 (Standards) and Appendix 2 (Service targets)
- 1.6 The guidance and targets provide an indication of the direction that the Government requires Youth Services to take in the future. This will be further clarified through a Green Paper that is due for publication before the end of the calendar year. However there are some current issues that we can anticipate will continue to be relevant to service delivery. These are considered in Sections 3 and 4 of this report.

2. Current pattern of service organisation

- 2.1 The overall aim of the service is to develop and support young people's informal learning. 80% of our work is with 13-19 year olds. Specialist resources are targeted wherever possible to poor, disadvantaged and disabled young people, or those living in particular communities where a need for support and intervention has been identified.
- 2.2 In addition, government targets require the service to :-
 - make contact with 25% of young people

- undertake intensive work (a minimum 4 sessions per month) with 15% of young people
- record the outcomes for 60% of intensive contacts and gain national accreditation for 30% of these young people.

2.3 Youth Services are provided mostly outside of school time through Youth Centres, information shops, music studios, climbing, sailing and off-site venues. There is also a well-used web-site known as the “Youth Channel”.

2.4 Key elements of the service are :-

- (a) A Head of Service located in Development Division at County Hall
- (b) A Quality Development and Training Team, based in Stevenage, which is responsible for the professional development of staff and accreditation of young people. It also manages the Youth Channel, 7 Youth Information Shops and 4 music studios across the county.
- (c) 4 Quadrant-based Youth Teams, each led by an Area Manager, with 8 or 9 permanent FTE staff. This core group is supported by approximately 300 part-time and sessional staff.

The Quadrant Teams manage 5 large centres, which operate during evenings and weekends for 50 weeks per year. In addition they run projects in over 100 smaller venues which open less frequently.

Detached youth work teams also operate in high need areas. In addition there are 13 Personal Advisers, funded by Connexions, who provide advice and support on a one to one basis, to young people in schools and elsewhere. Four of the PAs are responsible for teenage pregnancy issues.

- (d) The Herts Young Mariners Base in Cheshunt and the Snowdonia Centre in Wales which provide a range of personal, social and team-building opportunities are supported by an Outdoor Education Team of 4 staff.

3. KEY ISSUES

Ofsted inspection

3.1 Ofsted inspected the Hertfordshire Youth Service in 1999. Although it gave the Authority a satisfactory grading, it nevertheless raised a number of key points that needed to be addressed by the Local Authority. These were: -

- curriculum policy and a quality assurance.
- additional policies to ensure that all legislative requirements are met (e.g. Health & Safety and Child Protection).
- improved relationships with the voluntary sector
- recruitment and retention difficulties
- the condition of service property

- 3.2 Staff have worked hard to address these issues over the ensuing years but some areas of concern continue. These include standards of property, recruitment and retention and quality of service delivery.

Property

- 3.3 Ofsted said that *“much of the accommodation is generally poor and rarely fit for purpose. Many buildings suffer from long term neglect, resulting in low levels of maintenance and refurbishment. The majority of buildings are inaccessible for wheelchair users and the quality of equipment is poor and unsophisticated”*.

- 3.4 The service currently operates from approximately 117 venues of which the County Council has repair and maintenance responsibility for 51. Many are only available occasionally and are poorly resourced. Accommodation in the larger centres tends to be more satisfactory but a number of these have serious shortcomings.

- 3.5 The intention is to concentrate on key service delivery sites over the next few years. Most of these are owned by HCC and improvements would help maintain the value of county assets. Officers are therefore developing a scheme for Members’ consideration that would include :-

- vacating Alma Road Youth Centre in St Albans
- re-locating Youth Service workers and the music studio that are based there to Victoria Street St Albans
- Re-investing the proceeds of the disposal of Alma Road (less the cost of re-locating current users) in re-furbishing and improving a number of the key delivery sites

- 3.6 Significant improvements were made in 2002/03 to the Bowes Lyon Centre in Stevenage following extensive flood damage.

Recruitment and Retention

- 3.7 Ofsted said that: *“The service is facing a number of staff problems, including a relatively high number of vacancies; the loss of two full time staff to long-term sick leave.... These staff shortages impact disproportionately on some areas of youth work...”*

- 3.8 Youth Services nationally are now experiencing similar problems and the situation in Hertfordshire continues to reflect this. The current vacancy position, although better than it has been for some time, is as follows: -

- 4 full time staff vacancies, two of these at senior levels. Three of these posts have been advertised nationally 3 times with no success.
- 2 full time staff on long term sick leave
- 20% part time staff vacancies (although this figure has fluctuated between 8% and 40%)

- 3.9 The reasons for these problems include:
- Competition with other local authorities as their services expand to respond to “Resourcing Excellent Youth Services”
 - A wider range of opportunity for those wishing to work with young people (e.g. behaviour support, drug action, healthy education and youth offending teams)
 - The unsocial working hours associated with youth work
 - The attraction of inner city work to many newly qualified graduates who see it as more varied and challenging
 - The high cost of living in Hertfordshire
 - Higher salaries in some London Boroughs for working with smaller caseloads
- 3.10 These gaps inevitably have an impact on our ability to run projects and to train and support the large number of part-time staff on whom the service relies.
- 3.11 Steps that have been taken to address these problems include :-
- A high profile recruitment campaign for full time staff using powerful advertising images.
 - Large-scale recruitment events for part-time staff in public venues followed up by “taster sessions” with youth work trainers.
 - In-house training in conjunction with the YMCA George Williams College. We currently have 18 people on 2 and 3 year training courses and expect some of them to fill full time vacancies in the future. To qualify for support on the course students have to give an undertaking to work for a minimum of 12 hours per week, some of which must be voluntary. This provides them with invaluable “on the job” experience. This was the first arrangement of its kind and has subsequently been copied by other Local Authorities.

Service Delivery

- 3.12 Ofsted said that: *“poor staffing levels often contributed to unsatisfactory or poor standards of achievement”*.
- 3.13 As shown above, the problem of unfilled posts continues. One of the consequences of this is that a small core of full time staff is required to supervise much larger numbers of part-time staff. This means that they have little or no time for direct work with young people and their absence has a disproportionate impact on service quality. These circumstances inevitably limit the number of projects that can be delivered at any time, although this has been offset to some degree by working closely with the voluntary sector.
- 3.14 An example of success in this collaborative work with the voluntary

sector is the HAYP Service Level Agreement. Transforming Youth Work funding was used to allow HAYP to employ two community development workers whose remit is to work with local communities in rural areas to enable them to take responsibility for their local youth provision. These posts have now been mainstreamed.

- 3.15 In view of this continuing concern over quality, the Youth Service has introduced an internal inspection regime that focuses on two of the three elements of Ofsted reporting. These are the quality of youth work practice and the quality of young people's learning. Two teams have been inspected so far, with a third set for the end of September.
- 3.16 The aim of this exercise is to highlight both good and poor practice so that lessons can be learned and targeted work undertaken to systematically improve service quality. The first team to be inspected was regarded as unsatisfactory and has produced an action plan to address the issues raised. It will be revisited in January to examine progress.
- 3.17 It should be noted that this particular team is the one carrying the highest level of vacancies and staff absence on health grounds. Issues highlighted by the inspection team included :-
- inconsistency in quality of learning (although there were examples of good practice)
 - examples of poor planning and curriculum delivery
 - low levels of staff intervention
 - poor uptake by young people with a large proportion falling into the 11-13 year age group
 - insufficient levels of management support for part-time staff
 - poor quality accommodation
- 3.18 The second team was regarded as satisfactory. It too, produced an action plan but will not be revisited in this round of inspections. Key elements to be addressed in the action plan are :
- improving attendance rates at two of its Centres
 - reviewing staff timetables to respond more quickly to variations in demand across the Quadrant as a whole
 - addressing accommodation concerns at two Centres
 - increasing the profile of detached youth work
 - further improving the quality and consistency of face to face work.
- 3.19 Further inspections are planned as a basis for systematic improvement across the service as a whole. The third inspection is currently underway and early indications are that it may achieve a highly satisfactory grade.

- 3.20 In addition to recruitment and retention issues, a further contribution to the difficulties of maintaining high quality of delivery can be found in the fact that with current staffing levels, senior staff are required to support a larger number of projects than is manageable.

4. Challenges and opportunities for the future

- 4.1 As with all services to young people, there have been many changes in expectation since 1999. Some of these are national and some are local. The three biggest challenges that we now face are :-

- improving quality
- increasing engagement with schools and other support services
- responding to “Resourcing Excellent Youth Services”

Quality improvement

- 4.2 Recruitment, retention and current quality issues are considered in Section 3 above. As these are a source of concern nationally, the DFES, in conjunction with the National Youth Agency, has created a number of initiatives to monitor and improve performance. These include:

- A new management information service known as “Youth Base” which provides a wide range of information to both the Youth Service and the DFES. It has taken a long time to establish as the software has been problematic and the time required to supply the data has increased pressure on all staff. Nonetheless this is the best available tool to collect and share data and will be used to monitor and inform practice in Hertfordshire.

The Deputy Head of Service has been involved in the national development programme and will play a role in helping other Local Authorities to develop their use of the system

- A new kitemark to measure quality within Youth Services. Although this is not compulsory it could act as an aid to recruitment and will be a useful indicator of improvement in quality of service. West Sussex, who has had the best inspection report in recent years, is the only Youth Service to have an ISO 9001 kitemark.

- 4.3 In addition, the DFES is likely to develop further initiatives as it strives to develop better quality services with some standardisation across the country.

Engagement with schools

- 4.4 The Youth Programmes Unit was created in 1999 to support the alternative education of permanently excluded pupils at Key Stage 4. This team was, up to that point part of the Youth Service. Since that time the Youth Service has concentrated its attentions and resources on work

with young people outside normal school hours in their local communities.

- 4.5 With the development of a broader view of learning through the Green Paper, "Every Child Matters", and the emergence of the "extended schools" and programmes for out-of school hours learning, there may now be an opportunity to develop closer links between the Youth Service and schools.
- 4.6 There are already some examples of this approach. For instance in Norfolk the Youth Service contributes to the county's preventative strategy; provides a named youth worker for every secondary school and runs an accredited programme which is partly charged for. Similarly in West Sussex there is an active youth programme in schools with approximately half of the service venues being on school sites.

Resourcing Excellent Youth Services

- 4.7 The Youth Service will be expected to meet its REYS targets which were revised earlier this year. In the autumn of this year the National Youth Agency will be conducting a national audit to assess progress on behalf of the DFES.
- 4.8 These targets are very difficult to achieve. They have been based on the assumption that there is a qualified youth worker for every 400 young people in the target age range (Appendix 1). In Hertfordshire this would equate to 215 staff in comparison to a current full time equivalent of 120 (not all of whom are qualified).
- 4.9 In addition, the targets themselves are not readily compatible. There is an expectation that the Youth Service should reach 25% of 13-19 year olds. This can best be done by offering large-scale opportunities to groups of young people. On the other hand, there is a requirement to undertake intensive work with 15% of the age range and show recorded evidence of outcomes for 60% of these intensive cases. This is incompatible with the kind of large-scale activity needed to achieve the first target.
- 4.10 The Youth Service is currently developing a toolkit that will enable its workers to understand more clearly the process for producing learning outcomes for young people. This will be launched at the Youth Service training conference in October. It will link the collation of recordings with Youth Base to ensure a streamlined and consistent approach to the collection of data.
- 4.11 The service is also identifying and producing routes to accreditation as part of the toolkit to ensure that staff are able to use all the options available to them. These will include Duke of Edinburgh Award, NVQ's, Open College Network, ASDAN and AQA's

4.12 Many Youth Services are anticipating that they will be able to meet accreditation targets through their D of E programme. Hertfordshire Youth Service holds the County licence for the D of E and produces a very high number of Awards in proportion to the amount of money invested. It is the second highest in the region. However, most of the work is done voluntarily through schools and cannot be counted as part of our targets because the criteria require youth workers to know and recognise all the young people who gain accreditation. Clearly this is not the case where the Scheme is run through teachers and other volunteers.

5. Proposals for the future

5.1 This report demonstrates that the Youth Service faces a number of significant challenges. There is a message within “Every Child Matters” that Local Authorities need to adopt a broad-based approach to promote the learning, social, emotional and economic well being of children and young people. The Youth Service has a role to play in this process through its work with young people in informal and *voluntary* settings where learning and behaviour change can occur without the constraints inevitably imposed by the more formal requirements of schools. For many of these young people the informal nature of the settings and relationships with key adults is essential to secure their co-operation and motivation.

5.2 The Government recognises this too, and is due to publish a Green Paper on Youth Services before the end of the year. It is suggested therefore that this is used as an opportunity to mount a full-scale review of the service and the way in which it can best contribute to the county’s learning agenda alongside schools, other specialist services and the voluntary sector.

5.3 It is proposed that this review should include in its terms of reference:

- practice and quality standards
- staffing levels and qualifications
- accommodation and property issues
- recruitment, retention and training
- collaborative and traded work with schools
- further development of partnership agreements with the voluntary sector (e.g. The Princes Trust)

5.4 It is proposed that the findings and recommendations of this review should be presented to the Education Panel at its meeting of 23 March.

6. Financial implications

This report has no financial implications

7. Access to service implications

The Youth Service provides a range of universal and targeted provision for young people aged mostly 13 to 19. It operates from a wide range of premises, many of which are not owned by the County Council. The quality and suitability of these venues varies widely and this is an aspect of service delivery that will be reviewed and reported on as part of a more detailed consideration of the aims, organisation and funding of the service following publication of a Green Paper later this year.

The service provides a well-used and much appreciated information service for young people that is accessible through a network of 7 Information Shops and “The Youth Channel” website.

Young people use the service on a strictly voluntary basis and so their views are regarded as very important in shaping service priorities. A representative sample of service users will be involved in the service review following publication of the Green Paper.

APPENDIX 1

DfES STANDARDS OF YOUTH WORK PROVISION

This is a National Youth Agency document and we will encourage youth services to work to these standards in the context of their total resource allocation.

This document represents an agreed set of standards for youth work provision which is designed to promote young people's social development and personal achievement. It should be taken fully into account alongside other standards to secure effective policy for young people across various services. In particular, they complement those of Ofsted in respect of the quality and outcomes of youth work. Locally agreed standards may improve on these minimum national standards.

Throughout these standards youth work provision means a staffed youth work service point in a dedicated building, including schools or vehicles; detached and outreach work.

OBJECTIVE 1

Authorities must specify their key target groups, and identify and plan the range of interventions designed to promote their personal and social development.

Youth Standard 1:

Clear definition of target group, by age and any other relevant characteristics, including ethnic diversity.

Youth Standard 2:

Clear specification, in a planning framework, of the needs and of the range of opportunities for personal and social development to which young people in the target group have access (to include cultural activities; counselling; international and residential experiences; sport and outdoor adventure; voluntary action).

Youth Standard 3:

A defined curriculum framework document which links YS1 and YS2 in 90% of the provision secured by the local authority.

OBJECTIVE 2

Authorities must secure convenient and suitable access for young people to high-quality youth work in safe, warm, well-equipped locations and secure adequate opening of youth provision within these locations.

Youth Standard 4:

Percentage of youth population within a safe 30 minute journey time to youth work provision.

Target:

- 100% of young people in inner London

- 95% of young people in outer London and Metropolitan District areas
- 85% of young people in Unitary Authority area
- 80% of young people in County Council areas

Youth Standard 5:

Opening hours of provision.

Target:

- All youth provision per 1,000 youth population is accessible for a minimum of 4 hours per week
- 90% of larger youth provision are open at least 24 hours per week
- 80% of larger youth provision is open for 80% of school holidays, and weekends.

Youth Standard 6:

Electronic access to youth information.

Target:

- 80% of youth access points which are open more than ten hours per week have access to on-line youth information services.

OBJECTIVE 3

Authorities must secure provision, including detached and outreach work, which is attractive and relevant and hence promotes access to and participation in the youth service.

Youth Standard 7:

Number of contacts per thousand youth (13-19) population.

Target:

- 25% of total youth population

Youth Standard 8:

Number of individuals involved at least four times per month.

Target:

- 15% of total youth population

Youth Standard 9:

Number of individuals worked with intensively.

Target:

- 5% of total youth population

OBJECTIVE 4

Authorities must ensure user satisfaction with the youth services provided.

Youth Standard 10:

Eighty-five per cent of contacts report satisfaction with youth services offered.

OBJECTIVE 5

Authorities must demonstrate clear arrangements for involving young people in democratic processes.

Youth Standard 11:

Self indication by authority of its position on the LGAs Standards for Democratic Involvement ('Hear by Right', LGA/NYA July 2001).

OBJECTIVE 6

Authorities must promote achievement.

Youth Standard 12:

Participants can identify what they are achieving as a result of engaging in youth work and a proportion gain a youth achievement award e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Award or similar.

Target:

- 90% of youth participants can identify own achievements and 10% gain a specific award.

Youth Standard 13:

Percentage of sessions rated satisfactory or better by Ofsted.

Target:

- 90%

OBJECTIVE 7

Authorities must provide sufficient financial resource to secure an adequate youth service.

Youth Standard 14:

Youth Service spending per head of population aged 13 – 19 years.

Target:

At least £100 per head per annum (with additional funding for intensive work and disadvantage, including scarcity).

OBJECTIVE 8

Authorities must provide sufficient numbers of skilled staff reflecting social diversity of area.

Youth Standard 15:

Number of qualified staff by 13 – 19 population.

Target:

- 1 fte nationally qualified per 400 of 13 – 19 youth population.

Youth Standard 16:

Local authority spending on professional development of its staff.

Target:

- 5% of total youth service budget

Youth Standard 17:

Local authority spending on initial training for volunteers for 13 – 19 age group.

Target:

- £100 per person

OBJECTIVE 9

Authorities must have formal arrangements, in cash or in kind, which define the youth work contribution to key youth policy areas, including those with:

Youth Standard 18:

- a) the assisted (voluntary) sector

Youth Standard 19:

- b) the Connexions Service

Youth Standard 20:

- c) crime and disorder and community safety strategies

Youth Standard 21:

- d) schools and colleges

OBJECTIVE 10

Youth Standard 22:

Authorities must secure an authority-wide review and scrutiny group for young people's issues usually within a local strategic partnership.

APPENDIX 2

DfES SERVICE TARGETS

The Guidance

This guidance addresses four of the benchmarks (Performance Indicators) and should be used alongside the Local Authority Youth Service operational planning guidance sent to Local Authorities in a letter from Margaret Hodge on 3rd December 2003.

The four benchmarks are:

- Reach/Contact
- Participation
- Recorded outcomes
- Accredited outcomes

1. Reach/Contact

The benchmark is 25% `reach` by youth services into the target 13 –19 population (to reflect cultural diversity of the community). 'Reach' will now be defined as a 'contact' and this will be the term used in reporting youth service activities.

The definition of a contact is:

- The youth worker knows the name and face of the young person and is consciously building a relationship with that young person
- The young person may attend events occasionally
- The young person may seek information or advice
- The young person may be involved in issue-based session/s with a group at a school (but attendance at school assemblies does not count).

2. Participation

The benchmark for participation of the 13-19 population is 15%. The definition of participation is:

- The youth worker has an ongoing relationship with the young person **and**
- The young person is involved with/attends youth work sessions/activities on a regular basis and is participating in a youth work curriculum in some way **or**
- The young person takes part in a 'concentrated experience' - a piece of focused work such as a residential event or project.

3. Recorded outcomes

The benchmark is for 60% of participants to gain a recorded outcome. A recorded outcome is likely to have one or more of the following features:

- It shows the benefit derived and demonstrates personal progress as a result of a youth work intervention – *it is the result of identifiable progress that has been made within a programme of youth work. Youth work often takes place with young people in groups and this is the context within which much individual progress takes place. Recorded outcomes need to identify the achievement/learning gains for individual members and describe any particular role undertaken by a young person. For example, a local certificate for participating in a particular event, reaching a personal goal or target.*
- Provides evidence to show action/progression/distance travelled which in this case is evidenced by a youth worker not an external awarding body – *to show distance travelled the record must identify starting points, describe the process/identify what happened, and be clear about the achievement, learning gain or end product. This may include, for instance, a decision made as result of counselling or a detached work encounter.*
- Caters for different individuals – *a recording may utilise a range of formats that meet the need and abilities of differing young people and can accommodate a variety of levels of involvement.*
- Records a range of outcomes – *recognising that achievement is relative and depends on the starting point, the goals and length of time a young person has been involved as well as their individual needs.*
- Might be measured against a declared curriculum and thus be used to mark the achievement of a previously negotiated target or series of targets for that individual young person – *this may be an individual action plan covering a period of time/a course programme/a specific piece of project work.*
- Is meaningful (not just a narrative of events) – *confirms the achievement of a declared objective that is significant for that individual young person. Young people make many small steps on their learning journeys; for some individuals each small step is a major achievement and worthy of record, for others a number of steps are likely to be ‘rolled up’ into a package which becomes the recorded outcome (clearly, to be able to chart young people’s journeys it will be necessary to have some indication of their starting points).*
- Is recognisable within Ofsted frameworks for inspection – *recorded outcomes will clearly be owned by the young person however, they should be able to provide evidence to inspectors seeking to report within the section ‘Standards of young people’s achievement and the quality of youth work practice’.* There are three key measures that recorded outcomes can address:-
 - / *young people’s progress and success in responding to, achieving, challenging targets set and negotiated for the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding*
 - / *young people’s personal development, including their attitudes, values and self-confidence*

/ *young people's ability to function socially and as active citizens who are both autonomous individuals and responsible members of a community*

A range of tools/methods can be used for recording; for example: -

| *young people* may use learning plans, evaluation sheets, video, photography, diary logs, scrapbooks and music etc. The use of peer recording is an acceptable and, in many cases, a desirable part of the process. However, it is recommended that the recording is usually evidenced or signed off by a youth worker to count as a recorded outcome.

/ *youth workers* may use established frameworks, dated recordings to a standard format (perhaps shared by a local authority area or national voluntary organisation), notes made in an individual young person's file, evaluation and monitoring sheets etc. (or a combination of these).

Where there is a 'product' e.g. a video, theatre production, series of photographs, booklet, newsletter etc. etc. it will be necessary for the youth worker and/or young person to also record the process by which this was achieved and the learning that has accrued for the young person within that process. The product itself does not constitute a recorded outcome. This is of value to the young person who will have a better understanding of their specific contribution to the achievement of the group.

A recorded outcome does not necessarily lead to an accredited outcome. For some young people a recorded outcome is sufficient, for others the recorded outcome will form part of the learning journey towards an accredited outcome.

4. Accredited outcomes

The benchmark is for 30% of participants to gain an accredited outcome. Some young people may start to work towards an accredited outcome but may not achieve an award. In these instances what they have achieved, if properly supported and evidenced, can count as recorded outcomes.

Accredited outcomes will have one or more of the following features:

- Successful completion of one or more modules of a locally or nationally recognised award – *accreditation often takes the form of a verified certificate.*
- Be undertaken by young people supported within the youth work process – *the programme followed fits into the ethos of youth work and enables young people's ownership of the process.*
- Have currency/credibility outside youth work including enhancing life and social skills and, where possible, a link to employment, education and training – *many of the accreditation routes widely used within youth work are chosen because of their obvious benefits to the development of young people who can effectively integrate in society and become active citizens.*
- Be subject to either independent internal verification by the organisation making the award or be externally assessed by an awarding body –

therefore, securing quality, equality, consistency and attention to the health and safety of workers and young people.

Local Youth Service Awards will be encouraged to become part of a national accreditation system. At the moment there is no distinction between local and national awards, some national bodies are developing the accreditation of local 'units'. A formal verification of local awards would help to secure a more consistent approach alongside a Quality Assurance framework. The Network for Accrediting Young People's Achievement, co-ordinated by The National Youth Agency, has identified a national framework for awards and is developing a quality assurance framework for these awards.