

**JOINT MEETING OF CABINET MEMBERS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING, CULTURE AND LEISURE**

**Venue: Town Hall,
Moorgate Street,
Rotherham.**

Date: Wednesday, 9 November 2005

Time: 9.00 a.m.

A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.
3. Youth Matters Consultation (Rod Norton, Young People's Services Manager) (report herewith). (Pages 1 - 41)
- to approve the RMBC response to the Youth Matters Consultation

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

1.	Meeting:	Delegated Powers meeting
2.	Date:	9th November 2005
3.	Title:	Youth Matters Consultation
4.	Programme Area:	Children & Young People's Services

5. Summary:

The Government published the Green Paper 'Youth Matters' in July 2005 and asked for feedback within a consultation period ending 4th November 2005. The attached paper represents the RMBC response. It was not possible, due to Officer illness, to get Member approval for the response in the normal timescales and so Members are asked for retrospective approval.

6. Recommendations:

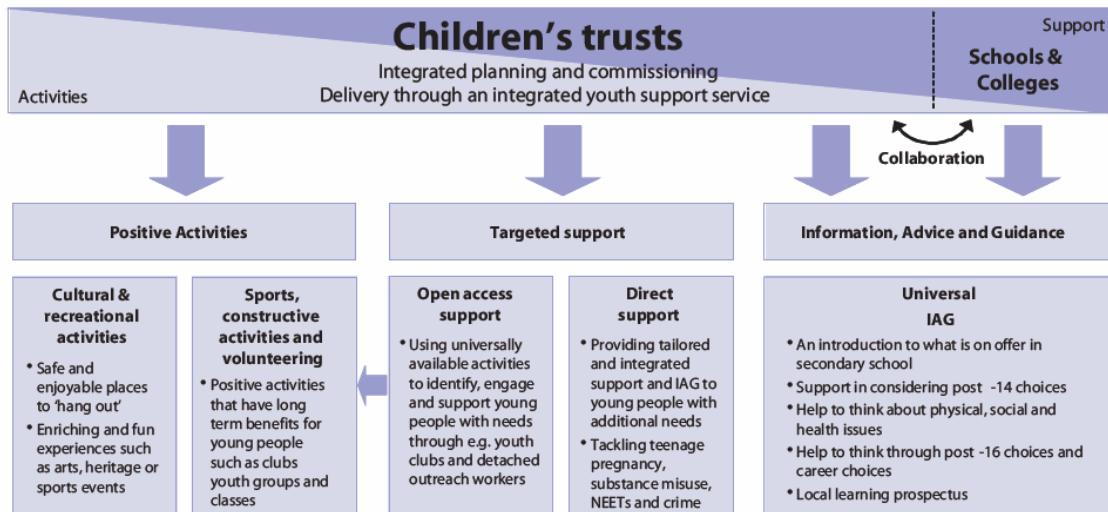
- **Members are asked to approve the RMBC response to the Youth Matters Consultation which is attached as Appendix One.**

7. Proposals and Details:

Youth Matters was published on 18th July 2005.

The main proposal of the paper is that local authorities will lead on developing youth policy and deliver this through an integrated Youth Support Service providing services ranging from universally available activities to specialist and targeted support. Local authorities will be responsible for planning and commissioning services from a variety of public, voluntary and private providers, against a new statutory duty to secure 'positive activities for all young people'. There will also be a set of national standards for positive activities, which will provide a framework for local youth offers. Subject to consultation and parliamentary timetables, amendments to the statutory basis will come into force in summer 2006.

It is proposed that Local Authorities will take the strategic lead in delivering this Service through local Children's Trust arrangements. Proposals are set out in the diagram below (taken from page 63 of the Green Paper).



Other specific proposals include:

- The introduction of an opportunity card. The proposal seems to be to use the card in two ways, firstly as a discount card for young people and secondly as a way of introducing a quasi-market system into the funding of services.
- To give teenagers "real influence over the range and nature of services on offer locally, particularly those that provide positive activities for young people". Some specific initiatives aimed at putting this into effect are:
 - The development of an 'Opportunity Fund'; a Government-funded budget to be spent as determined by young people locally.
 - £40m capital funding nationally for investment in youth facilities to be determined locally by young people.

- A clear role for young people in designing, commissioning and evaluating services.
- The development of an integrated package of support for young people with multiple needs, with a nominated lead professional with responsibility for oversight and contact with individual teenagers. The need for a clear and simple assessment process is emphasised and co-location of services in schools, drop-in centres and youth facilities to enable access is suggested. It is expected that this will lead to 'frontline youth support teams' focused on prevention and effective early intervention
- That each young person and their parents/carers should expect a clear minimum of Information, Advice and Guidance at different key stages. This will include introduction to secondary school, post-14 and post-16 choices, and personal social and health advice throughout their teenage years. Easy access to an innovative ICT service is also envisaged.
- Responsibility for commissioning IAG and its funding will be transferred from the Connexions Service to Local Authorities, working through Children and Young People's Trust arrangements, schools and colleges. It will be schools and colleges that are held accountable for ensuring the well-being and maximum progression of all pupils and students, including those with severe and complex learning difficulties and they will be able to commission IAG services directly where they believe existing provision is poor.

Officers have undertaken a consultation exercise with relevant partners and have also been part of the wider Connexions Service consultation.

A response to Youth Matters has been written following this consultation and this is attached as Appendix One.

Members are asked to approve the RMBC response to the Youth Matters consultation.

8. Finance:

There are no immediate financial implications related to this report

9. Risks and Uncertainties:

There are no risks or uncertainties directly related to this report.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications:

There are no policy and performance implications arising directly from this report.

There will be implications arising from any reorganisation of services as a result of Green Paper proposals but these will be the subject of future reports.

11. Background Papers and Consultation:

- Youth Matters. DfES 2005

Contact Name:

Rod Norton. Young People's Services Manager

Telephone: (01709) 822630

E-mail: rod.norton@rotherham.gov.uk

Youth Matters

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 4
November 2005

Your comments must reach us by that date.

department for

education and skills

creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

The information you send to us may need to be passed to colleagues within the Department for Education and Skills and/or published in a summary of responses received in response to this consultation. We will assume that you are content for us to do this, and that if you are replying by e-mail, your consent overrides any confidentiality disclaimer that is generated by your organisation's IT system, unless you specifically include a request to the contrary in the main text of your submission to us.

The Department may, in accordance with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, make available on public request, individual consultation responses. This will extend to your comments unless you inform us that you wish them to remain confidential.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

Name	Sonia Sharp
Organisation (if applicable)	Rotherham
Address:	Executive Director Children and Young People's Services Norfolk House Rotherham South Yorkshire S651AS

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact:

Telephone: 0870 000 2288

e-mail: info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:

Telephone: 01928 794888

Fax: 01928 794113

e-mail: consultation.unit@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Which of the following best describes you:

<input type="checkbox"/> Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Carer	<input type="checkbox"/> Young Person (under 13)
<input type="checkbox"/> Young Person (13-16)	<input type="checkbox"/> Young Person (17-19)	<input type="checkbox"/> Young Person (other) Please Specify in the box below
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Professional working with young people	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer working with young people	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify in the box below

Please Specify:

Executive Director Children and Young People's Services

If you work with young people, which best describes the organisation you work in:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Statutory Youth Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Connexions Service
<input type="checkbox"/> School	<input type="checkbox"/> Further or higher education institution	<input type="checkbox"/> Private or voluntary & community sector youth work organisation
<input type="checkbox"/> Private sector information and advice organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other voluntary & community sector organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:

Please Specify:

General

1 a) What do you think are the most important issues facing young people now?

Comments:

The Children and Young People's Partnership in Rotherham has recently undertaken a 'visioning exercise' with over 4000 young people in preparation for writing the single plan. Key issues which young people themselves identified were:

Making a Positive Contribution

What children and young people said:

- "Hear what we say not what you want to hear - don't let us down"
- "We feel proud of our achievements."
- "We do not get involved in decision making as we feel we are not listened to."
- "Young parents feel like they are treated as second class citizens."
- "We need a say in how you look after us. It is important to listen to what we say and do something about it. If its bad sort it out, if its good let's make sure it happens more often."
- "All young people are seen as jobs or naughty – adults stereotype young people – we feel stupid saying what we think or want."
- "Share the success of young people instead of hearing negative press all the time."
- "Rotherham is not just the town centre"

What children and young people would like to see in Rotherham:

- Adults, children and young people will treat each other with mutual respect.
- Adults will give children and young people their full attention by showing that they have listened and by providing genuine opportunities for working together in order to plan services and to share in decisions about life in Rotherham.
- A wide range of opportunities for children and young people to become involved as active partners in strategic planning for the borough, in voluntary

and community work and in the design and review of policies and procedures.

- Clear feedback to children and young people on the impact of their voice and influence activity and on the difference they have made.
- Rotherham as a children and young people friendly place – this will be seen in the town centre, in the buildings, in schools, in parks and leisure facilities and on public transport.
- Children and young people portrayed as positive and valued members of the community – their achievements will be celebrated by the media, by the Council and by schools.
- Children and young people in Rotherham seen as key ambassadors for the borough.

Achieve Economic Well-being

What children and young people said:

- “Combat stereotypes about certain parts of Rotherham”
- “We want more secure housing for young people in Rotherham.”
- “As looked after children we need a wider range of care placements to meet our needs. We should be part of the process that decides where and with whom we are going to live.”
- “We want to have respect from official people, to enable confidence to develop.”
- “Young people need to go out to work not only to personally develop but to be financially better off and to get out of the benefit trap.”
- “There needs to be affordable house prices for people so that they can buy their own property.”
- “We need to be able to get appropriate housing, council or private, when needed and not to be put on waiting list for years.”
- “Bus fares should be cheaper for students all year round and free bus passes for those who really need it.”
- “Students need more financial support so they don’t feel forced to go out to work.”
- “Realistic financial support for young people”

What children and young people would like to see in Rotherham:

- Accessible and cheap transport for children and young people connecting them to the places they want to be.
- All young people to have access to good quality housing and homelessness support, information and advice with affordable housing for all young people in need.
- Good quality vocational support, education and training for all young people who need it.
- The creation of real jobs for young people seen as an important aspect of the borough's economic regeneration.
- Children and young people planned into (not out of) local communities and the town centre.

Be Safe

What children and young people said:

- “We want safer, tidier streets.”
- “More accessible services please.”
- “We need more help in tackling bullying.”
- “Keep our streets safer:
 - Slow cars down on the streets
 - Have good street lights
 - Have metal barriers between road and pavement to reduce the impact if an accident occurs.”
- “Young people should be safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation. We should watch all children in schools, swimming baths and neighbourhoods; there should be a central number for people to ring.”
- “Recognise children getting abused quicker so they can stop it.”
- “Only bring us into care if you have to.”
- “Encouraging responsibility to look after each other”

What children and young people would like to see in Rotherham:

- Adults, children and young people working together to challenge bullies and

bullying behaviour wherever it takes place.

- All services alert to the potential abuse of children and young people whoever the perpetrator might be.
- Children and young people understanding their rights and challenging inappropriate behaviour.
- Systems for children and young people to feed in their concerns and complaints.
- Clear responses and time-scales that are appropriate for the nature of children and young people's difficulties.
- A commitment to challenge, confront and deal with behaviours that contribute to children and young people feeling unsafe frightened and lacking in trust.
- The media portraying a positive view on the relationship between children, young people and the wider community.
- That action will be taken against that small group of people of all ages that have a devastating impact on the lives of children and young people.
- Streets that are clean, well lit and tidy, including the areas where children and young people congregate and play.

Be Healthy

What children and young people said:

- "We need mental health awareness which includes bullying, self-harm, stress."
- "Stop drugs being given to young children."
- "Sports: more organised activities, wider variety of activities and arts facilities with cheaper/free access."
- "Health advice for young people from youth workers, school and college."
- "We need healthy foods/shops – healthy eating in hospitals, schools and lessons."
- "We want more fresh fruit and vegetables and to grow own food - also free or cheaper fresh fruit and vegetables."
- "More drugs and alcohol advice and information aimed at young people."
- "Services for young people need to be varied, e.g. local and town centre, opening times to suit young people, confidentiality, different methods, different venues – school, youth clubs, doctors."
- "We need more awareness about self-harm (schools, doctors, etc).

- “We need counsellors in school who can have a one-to-one with every pupil so no one gets singled out.”

What children and young people would like to see in Rotherham:

- Children and young people to be physically, mentally and emotionally healthy.
- A wide range of preventative health work on offer to make sure that children and young people have the very best information to help them make informed choices with regards to their health.
- Services that are varied, with information, advice, guidance, counselling and support available where children and young people are including in schools, local communities and in the town centre.
- Arts, sports and leisure facilities that are children and young people friendly and affordability will not be a block to taking part.

Enjoy and Achieve

What children and young people said:

- “There’s nothing to do in the town centre.... and what there is to do is expensive”
- “There needs to be more facilities for children.”
- “We want more grassy areas with trees and plants.”
- “Young people feel there isn’t enough information or education on CV’s, work experiences, job finding. “
- “In order to enjoy and achieve as looked after children we need the right school placement to help us to reach our potential.”
- “We believe that we can do well at school and training.”
- “We want more support for young people who aren’t in the system.”
- “Don’t exclude parents completely as some young people don’t cope well on their own.”
- “A place to ‘chill’ without being seen as trouble causers e.g. parks, youth clubs, space.”
- “Young people want a safe environment and to be loved and accepted by family and friends along with nice homes, money and a healthy diet (at home and in school).”

- “More group work to build up young people’s confidence and self esteem”

What children and young people would like to see in Rotherham:

- The very best learning environments possible.
- A world class educational system, where every child and young person is welcomed, valued and helped to find the best learning pathway.
- Children and young people encouraged and supported to achieve their fullest potential, no matter what life issues or difficulties they encounter.
- Children and young people involved fully in the development of their learning opportunities.
- Children and young people having access to a range of positive activities and places to go including educational, cultural and sporting opportunities both inside and outside of schools and colleges and both in local communities and the town centre.

1 b) How are these issues different for younger (13-16) compared to older (17-19) teenagers?

Comments:

There are common themes throughout teenage years, which include many of the issues uncovered by the Rotherham visioning exercise.

However, there is also a developmental gap between 13 and 16, and the emphasis changes as young people grow up and can exercise more choice and independence.

13 – 16 issues include: bullying: relationships: academic pressure; the need to develop social skills; mobility and transport: health education and advice.

At 17 – 19 young people are moving towards independence and leaving home, so the emphasis is on employment issues, work-based learning; unemployment and poverty traps; cost of mobility.

The issues noted above are simply examples and do not represent any exhaustive list. There will also be just as much differentiation based on gender, class, race, sexuality, ability/disability as on age.

2 Are there issues faced by particular groups of teenagers that are not addressed in this document? If so, what are they?

X Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Youth Matters is weak on analysing and differentiating the needs of different groups of young people. Discussion is around very general needs for targeted support and/or universal IAG rather than specific needs of individual groups.

There is a lack of specificity, even in Chapter 6 of the need and focus for intensive, integrated support services for increasing numbers of vulnerable and at risk young people.

Obvious groups with specific needs where the paper says very little are:

Young people involved in the criminal justice programme

Teenage parents

Disabled young people

BME young people

Asylum seekers and refugees

Young Carers

LGBT young people

3 Do you know of any projects or initiatives which have been outstandingly successful in tackling the challenges covered in this document? If so, please give details.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Rotherham has many examples of outstanding projects meeting the needs of diverse groups of young people in both the statutory and voluntary sectors. Examples of good practice include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer education, evaluation and quality assurance projects/groups • Advice, information and counselling projects • Domestic violence work and projects • International work and exchanges • Voice and influence work <p>Specific details can be given on request.</p>		

4 a) How can we encourage young people to take their responsibilities seriously?

<p>Comments:</p> <p>Behaving responsibly is a learned quality just like any other positive attribute. We need to offer young people many and varied opportunities to learn how to behave responsibly and what this means, because it is not always a straight forward and undisputed concept.</p> <p>Providing environments, both inside and outside the family, where young people are loved, trusted and given the opportunity to learn (including the appropriate testing of boundaries) should be the bedrock of any upbringing.</p> <p>Responsibility is also a two way street and the Rotherham visioning exercise showed that young people expect to be treated with respect by adults as a starting point not as an end point.</p> <p>We need to provide experiences for young people where they can learn the effects of their behaviour on others and the benefits for all of mutual respect.</p> <p>Where young people do overstep the mark there need to be clear, fair, consistently applied sanctions so that this too becomes part of an educative process.</p> <p>Enabling young people to have a genuine voice and influence in how services are developed is an incredible important part of building responsible behaviour and the emphasis with Youth Matters on this area of work is warmly welcomed.</p>
--

It is also worth remembering that youth has always been a time for irresponsibility.

4 b) What should the incentives be for good behaviour?

Comments:

Positive feedback to young people delivered through positive relationships is the basis for any positive development – this is as true for adults as it is for young people.

Young people can be 'bribed' or 'bought' (often their view of certain 'rewards') but positive recognition is the best way of increasing self worth and self esteem in the long term.

4 c) What sanctions should be applied for poor and disruptive behaviour?

Comments:

A process of managing poor and disruptive behaviour needs to include and involve young people as part of a local voice and influence strategy. A range of appropriate, fair and consistently applied sanctions should be clearly understood by young people.

Some of the young people who behave most irresponsibly are some of the most vulnerable and damaged young people in our society. We remain unconvinced that isolating such young people from their communities by withdrawing access to positive activities is a sensible or workable approach. Where is the evidence base that such isolation improves behaviour?

4 d) Do you know of any examples of schemes which have applied these kinds of incentives and sanctions effectively?

Comments:

There are a range of schemes which create opportunities for young people to gain self-esteem and be praised and recognised, include:

- Millennium Volunteers
- Duke of Edinburgh award
- U-project
- Princes Trust Team Challenge
- Peer mentoring and buddying projects
- Restorative justice work

Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) has demonstrated evidence of successful diversionary activities, with no financial reward. Young people are able to select activities that interest and motivate them on a non-compulsory basis.

5 What more could be done to divert young people from risk-taking behaviour, like smoking, binge-drinking and volatile substance and illicit drugs misuse?

Comments:

Taking risks is part of growing up. Most adults took risks like this when they were young, and some continue to do so. We must have a clear harm reduction strategy for all such behaviour and support young people in what is often a normal part of growing up.

The emphasis in Youth Matters on a clear 'Youth Offer' which should include access to information, advice and counselling for all is most welcomed.

Most young people, given accurate, up-to-date information about the risks associated with their behaviour, will make informed and safe choices.

We need to show young people that they have real choices and to support them in choosing, to help them recognise that their behaviour might be endangering their future, and to continue to develop a supportive framework which enables them to receive help if their risk-taking becomes dangerous or a concern to them or others.

6 What practical benefits and challenges will there be in developing an integrated youth support service?

Comments:

RMBC welcomes the opportunity provided by Youth Matters to take forward the further integration of services to young people.

We would argue that this needs to go beyond the very positive idea of a Youth Support Service to a Youth Support and Development Service. The education and development of young people will be a crucial way in which we work towards more positive outcomes and this needs to be in addition to a function of support.

Benefits of an integrated service include:

- Making services for young people more efficient and effective.
- Bringing together youth policy development and funding in one place allowing for transparency and a single point of responsibility.
- Engaging more young people in positive activities and empowering them through voice and influence activity to shape the services they receive.
- The joining together of current advice, information, counselling and guidance services provided by a range of organisations so that young people have a single point of call for these services.
- Providing better and more personalised intensive support for each young person who has serious problems or gets into trouble.
- The involvement of a wide range of organisations from the voluntary, community, independent and private sectors to increase choice and secure the best outcomes.
- Making services more responsive to what young people and their parents/carers need.
- Having a single set of agreed outcomes that drive the whole service across the borough.

Challenges will include:

- The creation of a common culture and practice across a range of specialist providers.
- The development of a robust commissioning and resource allocation frameworks will require commitment and co operation of all partners and will have cost implications in terms of infrastructure, particularly if devolved to schools.
- Ensuring that the sub-regional aspects of current Connexions delivery are not lost.
- The maintenance of specialist roles in a context of integrated working will need to be carefully managed.

- The management of youth crime prevention in co operation with local YOTs.
- The challenge of delivering both universal and targeted services on a limited budget will not disappear just because we have created new organisational structures.
- The Business and Commerce community value the strong statistical analysis that Connexions is able to supply and are concerned that planned changes would result in a loss of capacity at a sub regional level to produce this information. They wish to have clear routes to make contact with the world of education and have clarity about the future service. They are concerned about the future nature and robustness of careers advice to young people at critical stages in their education.

7 How can the Connexions brand be used to best effect within the reformed system?

Comments:

The Connexions brand is widely recognised by young people and has achieved high satisfaction rates in national and local evaluations therefore RMBC is not opposed to the retention of the Connexions brand

However, we remain sceptical that the brand will in reality survive given that many partnerships will wish to integrate young people's services into local brands developed to give identity to local partnerships.

8 What more can we do to ensure that reformed services are focused on achieving the improved outcomes we all want to see?

Comments:

- Involve the voice and influence of young people directly at every stage of the service development and delivery process.
- Ensure that the best of current provision is integrated/commissioned – build from a firm foundation of proven activity/services in order to ensure continuity and credibility with young people – then expand upon this.
- Seek to ensure a healthy collaboration between providers.
- Ensure clear national quality standards are in place and quality assured both locally and through the JAR.
- A focus upon outcomes through joint targets, KPIs and a cross-agency performance management system rather than conflicting agency targets.
- Consistent information sharing and use of the CAF.

Chapter 3

Empowering Young People: Things to do and Places to go

9 a) What do you think of the emphasis in the proposals on empowering young people themselves to shape local services?

X Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

We fully support this emphasis.

Young people's voice and influence should be fully integrated into all aspects of service development and delivery, from design and planning to delivery, inspection, evaluation and governance.

Young people should be fully and directly involved in commissioning processes rather than exerting influence through artificial quasi-market constructions.

This emphasis should not just apply at a local level; good practice needs to be taken into the policy arena at sub-regional, regional and national levels with a special focus on Government Office, Government Departments and Inspection/Quality Assurance regimes.

9 b) What options are there for achieving this?

Comments ;

There needs to be a clear understanding of what 'empowering' young people means.

In Rotherham we believe that to be successful and effective, 'empowering' has to be around **giving all children and young people real voice and real influence** in such a way that they have and can see a real impact.

There needs to be a clear strategy for voice and influence work with children and young people that includes; an underpinning philosophy on ways of working; potential new structures and ways of working; encourage services to work together; and has a focus on capacity building to ensure as many children and young people and possibly have the opportunities to take part in the process.

Alongside capacity building with children and young people is the need for capacity building with many adults and institutions; they are the biggest block to the actual impact of children and young people's voice.

We have to ensure children and young people are in:-

- Strategic thinking
- Service design
- Service planning
- Commissioning of services
- Service delivery
- Quality assurance and inspection of services
- Evaluation

Many existing structures used to give voice and influence to children and young people are simply mirrors of adult ways of working, while there is nothing intrinsically wrong with these, they are not always effective. Working with children and young people we have to develop new innovative, inclusive structures alongside realistic timescales that ensure that intent is turned into real action. Too often 'empowerment' is turned into 'tokenism'.

10 a) What should be done centrally to support the development and delivery of local opportunity cards?

Comments:

It is not clear what the main function of the proposed opportunity card is to be.

Is it to be a discount card with increased/extended discounts for positive behaviour and sanctions for irresponsible behaviour? Is it to be a resource allocation tool through the creation of new quasi-markets? Is it to be a junior version of the adult national identity card?

Clear decisions as to purpose and then extensive piloting will be essential if the relative failure of the Connexions card is not to be repeated (DFES Research Report RR614, Jan 2005).

Major resourcing at a national level will be needed - such an initiative would require major backing by commerce and business to ensure credibility with young people and investment by local providers.

Many young people, particularly those in greatest need of support, will need reassurance that such cards hold a value for them (i.e. not an identity/tracking card).

There will also need to be clear links to existing local card systems.

10 b) How should opportunity cards be developed so that the maximum number of young people can benefit?

Comments:

They would need a national identity and currency so that young people can use them sub-regionally/regionally, nationally when travelling/on holiday etc – as well as locally.

11 a) Which activities do you think have the most benefits for young people?

Comments:

Activities which are educative and have personal and social development at their heart. This can be through activities which have traditionally been undertaken through youth work, through more formal training/education or through work based learning/experience /enterprise.

If we are to guarantee positive outcomes for young people we need to enter into relationships which allow them to learn and develop and not only activities which divert young people from negative behaviour for the short time that they are actually taking place.

The full involvement of young people at every stage in the process, see above, is one of the best ways of making sure that this happens.

Young people should be able to access a wide range of activities from art to sport to adventure. We know many young people who have benefited greatly from residential experiences, international exchanges, and community-based arts, music, drama and media activities.

There is also a lack of safe places for non-organised activities

There a range of issues impacting on accessibility, variety and choice including: transport, safety, child care, gender, religion, sexuality, ethnic origin.

11 b) Do the proposed national standards on activities cover the right areas?

Yes x No Not Sure

Comments:

The emphasis in the national standards seems to be on sports based leisure. While such activity certainly has a part to play the standards should be extended to include personal development and growth, arts, work-related learning and training, work opportunities and broadening the range of young people's experiences

We support a national **entitlement** for young people to access activities of their choice, at venues and times that meet their needs, but we do not believe there should be a national requirement to participate.

11 c) Are they achievable and affordable within existing resources?

Yes x No Not Sure

Comments:

The proposals for additional services within Youth Matters are modest. Even so, it is doubtful that they can be achieved within existing resources with an additional £40m Opportunity Fund. We would urge caution in creating unrealistic expectations in young people.

Ultimately it will depend upon the final nature and composition of the new standards and Government should ensure that any national standards including the content of the youth offer are achievable within the available resources.

Chapter 4

Young People as Citizens: Making a Contribution

12 Will our proposals, taken together with those of the Russell Commission, lead to increased mutual respect between young people and others in the community?

Yes

No

X Not Sure

Comments:

RMBC believes that opportunities for volunteering should be expanded and that volunteering brings benefits to both the young person as a volunteer and to others. Young people gain useful skills and experience that can benefit them in the workplace and in wider life.

If the Russell Commission proposals are endorsed, funded in full, and supported at the highest levels, then they represent an exciting agenda.

13 What more can we do to recognise and celebrate young people's positive contributions to their communities?

Comments:

Establish/encourage both local and national recognition of positive/active citizenship through both formal and informal methods.

Local/national awards and accreditation will need to be part of this but more informal local celebrations and publicity developing a positive attitude towards young people will be just as important.

Support for the NYA positive images initiative would be a good first step.

14 Would the opportunity to earn rewards motivate young people to get involved in their communities?

Yes

No

X Not Sure

Comments:

We do not believe that tangible rewards themselves are necessarily a key motivator – what motivates most is that the contribution is valued and has a purpose, and being respected is the most important prize.

Young people may also be interested in earning rewards for their club or project so that they can, for example, buy new equipment, re-decorate, or increase the hours of a part-time worker.

15 How can we ensure that young people from the diverse range of communities that make up today's society are effectively engaged by service providers?

Comments:

- By involving a wide range of young people in the development, delivery, inspection and evaluation of services.
- Target funding to ensure that it happens.
- Specifically commissioning work that targets difficult to reach young people.
- Ensure that the work force we employ reflects the communities we are serving.
- Involve a range of providers including the voluntary sector.
- Ensure appropriate training and awareness

Chapter 5

Supporting Choices: Information, Advice and Guidance

16 What kind of help and support is most important for young people?

Comments:

Young people value the opportunity to talk confidentially 1:1 with a trusted professional about their learning and support needs and value ongoing advocacy and support services.

Young people want timely accessible support services which are tailored to their individual circumstances and provide independent, impartial and relevant information, advice and guidance.

Young people should have choice over where and from whom they can access support. Access to support should not be limited to a single setting eg school and needs to include personal contact alongside ICT telephone group activity and curriculum.

Support services should operate within a clear set of principles which are jointly determined by young people and the commissioning body.

17 How can we ensure that information, advice and guidance provided to young people is comprehensive, impartial and challenges rather than perpetuates traditional stereotypes?

Comments:

- Set national minimum standards which include level of information, breadth, impartiality – IAG needs to be objective and industry focussed.
- Recognise that information, advice and guidance are different but interdependent activities.
- Ensure that all staff are suitably qualified and have access to ongoing professional development to deliver their remit within information advice and guidance community.
- Ensure that information advice and guidance informs individual choices and is delivered within the relevant framework of the needs of the economy and emerging industries.
- Ensure that all teachers delivering CEG curriculum and ILP are trained to have a current understanding of industry (up to date knowledge) and routes in 14-19 learning.
- Increase access to non-specialised training for multi-disciplinary workers. Ensure that provision is commissioned from providers who have expertise and up to date knowledge of related markets.

18 What do you think of our proposals to devolve responsibility for information, advice and guidance to children's trusts, schools and colleges?

Agree

Disagree

X Not sure

Comments:

Delegation of commissioning to a local level could offer an opportunity for schools and colleges to hold a shared responsibility for delivery processes and joint accountability for outcomes. Success will be dependent on ensuring that those involved have sufficient expertise to undertake this duty and that this is delivered in a framework of partnership working.

We believe that it is correct to define IAG quite widely, as Youth Matters does, but standards need to carefully define what we mean by IAG so that none of the components are left out.

Careers education is an essential part of the school/college curriculum but tends to lack status; careers guidance, whilst requiring skilled staff crucially also requires detailed and current understanding of the labour market and links to continued education and/or employers. The differences are very important, schools and colleges should be responsible for delivering careers education but we need further clarity on how they will access careers guidance if they opt out of partnership arrangements.

We support out an explicit entitlement for all young people based on national minimum standards and have already undertaken work in this area locally.

In separating the responsibility for commissioning IAG and targeted additional youth support we need to be careful that targeted support is not seen as stigmatising and viewed in a negative way by young people, particularly those who may need individual support in order to be able to access IAG effectively.

There would be a need to establish clear performance indicators and ensure that they are owned by all involved in the delivery chain.

19 a) Do you agree that it is important to have minimum expectations of the information, advice and guidance received by young people?

X Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

We support with the NACP statement that;

“ All young people should have access to well informed career support services through a system of careers information advice and guidance services rooted in good labour market understanding which ensures that :

- They have experienced and acquired an effective foundation of careers education*
- They understand the contribution that effective career information advice and guidance can make to their working lives*
- Having developed appropriate and relevant skills they know how to access such service and use them effectively to support informed decision making*
- And that they make use of them”*

(NACP 2005)

High quality impartial guidance must be delivered by qualified staff who are fully informed of local economic needs . This process must be underpinned by a robust careers education curriculum through a national framework.

Young people and their parents/carers need to have a clear understanding of their entitlement to individual, independent, inclusive and timely impartial information advice and guidance. This entitlement should be lifelong, involving the full range of learning providers and include young people in the delivery of peer guidance. Schools, colleges and work based learning providers are key to enabling partnerships to deliver flexible and responsive services and all should be expected to achieve quality award status.

19 b) Are the proposed expectations correct for each age group?

Yes

X No

Not Sure

Comments:

The focus appears to be too narrow on schools and should be broadened to include the wider community. There is a need to establish clear minimum expectations for post 16 services, particularly recruitment and placement services, and links with employers which are critical to providing a comprehensive service.

Young people should expect:

- Access to quality assured information resources in a range of settings eg learning institutions, youth advice/Connexions/community centres and via web and access to telephone helpline.
- To have a session with an adviser for an assessment of needs and information in relation to transition planning and developing a learning plan/transition plan at key points including the end of year nine and in year 11 with access to impartial careers, IAG or targeted support if needed or required.
- Drop in and outreach facilities in school/college, WBL and their local youth/community centres to access face to face advice and guidance.
- Access to services outside school 6 days per week including evening/weekends at advertised locations.
- Access to an enhanced service and have a named personal adviser to provide ongoing IAG support if they are outside of learning and employment or experiencing personal barriers or difficulties.

20 a) Do you agree there is a case for quality standards for information, advice and guidance? If so, what should they cover?

X Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

We strongly agree that there is a case for quality standards and would advocate that these are devised nationally.

Standards need to be sufficiently flexible in order that they can be implemented across a range of settings and could build on the nationally recognised Matrix awards but include specific requirements on access to a CEG curriculum and partnership working .

Standards should cover

- Leadership and management
- Access
- Information resources
- Provision of impartial and objective information advice and guidance
- Work Force Training And Development
- Quality Assurance / Customer Feedback
- Monitoring And Evaluation

Any standards devised need to link into the wider picture of 14-19 and schools reform. Standards need to regularly validated and progress reviewed by the School Improvement Partnership against progression and attainment indicators.

20 b) How can they be made affordable without putting pressure on financial or workforce resources?

Comments:

Working in partnership with other agencies to pool resources and share in-house training. However, providers of IAG need to be committed to achieving the standards and costs involved should be accommodated within their budgets.

Learning providers should be able to draw on expertise from the CYP School Improvement teams for support with policy development, staff training etc.

Peer inspection and support frameworks and joint training across delivery area or Local Authority areas could support implementation.

One option could be to develop the concept of Beacon Schools for schools who have achieved the standard and have been identified as leaders in relation to CEG and IAG standards.

21 Would quality awards for IAG help to ensure high quality and impartiality?

X Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Quality Awards could contribute to the development of best practice and help support the delivery of high quality and impartial services. However the current Quality Awards are not consistent nationally and offer a simplistic solution for a complex area of delivery, focusing predominantly on CEG delivery and not the wider multi agency support dimension for IAG. Local awards are only of value if they are linked to credible national standards eg Matrix and a clear performance management framework.

Although a quality award may help to ensure this, it could also be a barrier if organisations are not in a position to achieve it.

Quality awards should involve peer professional and young people in the assessment/inspection process.

Schools, colleges and work based learning providers are key to enabling partnerships to deliver flexible and responsive services and all should be expected to achieve quality award status.

22 Do you think a 'personal health MoT' for 12-13 year olds would be an effective way of helping young people make a successful transition to the teenage years and to secondary education?

x Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

In principle, the idea of a 'review' at the age of 12/13 is positive and is fully supported by RMBC if it is part of a holistic approach to a young person's health and emotional well being.

Would need to link to CAF where appropriate and relevant.

Our only questions are practical ones:

- Who would undertake such a 'review'?
- To what 'depth' would it go?
- Where will the finance come from?

Any review would need to involve young people and be young people led and linked to the Healthy Schools work/initiative/standards.

Chapter 6

All Young People Achieving: Reforming Targeted Support

23 Do you think there is a good case for bringing together within children's trusts responsibility for commissioning different services which provide support to young people with additional needs?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Yes.

It is the logical way to ensure a single, unified and consistent set of services to young people. We believe that this should be the case for all services to young people under the remit of the Children and Young People's Partnership and not only 'additional' services.

Aligning budgets may well increase efficiency but total resources will still be stretched. The delivery of both targeted and universal services proved difficult for Connexions and there would seem to be nothing in Youth Matters which would mean that this will not continue to be a problem.

24 How can we ensure that young people facing particular barriers, for example those who are disabled, are effectively engaged by service providers?

Comments:

These are the very groups of young people referred to above, who require high levels of support in order to engage with services initially and then to sustain that contact in order to:

- Involve young people through local voice and influence strategies (see above).
- Specifically include in national standards/entitlement.
- Commission specific work in this area – from young people themselves if this is appropriate.
- Listen to specialist services and those with most experience of the client group.
- Listen to young people and their parents/carers.
- Establish effective referral and exit pathways.
- Effective partnership working established around Lead Professional and

CAF.

25 How can we ensure that the new lead professional role is successful in co-ordinating the delivery of targeted support to young people who need it?

Comments:

- Need to establish effective multi-agency teams at a local school/community/district level, from and through which the lead professional role is identified and determined.
- Ensure consistency at transition points in young people's lives e.g. use of CAF and implementation of Personal Support Plans at 16 years and at 19 years (Adult Services).
- Work closely/be located with and work in partnership to deliver effective support plans.
- Good information sharing.

26 What more could be done to help older teenagers make a smooth transition to support from adult services, where they need them?

Comments:

- As above (25) – implement PSPs for vulnerable young adults and ensure effective transition/referral pathways.
- Input from appropriate specialist agencies to support specific issues for individuals.
- Preparing adult services to respond to the needs of older Young People/Young Adults.
- Clear information sharing protocols.

Parents

27 At what stage(s) of their children's lives would parents find it most helpful to receive information about how they can support their teenage children?

Comments:

Throughout the 10-18 years period but more specifically at the following key times:

- Primary to Secondary School transition
- Year 8 to year 9 transition, ie career/option choices
- Late Y10 – early Y11, ie Key stage 4 assessments/exams
- Late Y11, ie transition to further education, employment, training.

Information needs to be formal education institutions but also community based.

28 a) On which issues would parents of teenagers most like support?

Comments:

Key areas of need identified by the Rotherham Youth Start project are:

- Relationships /Contraception/Sexual Health
- Mental/Emotional Well Being (includes numerous categories e.g. bereavement, depression, self harm, anger, anxiety, bullying, stress etc.)
- Home Life (relationships with parents/carers/siblings/other family members/family break up/ domestic violence etc.)
- Social Welfare Issues (e.g. housing/benefits/debt/ young people rights etc.)
- Abuse (includes rape & sexual assault)
- Drugs & Alcohol
- Education & Employment Issues (e.g. truancy/exclusion/ exams/work life/opportunities etc.)
- Health (e.g. smoking/puberty/physical health etc.)

28 b) How, or through whom should information be delivered?

Comments:

- Community based sessions/projects with skilled, trained staff.
- Youth work sessions and groups.
- Leaflets, brochures.
- WWW.
- Schools/Colleges – PSHE, parenting groups, PAs and other pastoral staff.
- Access to specialist agencies.
- Health projects and GPs.

This is not an exhaustive list – the key is that a range of methods should be coordinated through a single Youth Support and Development Service.

29 How could schools help parents remain involved with their teenagers' learning and future education opportunities?

Comments:

- Schools must welcome parental interest/involvement, ensure regular information flow etc.
- Establish climate of mutual respect.
- Use of schools by parents for their own social, recreational, learning needs – a community resource.
- Go beyond parent's evenings!
- Schools should become the centre of their communities for a range of provision – they should be extended (community) schools.

Other

30 Do you have any other general comments?

Comments:

The main thrust of Youth Matters – the creation of an integrated service managed through Children’s Trust arrangements, is supported by RMBC.

The voice and influence of young people needs to be central to all developments as this is the best way of guaranteeing quality and relevance. By this we mean ongoing active involvement not reference to the occasional focus group.

The proposals do not reflect the barriers that some young people face in accessing experiences and opportunities, through such things as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or just living in rural or urban communities. This needs to be rectified in final proposals.

Commissioning through Children and Young People’s Trust arrangements is seen as the preferable model. If schools and colleges commission directly they:

- Should meet robust criteria on their readiness to commission.
- Commission provision which has expertise in IAG and knowledge of the labour market.
- Evidence that they can meet clear service specification and agreed quality standards, underpinned by robust quality standards and performance management arrangements.
- Ensure that every young person receives impartial, high quality advice and guidance.

Following the lack of success of the Connexions Card RMBC has serious reservations relating to the purpose and value for money of the proposed Opportunity Cards. Any proposal needs to be thoroughly piloted.

We remain unconvinced by the outline proposals to use Opportunity Cards as a funding mechanism.

The local business community value the strong statistical analysis that Connexions has been able to supply and are concerned that planned changes would result in a loss of capacity at a sub regional to produce this information. They are concerned about the nature and robustness of future careers advice to young peoples at critical stages in their education.

Finally how will potential tensions between National statutory requirements and Local Area Agreements and flexibilities be resolved?

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply

Here at the Department for Education and Skills we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

xYes No

Code of Practice on Consultation

All UK national public consultations are required to conform to the following standards:

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

Further information on the Code of Practice can be accessed through the Cabinet Office Website: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/consultation-guidance/content/introduction/index.asp>

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 4 November 2005

Consultation responses can be made:

www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations

by email to: youthmatters.consultation@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

or in writing to:

Consultation Unit
Area 1A Castle View House
East Lane
Runcorn
Cheshire
WA7 2GJ