



# Aiming High for Young People: A Ten Year Strategy for Positive Activities

## Implementation Plan

### A summary

This summary has been produced by the Regional Youth Work Unit - North East, a strategic development body supporting both statutory and voluntary youth services across the region.

## 1. Introduction

Aiming High for Young People: A Ten Year Strategy for Positive Activities was published in July 2007 and set out the Government's vision for improved services and opportunities for young people. This implementation plan highlights progress to date and key actions to be taken over the next 12 months to implement the 55 commitments made in Aiming High to increase young people's participation in constructive leisure time activities.

The 6 key objectives of Aiming High are

- Rebalancing the public narrative about young people
- Empowering young people to increase their influence over the design and delivery of services for them
- Increasing the number of local places for young people to go
- Removing barriers and supporting young people to access local opportunities and services for them
- Improving the capacity and quality of services for young people
- Supporting and developing the youth workforce to employ the very best practice in working with young people

Achieving these objectives will require integrated working from the full range of local partners, including Local Authorities, Youth Offending Teams, Sports and Arts Bodies, Primary Care Trusts, Schools and Colleges, Third Sector youth organisations, and young people and their communities. At national level, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) will work with other Government departments to implement Aiming High.

## 2. Aiming High in Context

Aiming High builds on the reforms set out in the Youth Matters and Youth Matters: Next Steps, which aim to deliver effective and integrated services for young people. This is in line with the Government's ambition stated in the Children's Plan that all young people will enjoy happy, healthy and safe teenage years and make a successful transition to adulthood. It responds to evidence from both the UK and USA which indicates that participation in positive activities during the teenage years leads to improved later life outcomes. The proportion of young people participating in positive activities will be measured through the new Youth Public Service Agreement (PSA), and there will be a particular focus on securing the participation of the estimated 25% of young people who currently don't take part in organised positive activities.

Implementation of Aiming High will need to take place alongside, and link to, other measures intended to increase opportunities for young people, including:

- The roll out of extended schools
- Local implementation of the PE and Sports Strategy (5 hours/week of sporting opportunities for 5 – 16 years olds, and 3 hours/week for 16 – 19 year olds)
- More volunteering opportunities for young people, led by v
- Access to cultural opportunities in and out of school, led by a new Youth Culture Trust
- Implementation of 14 – 19 reforms, with young people having access to a wider curriculum and staying in education or training until the age of 18

Key challenges to be overcome include

- Building effective mechanisms to enable meaningful participation by young people in shaping the local offer
- Engaging the most marginalised young people
- Bridging the gap between young people and their communities
- Increasing the quantity and quality of opportunities for young people
- Children's Trusts securing effective contributions from a wide range of local partners in responding to the specific needs of young people

£679 million is being provided to implement Aiming High, including £124 million revenue funding, £60 million capital funding, and £495 million to continue existing baseline funding. In addition, £160 million will be provided through the unclaimed assets scheme to improve youth facilities.

The Youth Taskforce has been created, building on the work of the Respect Taskforce, to support local partners working with young people who are experiencing serious difficulties such as truancy, anti-social behaviour or problems with alcohol or drugs. The approach of the Taskforce will be a combination of tough enforcement, support and prevention, and its programme is set out in the Youth Taskforce Action Plan available at [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters/yt/actionplan/](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters/yt/actionplan/) The Taskforce will focus its work on 50 of the most disadvantaged areas to improve the offer of places to go and to increase young people's participation in positive activities.

### 3. The Story So Far

Amongst the developments which have taken place since the publication of Aiming High in 2007 are the following:

- Announcement of the 50 local authorities receiving an additional £25 million for the Youth Opportunity Fund, reflecting the high levels of deprivation
- 9 Empowering Young People pilot areas announced, to test the affect of subsidising access to positive activities
- DCSF are working with the Local Government Association (LGA) and National Youth Agency (NYA) to develop a baseline to measure the extent of young people's involvement in deciding how budgets for activities are spent
- Announcement in the Children's Plan of £160 million for youth facilities
- Announcement of 15 local authorities receiving extra investment for targeted activity programmes to engage young people with the most serious problems
- The Youth Hostel Association invited to deliver the Do It 4 Real residential programme in 2008 – 09
- Plans announced to invest up to £100 million through a Youth Sector Development Fund to develop the capacity of third sector organisations working with the most disadvantaged young people
- 'Call for Evidence' launched into how support for front-line practice could be improved
- Plans published for a national body for youth leadership
- The Children's Workforce Network and Children's Workforce Development Council engaged to lead on the youth workforce remodelling programme

- An indicator of young people's participation in positive activities included in the National Indicator Set

#### **4. Rebalancing the Public Narrative about Young People**

Aiming High included a recognition that young people grow up in a culture which has negative perceptions of youth, and committed to do more to celebrate young people's positive achievements. Amongst the ways in which this will be achieved are:

- Local youth led celebration events - work is currently taking place to develop a number of pilots around the country, with events expected to take place in late 2008/early 2009.
- A 'national youth week' which would provide an annual focus for celebrating young people's achievements, with a feasibility study expected to be completed by spring 2008.
- The Youth Taskforce is planning a national award scheme to celebrate the achievements of young people who turn their lives around or make a significant contribution to their communities

#### **5. Empowering Young People**

The Youth Opportunities Fund and Youth Capital Fund (YOF/YCF) will continue until March 2011, with an additional £25 million going to expand the YOF in the 50 most deprived areas. There will also be an additional allocation to the same areas to enhance the YCF, and revised guidance to support the delivery of both programmes will be issued in spring 2008. A good practice guide will be published in April 2008, and an evaluation of the first 2 years on July 2008.

The LGA and the NYA have been commissioned to identify the range of ways young people are being engaged in decision-making over budget allocations. This will inform a good practice document due to be released in summer 2008.

The Youth Sector Development Fund will support third sector organisations working with young people to establish their own projects, and with the most disadvantaged young people. More detail on this is contained in Chapter 8.

DCSF have been working with Changemakers to consult on arrangements for a new national institute for youth leadership with proposals due to be issued in early summer 2008. As things stand, this body will have a budget of £2 million/year until at least 2011, will consist of one of more of the best existing youth leadership organisations, and will be a virtual organisation so all the money goes directly to young people and youth organisations.

Funded by the Office of the Third Sector (OTS), the youth volunteering organisation v is building a national youth volunteering framework. In June 2007, OTS announced a £75 million investment in vinvolved, which will create vinvolved teams in every local area, leading to the development of 500,000 opportunities for young people to volunteer. A list of all the teams and projects is available at [www.wearev.com](http://www.wearev.com)

Aiming High emphasised the importance of communities, parents and young people themselves being able to hold local authorities to account over the provision of services for young people, particularly through access to and use of local councillors. As part of the cross governmental commitment to this, the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) has set out in its Community

Empowerment Action Plan, published in October 2007, ways of increasing opportunities for young people to participate in local decision making. A Community Empowerment White Paper will be published in June 2008, containing proposals on how young people can have more influence on their community. Steps have already been taken to increase the number of young people influencing local services with the initiation of the Young Advisors scheme, with over 250 Young Advisors already working as consultants throughout the country. Finally, the Councillors Commission have identified in their Representing the Future report the importance of young people knowing what councillors do, and how to meet with them and take part in local decision making processes.

Aiming High also set out an expectation that local authorities would bring together young people's and adult participation forums to develop common solutions to common problems, and the Youth Taskforce will be carrying out a sampling exercise in order to identify best practice for wider dissemination. Work is also taking place to build the capacity in intergenerational volunteering to build better relations across the generations, and a seminar will be held in the spring to explore the potential for using intergenerational work to improve outcomes for young people and families.

## **6. Places to Go**

Aiming High announced a programme of capital investment using £60 million of new DCSF funding and re-investment of unclaimed assets, whilst the Children's Plan committed an additional £160 million over the next 10 years to develop new and improved places for young people to go. This funding will be distributed by the Big Lottery Fund (BIG), and local authorities

and partners will be expected to develop integrated capital strategies to maximise existing assets and new funding. Access to the funding will be through an open competitive process, with the fund expected to be launched at the beginning of April and open for applications in early May. All bids will be expected to demonstrate the active participation of young people, partnership between public, third and/or private sector organisations, and financial sustainability to ensure the long term viability of projects.

Work is progressing towards the launch of the unclaimed assets scheme, with the Dormant Bank and Building Society Accounts Bill currently progressing through Parliament. It is expected the first funds will be distributed by the end of 2009.

Additional capital investment will be made in the 50 most deprived areas, with an additional £22.6 million being allocated on top of the existing Youth Capital Fund allocations for 2008-09. The Youth Taskforce will provide support to these areas to ensure the additional funding is used strategically to reach young people in the most deprived communities and to develop new approaches to empowering young people.

## **7. Removing Barriers and Supporting Access**

The development of Targeted Youth Support programmes will ensure all local authorities have procedures in place for supporting the most vulnerable young people in their area. Aiming High committed £221 million over the next 3 years to develop this provision, and it is expected to be delivered using a partnership approach, with particular use made of third sector partners working with the most marginalised young people. An additional £6 million will be invested during 2008-09 in 15

priority areas to expand the availability of year round provision.

A further commitment of £15 million over the next 3 years was announced in Aiming High to expand the availability of residential opportunities. DCSF have now contracted with the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) to expand their Do It 4 Real programme in 2008-09, and further discussions are taking place with YHA and other partners to explore options for future arrangements.

From April 2008, 9 local authorities will be running Empowering Young People pilots to test a range of ways of subsidising positive activities for young people who may face financial barriers to participation. In addition, from September 2008 extended schools will receive additional funding, building up to £217 million in 2010-11 to enable them to offer 2 hours free extended activities a week during term time, and 2 weeks of part time holiday provision to economically disadvantaged young people.

Up to £100 million will be invested over the next 3 years in supporting 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations who work with marginalised young people to become sustainable and expand their provision. Further details are included in Chapter 8.

Local authorities will continue to receive funding to publicise and keep up to date information about local activities and facilities for young people. DCSF have been discussing with commercial providers of ICT, communications and internet services how to do this successfully, and are currently considering how best to move forward.

Following successful evaluations, the online questionnaire, NHS Teen LifeCheck, which has

been piloted in a number of areas, will be rolled out in summer 2008, with the aim of empowering young people to take more control over their health.

Work is currently taking place with the Department for Transport to encourage Children's Trusts and transport planners to work together to overcome transport barriers that young people face in accessing positive activities. This will be supported by work the NYA are leading on to develop guidance for Children's Trusts, as well as emerging results from Empowering Young People pilots which are testing the impact of subsidised travel on young people's access to positive activities.

Since the publication of Aiming High, statutory guidance on the duty to secure access to positive activities has reinforced the expectation that partners including Local Safeguarding Children Boards, Local Strategic Partnerships, and Children's Trusts work together to address young people's concerns about safety. Further guidance will be published on combating bullying in summer 2008, and the Youth Crime Action Plan, also due in summer 2008, will set out measures to support young people who are victims of crime.

## **8. Improving Capacity and Quality of Services for Young People**

The announcement in Aiming High that Youth Offending Teams (YOT's) would be expected to pool 10% of their funding for young people's prevention initiatives with local youth support services has to some extent been scaled back, with a 3 year pilot now being planned with a smaller number of YOT's in order to assess the impact of the pooling process on outcomes for young people. Good practice will be gathered from the pilots and used to inform wider roll out if the approach is successful.

The Children's Health Strategy, due to be published in 2008-09 will provide more information about the proposal in Aiming High for Primary Care Trusts to pool their budgets for preventing poor health outcomes for young people with local authorities. Further exploration will also be carried out into innovative approaches to school based health provision, including the development of multi-disciplinary teams managing a wide range of health conditions.

DCSF and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport announced in February 2008 proposals for a new Youth Culture Trust which will lead the development of new opportunities for children and young people to engage in a range of cultural activities. The Youth Culture Trust will bring together organisations such as the Arts Council, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, and the UK Film Council, and will be responsible for delivering Find Your Talent – a £25 million 3 year programme in which 10 local areas will trial different ways of offering young people 5 hours a week of cultural opportunities. In a similar vein, the Youth Sports Trust and Sport England will continue to work through the School Sports Partnership network to support the delivery of the 5 hour PE and Sport for Young People Strategy.

£100 million has been committed over the next 3 years to fund a Youth Sector Development Fund to support 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector organisations that engage with the most disadvantaged young people. This fund will provide both large and small grants as well as business support to help organisations become sustainable and build their provision. The YSDF will be managed by an external body, which is expected to be in place later in 2008, at which point the fund will become operational. To inform the development of the YSDF, 5 organisations have

successfully applied to become pathfinders from April 2008. The organisations are Kids Company, Speaking Up, Fairbridge, UK Youth and Leap.

In addition to the Youth Sector Development Fund, over £515 million will be invested in 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector programmes through the Office of the Third Sector, with details contained in the July 2007 strategy 'The Future Role of the Third Sector in Social and Economic Regeneration: Final Report'. This will include £85 million investment in Capacitybuilders to support third sector infrastructure, with new funding streams available from April 2008. £130 million will be invested in the new Grassroots Grants programme, made up of an £80 million small grants fund for community organisations, and a £50 million endowment to enable local funders to generate match funded donations which they can then invest in endowments, thereby building their capacity to provide long term funding for community organisations.

In partnership with the Economic and Social Research Council and the Barrow Cadbury Trust, the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) is investing £10.25 million in a new national centre for 3<sup>rd</sup> sector research. The OTS is also funding the National Programme for Third Sector Commissioners between 2008 – 2011, to train commissioners to develop their skills and understanding of the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector.

The new Public Service Agreement (PSA 14) – increasing the number of young people on the path to success – includes an indicator to measure the increase in the number of young people participating in positive activities. A baseline for participation will be established using the Tell Us Survey which measures the behaviour and attitudes of children and young people.

During Spring 2008, IDeA will bring together the Local Government Association, Continyou, TDA, NYA and Together for Children to develop opportunities for elected members to assist with the implementation of Aiming High. This will aim to increase elected members understanding of the value of positive activities, and enable them to become more effective at addressing issues facing young people in their areas.

Following the announcement in Aiming High of proposals to rationalise youth sector support arrangements, a public Call for Evidence was announced in January. Responses to this consultation will inform the approach taken in supporting delivery of the Youth PSA and identify how new developments can complement existing activity to improve the quality of young people's services.

## **9. Supporting and Developing the Youth Workforce**

A number of commitments were made in Aiming High in order to drive up the quality and capacity of the youth workforce. Amongst these were:

- The introduction of a new leadership and management initiative to develop shared skills and values for managers across all sectors
- Development of a post-graduate recruitment scheme and development of the existing youth apprenticeship and undergraduate courses
- Exploring how best to support the training needs of staff and volunteers in the third sector
- Exploring the use of mentors for disengaged young people

- Introduction of a common platform of skills and training for those across all sectors working with young people

Additional work is taking place to ensure doctors and nurses who work with young people have the relevant skills, and developing ways of ensuring health information, advice and guidance is included in future youth work training.

Reforms to the youth workforce will need to address some key issues to drive up the quality of the youth workforce, within the context of local workforce strategies. It is expected that these reforms will lead to clear professional standards for the youth workforce and the development of a new status of youth professional. The Children's Workforce Network are leading on the workforce reform programme, as they bring together all the major Sector Skills Councils that cover the range of occupational groups in the youth workforce, and the National Youth Agency and National Council for Voluntary Youth Services are also making a contribution.

The Implementation Plan also includes 2 Annexes: the first contains information about the range of stakeholders DCSF have engaged to design the delivery arrangements for Aiming High, and the second contains a breakdown of the investment made to support the implementation of the proposals.