

## **Youth Matters – A Summary**

This Green Paper outlines the Government's vision for ensuring all young people are given the best chance to succeed in life through increased opportunities and taking their responsibilities seriously. It outlines how young people, parents, local and central Government, and all other providers of services for children and young people can work together to make a significant difference.

The paper is out for consultation until 4<sup>th</sup> November 2005, following which final decisions will be made.

### **Chapter 1 (p11 – 18) Context: Young People and Services Today**

Most young people today are doing well and taking advantage of the increased opportunities available to them. Educational achievement is on the increase, and health related outcomes are showing improvements. However, a significant number of young people experience challenges, particularly those with disabilities or mental disorder, those from minority ethnic groups, or those who are homeless.

Current services for young people, including those delivered by the public, voluntary and community sector provide millions of opportunities for young people. However, the Government have identified 4 services they feel have room for improvement:

- *Youth services* – whilst there are examples of outstanding practice from across the country, from both statutory and voluntary providers, recent Ofsted reports show that provision is patchy both in terms of quality and quantity.

- *Connexions* – established in 2001, the Connexions service has had high levels of customer satisfaction and been successful in supporting young people not in education, employment or training. However, there is a need to realign the service to become a more localised provider, taking into account the increased focus on locally integrated services as outlined in *Every Child Matters*.

- *Mainstream services* – health services in particular have not always ensured services have met the needs of children and young people. In future, children's trusts and local partners will be expected to work together to implement the *National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services (2004)*.

- *Targeted support programmes* – services such as Youth Offending Teams, Positive Activities for Young People, Positive Futures and the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy have developed over time in a way which has resulted in young people being in contact with different services who do not share information or join up responses. The Government are keen to see the development of more coherent services.

Other improvements required across the whole system include:

- more accessibility for young people, including appropriate opening times, increased use of technology;

- striking a balance between challenge and support;
- an increased role for parents;
- equality of opportunity for young people with additional needs;
- more competition and creativity in providing services.

## **Chapter 2 (p 19 – 24). Vision, Challenges and Principles: Our Approach to Reform**

The Government's vision is to create a system which supports all teenagers to achieve the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes. To do this, they have identified 4 key challenges, which form the basis of chapters 3-6. This paper is about meeting these challenges, and complements other documents including *Supporting Young People to Achieve*, the *National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services*, the *14-19 Curriculum and Qualifications Reforms*, and the *Russell Commission proposals*.

The proposed reforms are based on 6 principles:

- Making services more responsive to what young people and parents want;
- Balancing greater opportunities and support with promoting young people's responsibilities;
- Making services for young people more integrated, efficient and effective;
- Improving outcomes for all young people, while narrowing the gap between those who do well and those who do not;
- Involving a wide range of organisations from the voluntary, community and private sectors in order to increase choice and secure the best outcomes;
- Building on the best of what is currently provided.

## **Chapter 3 (p 25 – 38). Empowering Young People: Things to do and places to go**

Whilst most young people engage in positive activities in their leisure time, provision is variable in terms of quality and quantity. The Government's vision is for all young people to have a greater choice of activities and services to help them achieve the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes.

The Government are looking to pilot an *opportunity card scheme*, which will give young people access to discounts on a range of services, including high street stores, sporting, cultural and recreational activity. Family members would be able to put money onto the card, as would the local authority and other organisations to promote young people's participation in particular activities. Additional top-ups could be used to reward volunteering and particular achievements. Young people who engage in unacceptable behaviour will not receive top-ups and may have their cards withdrawn.

Local authorities will be given an *opportunity fund* to be used in consultation with young people to improve things to do and places to go.

A revised statutory duty will be introduced to clarify local authorities' responsibilities for providing activities for young people. This will include new performance indicators and guidance on involving young people, particularly those with additional needs

A new set of *national standards* will be introduced, including targets for the amount of access young people have to sporting and other constructive activities, increased volunteering opportunities, and access to a wide range of places and experiences.

Each children's trust will develop a *local offer*, including a summary of things to do and places to go, an annual activity handbook for each local area, and a statement about young peoples responsibilities to behave appropriately. The offer would be based on analysis of existing provision, how it meets the needs of the young people in that area, and any gaps would be filled by commissioning services from the public, private or voluntary sector.

Schools will be an important part of the local offer, with the Government spending £835 million by 2008 on the *extended schools* agenda. They will be expected to work in partnership with other providers in the community.

The Government will provide a *£40 million capital fund* to help upgrade existing facilities and provide new ones. Children's trusts, partner organisations, young people and parents will also be consulted on how existing facilities can be used more efficiently and effectively.

A network of *local youth sport development managers* will be established to support an increase in the use of sporting opportunities. Additional use will also be made of summer residential events.

The *involvement of young people* in the design, development, delivery and evaluation of services will be a key element in ensuring their needs are met

#### **Chapter 4 (p 39 – 43). Young People as Citizens: Making a contribution**

The Government have pledged £45 million from April 2005 to increase volunteering opportunities, backed up with £55 million from the private sector. This will support the recommendations of the *Russell Commission*, including the creation of an *implementation body* to bring together young people, business, the voluntary sector and government.

The Government are keen to:

- expand opportunities for peer mentoring;
- expand longer-term volunteering opportunities;
- encourage more opportunities for volunteering in schools, universities and colleges and in public services
- looking at financial incentives and support for volunteers
- provide a more flexible approach to volunteering

*A single national youth volunteering award* is proposed, building on schemes such as the Philip Lawrence Award and the Millennium Volunteer of the Year Award. Rewards for volunteering, linked to the opportunity card, will also be explored.

## **Chapter 5 (p 44 – 54). Supporting choices: Information, Advice and Guidance**

Young people have an increased range of choices to make about progression routes in education and about how to spend their leisure time. To help them make these choices, the vision is to bring together existing services to give young people access to wide ranging information, advice and guidance. This will include a *core offer* outlining what support young people should receive at several key transitional stages.

To achieve these changes, and to fit in with the reform of services under Every Child Matters, *responsibility and funding for commissioning information services will be devolved from Connexions to local authorities* through children's trusts, schools and colleges. The expectation is that children's trusts will consult with schools, colleges and young people about existing services before commissioning services on their behalf. If individual schools or colleges are not satisfied with this service, they can withdraw from the arrangement and commission services directly. If this provision was later found to be inadequate through inspection, devolved funding may be withdrawn by the children's trust. The transition to these arrangements is expected to begin in 2006 and be completed by 2008.

*New accountability arrangements* will be introduced. These will include an increased responsibility on schools for young people's progression after the end of compulsory education, as proposed in the *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper*. They will also seek to ensure that advice given through schools and colleges is impartial and in the best interests of the young person, not the institution.

Children's trusts will need to ensure equal access for young people not in education employment or training. From 2006, the Government will invest £140 million over 2 years to test personally negotiated agreements to engage 16 and 17 year olds not in education or employment. £60 million will test '*activity agreements and allowances*' across 8 Connexions areas, where young people will gain financial support in return for following steps to enter work or learning. The rest will go on a pilot project offering similar incentives to young people in jobs without training to take part in learning.

Greater use will be made of technology including advice through e-mail, text and telephone, online advice, peer support, and improved signposting and referral services

The Government are committed to ensuring young people have good access to a range of health services, and that these services, including physical and mental health provision, are delivered in age appropriate ways

Increased support for parents will ensure they have access to information about the choices young people have to make, about the issues facing their children at key transition points, and can help them make the right decisions. £20 million will be spent over 2 years on sessions for parents to attend when their children move from primary to secondary school. Parenting support programmes will be made

more widely available, particularly for parents where children are at risk of or experiencing serious problems

### **Chapter 6 (p 55 – 61). All Young People Achieving: Reforming Targetted Support**

As part of the Every Child Matters agenda, the Government are keen to see the development of *integrated youth support services* at local level. Within this universal service, *targeted youth support teams* would be established with the aims of:

- early identification of young people needing additional support;
- making it easier for young people to access the system;
- providing a lead professional to act as a single point of contact for individual young people and their families
- delivering preventative work with groups of young people
- supporting staff in universal and specialist agencies

Amongst proposals to facilitate these changes are;

- the merging of existing funding streams for targeted youth support, including those relating to youth crime and substance misuse;
- developing a common management information system;
- introduction of a *Common Assessment Framework*;
- revising a number of performance indicators;
- streamlining accountability, collapsing management chains and merging the functions of separate services.

Schools will be important partners in the delivery of targeted support for young people, and co-location of services will be encouraged within schools as well as community based facilities such as drop-in facilities, advice shops and youth centres.

There will continue to be a place for highly specialist services for young people with, for example, severe and enduring mental health problems, complex learning and physical disabilities, or who have suffered from severe abuse or trauma as children.

### **Chapter 7 (p 62 – 72). A Reformed Service: Delivering the Proposals**

The primary responsibility for delivering these reformed services for young people will be the local authority, working through children's trusts. Integrated youth support services will include both universal and targeted support, delivered by providers from the public, private and community sectors

The implementation of much of the reforms mirrors that outlined in the Every Child Matters: Change for Children document, including:

- the *Outcomes Framework* will be the sole performance management system for measuring progress;

- services for teenagers should be set out as part of the *Children and Young People's Plans*;
- *Joint Area Reviews* will assess the combined impact of local services on children and young people's outcomes

Funding streams will be merged, possibly using Local Area Agreements, to allow greater efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources. The funding allocated to support the proposals is financed out of available resources from the 2004 spending review period, with future resources yet to be determined.

Implementation of these reforms will take place on a phased basis, with the aim of being completed by April 2008.

Local authorities will be able to decide, within the national framework, what structures will best fit their local circumstances. A number of pilots will be carried out to test out proposals and to inform the implementation of reforms.

The voluntary and community sector will need to be engaged by local authorities, through children's trusts, in all aspects of planning, developing and delivering services for young people. There will be an expectation on local authorities to build the capacity of voluntary and community organisations to increase the range of providers capable of delivering the reforms. Good practice guidelines, including minimising monitoring and reporting requirements, and the principle of full cost recovery, should be followed in these funding relationships. The Government will collate and track the amount of publicly funded services which are delivered by the voluntary and community sector.

The Big Lottery Fund's new programmes should be seen as additional and complementary to local and central Government initiatives. All its future programmes will seek to address young people's needs.

In the 2006 spending review, the Government will look at recommendations for a single funding stream for young people's volunteering.

The changes with the funding and responsibility for information, advice and guidance passing from Connexions to local authorities is not expected to involve a major reduction in the Connexions workforce, as the majority of frontline staff will be required to deliver the services set out in this paper. However, there may well be a need for support of staff, for example, who move from their existing employer to being employed directly by a school or college.

There is likely to be substantial remodelling of the current workforce with the move towards integrated children's services, and a clear distinction between universal and targeted support. Youth workers are expected to have a new and reinvigorated role, given the unique contribution youth work has to make to improving outcomes for young people. The skills of Connexions staff will also be crucial in supporting young people into education employment or training.

In the future, more attractive career pathways for everyone working with children and young people will be developed. These will be based on a single qualifications framework, underpinned by a common core of skill and knowledge, as outlined in the *Children's Workforce Strategy: a strategy to build a*

*world class workforce for children and young people.* The areas identified in the common core prospectus are:

- Effective communication with children, young people, their families and carers;
- Child and young person development;
- Safeguarding and promoting welfare;
- Supporting transitions;
- Multi-agency working;
- Sharing information.

*This summary is one in a series produced by the Regional Youth Work Unit – North East. The complete version of the Youth Matters green paper can be downloaded from [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)*