

MOVING FORWARD

A STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING
YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHANCES
THROUGH YOUTH WORK

A NATIONAL YOUTH WORK STRATEGY



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scotland
SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

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YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHANCES
THROUGH YOUTH WORK**

A NATIONAL YOUTH WORK STRATEGY

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FOREWORD

LAST YEAR MANY OF YOU RESPONDED TO OUR CONSULTATION PAPER *YOUTH WORK – OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL*. IN IT WE ASKED FOR YOUR VIEWS AND IDEAS ON HOW WE CAN WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE GROWTH AND SUCCESS IN THE YOUTH WORK SECTOR IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE MORE POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND.

The response was excellent, particularly from young people, and we have been working to take on board your concerns and aspirations for youth work in Scotland in developing this strategy.

We value the nature and role of youth work and recognise fully the contribution it makes to young people individually and to developing strong communities, where young people play an active and positive role. We intend, through this strategy, to give youth work in Scotland the best possible opportunity to play an increasingly visible, substantial and effective role in achieving long term benefits for young people.

This strategy aims to support long-term growth in the sector with more opportunities for young people, volunteers and youth workers, better facilities and more effective, targeted support at a national level. Some of the measures outlined therefore represent long-term changes in how we work – for example, our commitment to recognising the role youth work can play across the Scottish Executive in shaping and delivering broader policy aims. These aims include getting more young people into education, training or employment, tackling sectarianism and supporting young people dealing with issues relating to drugs or alcohol.

The strategy also includes a range of shorter-term measures to put in place new support structures and boost the capacity of the sector to take forward the longer-term vision. The strategy therefore heralds a “Year of Action” on youth work, for which we provide additional investment – a package of support worth over £8m – to improve facilities and training, to develop volunteering and for projects developed by local partnerships.

Youth work is about improving young people's life chances and experiences. All the funding we put into youth work, whether supporting voluntary organisations or through local authority provision, is designed to improve outcomes for young people and their communities. Underpinning the strategy is a commitment to equality and inclusion, achieving best value for available resources, working in partnership and encouraging more young people to have their say locally and nationally to influence decisions which affect them and their community.

We have taken on board what you told us during the consultation and we hope you recognise your own priorities reflected in the strategy. We look forward to working with you to achieve these outcomes and to ensure that the value of youth work is recognised and sustained in delivering for all our young people.



Hugh Henry, Minister for Education and Young People

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hugh Henry".



Rhona Brankin, Minister for Communities

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rhona Brankin".



Robert Brown, Deputy Minister for Education and Young People

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Brown".



Des McNulty, Deputy Minister for Communities

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Des McNulty".



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

YOUTH WORK CAN ENHANCE THE LIFE OF ANY YOUNG PERSON. IT CAN CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERSONAL GROWTH AND TO THE GROWTH OF THE COMMUNITIES THEY LIVE IN.

In recognising the value of youth work we undertook a consultation to hear the views of young people and those that help deliver these opportunities. This provided your views as to how we can build on and support the already considerable strength of the youth work sector in Scotland. An excellent response was received on the consultation paper on youth work with over 3,091 responses and over 2,500 of these were from young people.

Our long term vision for youth work has two main elements:

- ⇒ all young people in Scotland able to benefit from youth work opportunities which make a real difference to their lives; and
- ⇒ a youth work sector equipped and empowered to achieve ongoing positive outcomes for young people now and in the future.

To achieve this we need to think both short and long term. Below is a summary of some of the main actions we are proposing through the National Youth Work Strategy.

Short term:

To kick-start the delivery of the strategy we are proposing a **year of action on youth work**.

We will provide £0.5m in 2007-2008 for a **Voluntary Organisations Support Fund** to support national voluntary organisations to provide better training and strengthen their capacity.

We will continue to support more young people volunteering through **Project Scotland**, and in other appropriate ways.

We will work with voluntary organisations to ensure clear information and understanding in the **Protection of Vulnerable Groups Bill**.

We will provide a **Youth Opportunities Fund** of £2.5m for 2007-2008 for bids to run local events, projects and volunteer campaigns.

We will offer a £5m **Youth Work Facilities Improvement Fund** for 2007-2008.

We will fund with Learning and Teaching Scotland a **co-ordinator post to work with schools and the youth work sector** improving and increasing links across the sectors and improving ultimate benefits for young people.

We will continue to support the value of peer education of providing support to young people by young people through continuing to fund the **Peer Education Network** until 2010.

We will ask YouthLink to pilot **local and themed networks** to give youth work providers more opportunity to share good practice and train together.

We will ensure that the new **Standards Council for Community Learning and Development** recognises and responds to the unique role of youth workers and volunteers.

We will work with Higher Education Institutions to ensure the **key elements of the strategy are reflected in degree provision**.

We will engage with young people in helping to shape and take forward the Action Plan outlined in the Youth Work Strategy.

Long term:

We will promote the role and contribution of youth work in developing wider policies affecting young people.

We will encourage more young people to take advantage of the increased opportunities available.

We will support youth work organisations at a national level through working alongside the sector, providing longer-term funding and offering support for quality improvement through HMle.

We will support organisations to improve their training, understanding and support of minority groups.

We will work with voluntary organisations to develop an **Action Plan for Volunteering**.

We will work with organisations to improve delivery and evaluation of services.

We will work with Young Scot to ensure young people have access to the information they require in the format most accessible to them.

We will help employers to understand and value the skills young people gain through youth work.

1. INTRODUCTION

OUR VISION FOR YOUTH WORK AND YEAR OF ACTION

'THE CHALLENGE IS ON TO CREATE A YOUTH WORK STRATEGY FIT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY WHICH GIVES YOUTH WORK THE RECOGNITION AND VALUE IT DESERVES'
Voluntary Organisation Response

- 1.1** Youth work has a significant role to play in delivering our broad vision for Scotland's young people – that they are nurtured, safe, active, healthy, achieving, included, respected and responsible. Youth work opportunities can also support young people to live their lives as confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens.
- 1.2** We believe that all young people can be like this. But we also recognise that young people are individuals with different needs, abilities and learning preferences. Youth work opportunities can enhance the life of any young person but, for some, youth work will have a more important or even critical role in enabling them to see and fulfil their true potential.
- 1.3** Youth work has a major part to play in providing life-enhancing experiences for children and young people – and the learning and development opportunities it offers must be seen and valued as an integral part of what society provides for young people across the board – children's services, school education, post-school education and training.



- 1.4** We recognise the value of youth work in contributing positively to young people’s personal growth and to the growth of the communities they live in. We recognise the value of both:
- ⇒ open access youth work activities, open to any young person who wishes to attend, offered by local authorities and voluntary organisations; and
 - ⇒ specialised targeted provision designed to meet the needs of young people who are particularly vulnerable or who have specific needs.
- 1.5** A vibrant youth work sector needs both. As well as enhancing the lives of young people from all backgrounds, universal youth work opportunities can have an early intervention and prevention role. It can engage in positive activities young people who might otherwise become involved in anti-social behaviour, alcohol or drug misuse, or who would leave school with few qualifications and skills, perhaps not progressing into education, employment or training (entering the ‘NEET’ group). Universal youth work opportunities can also offer vulnerable young people a non-stigmatising route into finding more specialist support where they might not be ready to go directly, e.g. to a project for young people with specific problems e.g. mental health issues.
- 1.6** Our aim is to build on the already considerable strength of the youth work sector to ensure provision for young people that is forward-looking, well-resourced and supported effectively – and that focuses all its efforts on delivering the best possible outcomes for young people in Scotland. We intend to support growth in the youth work sector through a variety of means – more opportunities and influence for young people, more youth workers and volunteers, commitment to ongoing training and development of youth workers and volunteers, better targeted resources, more access to good facilities and better support for the sector both nationally and locally.

1.7 Our long term vision for youth work has two main elements:

- ⇒ for young people in Scotland able to benefit from youth work opportunities which make a real difference to their lives; and
- ⇒ a youth work sector equipped and empowered to achieve ongoing positive outcomes for young people now and in the future.

To achieve this we need to think both short and long term. We have welcomed and listened to what you told us in the consultation. We have used what you told us to develop the outcomes we need to deliver to achieve the vision. And we have set out a range of actions to support the youth work sector in meeting the needs of young people today. Some of these involve early action to boost the sector in the coming year. With others, particularly where we need to build the capacity and expertise of youth work, we are proposing longer term commitments.

The Consultation, the Strategy and Beyond

1.8 The Youth Work Strategy consultation ran from 1 August to 1 November. 15,000 copies of the consultation paper were sent out with an online version also available. 15,000 copies of the full questionnaire were issued with 19,000 copies of the shorter questionnaire specifically for young people.

1.9 We issued the consultation paper widely, including to all schools and voluntary organisations working with young people. We also supported the following organisations to support specific consultation activities with key groups of people:

- ⇒ YouthLink – the youth work sector generally, both voluntary organisations and local authority community learning and development teams;
- ⇒ The Scottish Youth Parliament – large numbers of young people through their MSYP network;
- ⇒ Young Scot – large numbers of young people online, using their eRoadshow and Youth Information Points;
- ⇒ Youth Scotland – volunteers involved in youth work;
- ⇒ YMCA – young people living in rural areas;
- ⇒ BEMIS – black and minority ethnic young people;
- ⇒ Save the Children – young people from gypsy and traveller communities;
- ⇒ LGBT Youth Scotland – lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people;
- ⇒ Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum – young people who are, or have been looked after;
- ⇒ ENABLE Scotland – young people with disabilities; and
- ⇒ The Big Step – young asylum seekers.

3,091 responses were received and analysed. Of these over 2,500 were from young people. The consultation responses have given us an invaluable snapshot of views from young people and the people who work to provide youth opportunities for them. The consultation report is available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/YouthWork/Consultation>.

1.10 The key message that comes across in all the responses is a real sense of the value of youth work, belief in its potential to make a difference to young people's lives and a commitment to building on the real strengths we have in youth work in Scotland to give young people more and better opportunities and to make sure that the organisations have the support necessary to deliver the best possible outcomes for young people in the future.

The Strategy

1.11 This strategy sets out our vision for youth work based on delivering positive outcomes for young people. This must be the high level aim of all that we do and we must do what is necessary to achieve it. This may mean changes in how we, in government, and in the youth work sector, work and approach the challenges we face. We must accept that the young people we work with are interested in what is relevant in the 21st century and we must adopt the same mindset. Challenges for all of us include modernising our thinking and our working practices to be meaningful to young people, making sure we evaluate and measure where appropriate and that we know the outcomes we want to achieve.

1.12 In setting out how we will take forward the strategy our focus is on outcomes and on commitment to specific actions which will lead to both quick wins and steady progress. Getting to where we want to be will take time and progress will be cumulative.

A Year of Action on Youth Work

- 1.13** To kick-start the delivery of the strategy however, we are proposing a **Year of Action** on youth work. We will work with the sector to put in place some key supportive measures and target some additional funding at areas of key importance. It will be a year where together we make changes and commitments to boost the standing of youth work in Scotland, enhance its role and build on all its current strengths. A year where we work with national organisations, the voluntary sector and those delivering community learning and development services in local authorities. A year when we build capacity in the sector and make sure volunteers have the support and training they need. Together we must make sure that young people have access to the opportunities which make most difference to their own development. And which allow young people to flourish in their own communities, able to influence the nature and design of local services and strategies which affect them.
- 1.14** Some of the actions proposed are for the Scottish Executive. Others will be achieved through working with partner organisations. Some are short term and others are intended to be more long term to ensure the youth work sector is ready and able to make a lasting impact on the lives and future of young people for many years to come.

A Report back on Progress

- 1.15** We know that young people in particular are concerned that the views and ideas they offer during consultations may not lead to action and that they don't receive enough feedback. **We will therefore report back in the autumn of 2008 on the outcomes we set out in this strategy and on progress we've made in taking forward the support needed to achieve them.**

- 1.16** We recognise that some commitments are to begin discussions or to get the ball rolling on important strategic issues such as a specific career structure for youth workers and support for volunteers. We need to put more thought, engagement and specialist discussion into these areas with partners and experts in the field so it would not be appropriate to make long term decisions at this stage. But after a year we would expect to be able to set out longer term direction and proposals on these important areas.
- 1.17** After the election, the new administration will consider the Spending Review plans which are due in September 2007. This should cover the full new parliamentary session to 2011. At that stage, we plan to set out youth work spending commitments in the context of wider Executive strategic priorities.

2. THE VALUE, FOCUS AND FUTURE OF YOUTH WORK

- 2.1** The consultation asked some important questions about the role and nature of youth work, questions which have attracted differing views and debate over many years as youth work has developed as a means of informal learning. Debate which will continue as youth work continues to evolve and reflect the changing needs and preferences of young people as well as current trends. What the consultation results show are the views of young people, youth workers and organisations at this point in time. Ten or twenty years ago the answers might have been very different. And there will be more changes in years to come.
- 2.2** Perhaps the first point we all need to recognise is that youth work must continue to evolve to reflect the lives and needs of young people, their communities, and national and global society. Youth work must continue to look forward with focus and with ambition for its role. Modernising and changing, it will be right at the forefront of delivering the best possible outcomes for every young person in Scotland.
- 2.3** We remain clear that the purposes of youth work are those set out in *Working and learning together: to build stronger communities* Scottish Executive (2004). These are to promote achievement by young people through facilitating their personal, social and educational development and enabling them to gain a voice, influence and place in society. The outcomes we seek from youth work are the same as we seek from schools, that is, that young people become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens, and that they make a successful transition to life after school, taking advantage of and sustaining opportunities in education, employment or training.



- 2.4** For some young people youth work enhances lives which are already full. But for others, youth work can be the main means of personal development in their lives, helping them connect with other services they may need. Youth work must be fun but it needs to be more than that. It is also a unique means of engaging young people and using activities they enjoy to channel their development and move forward in their lives. Youth work organisations already employ sporting, cultural and arts activities which appeal to young people and use them to enhance their informal learning opportunities. Many organisations already have good links with sporting, cultural and arts organisations and we are keen to encourage this at national and local level. In line with Scottish Executive policy proposals for cultural entitlements, local authorities will be consulting with local people about the cultural services they want, and will develop cultural entitlements in response. This will provide an opportunity for young people to have their say in the kind of cultural activity they want to see and be involved with. International contacts, exchanges and involvement in volunteer projects abroad also excite the commitment of young people, and increase their motivation, self-confidence and life-skills.
- 2.5** Youth work must take its place alongside other professions in delivering in a joined-up way for young people. It must look outward and forward at how it can contribute to young people’s integrated development – and to playing its part in wider national policy development, whether on health policies, careers, or supporting young people to move on to education, employment or training after leaving school. Youth work can have a major role in growing local communities by supporting young people’s active participation and positive influence. It can be particularly important in building intergenerational links between older and younger people, as highlighted in the Scottish Executive’s *Strategy for a Scotland with an Ageing Population*. It can also have a role in addressing future national skill needs, particularly in relation to the softer people-based skills which employers today particularly value.

Availability of opportunities

- 2.6** Increasing numbers of young people are getting involved in youth work. Learning Connections' survey in November 2006 showed that almost 90,000 young people took part in local authority-run youth work provision in a typical week, an increase of 5000 from November 2005. Many more take part in a wide range of youth work activities run by voluntary organisations across the country. Young people involved in the four uniformed organisations alone number over 118,000 in Scotland today.
- 2.7** A key question facing funders and policy makers is whether resources should be used to provide opportunities open to all young people or concentrated more on specialist youth work provision for disadvantaged and vulnerable young people.
- 2.8** Predictably views expressed during consultation were mixed. A majority of adult responses (52%) believed that basic youth work provision should be available for all young people equally, while a sizable minority (26%) thought it important to target young people who are excluded, vulnerable or disadvantaged. 28% felt that the type of provision would depend on circumstances with 14% calling for a balance between targeted and general provision.
- 2.9** With resources inevitably limited, choices will need to be made. We recognise that a balanced approach is necessary. We want all young people to be able to benefit from high quality youth work. But we also recognise that youth work can sometimes uniquely reach young people who are disadvantaged, excluded or who have particular problems.
- 2.10** We cannot afford to extend general provision by removing what may be a lifeline for young people who have fewer life-enhancing opportunities. But what we can do is to support the sector in getting the best possible value from the resources they do have. Local authorities and voluntary organisations must be able to focus on delivering the best outcomes for young people, whether through youth work open to all or through specialist programmes designed to boost the development of more vulnerable young people.

2.11 Some responses called for a minimum entitlement for young people to access youth work provision. Attempting to do this would require primary legislation and would be difficult to achieve in a way which ensured every young person had access to the provision that was right for them. We do believe that all young people should be able to benefit from youth work but intend to pursue this aim within a non-legislative framework. Our focus must be firmly on achieving greater opportunities, influence and outcomes for individual young people with resulting benefits for their communities and society in general.

Voluntary participation

2.12 A significant majority of both adults and young people responding believed that a young person should always be free to decide whether to take part in youth work activities. Responses from adults and organisations were particularly strong in support of voluntary participation as a defining factor of youth work. Respondents felt that young people should be encouraged more to take part, with more promotion of benefits and youth work opportunities.

2.13 A significant proportion of adults and, notably, young people did feel that compulsory participation in youth work opportunities might sometimes be appropriate. The circumstances mentioned included drink or drugs rehabilitation, community service or health and safety – all areas where participation would be for the young person’s benefit as well as that of society.

2.14 On balance, we take the view that the voluntary aspect of youth work – the fact that the young person has decided to take part and chosen to continue – is an important self-development aspect of youth work. But we would also support the use of youth work approaches where appropriate for young people addressing serious problems. There is an underlying message in the consultation that other professionals could learn much from youth workers on how to engage with young people positively and help them take responsibility for themselves on their own terms.



2.15 We recognise that we need to work better across the Executive to promote the role and benefits of youth work and youth work methods. And how they can contribute to the successful delivery of wide-ranging policies and broad-based positive outcomes for young people.

The Outcome we want:

For the value, unique nature, and contribution of youth work to be recognised and reflected in a broad policy context, contributing to achieving wide-ranging positive outcomes for young people.

The Action we propose:

- The Scottish Executive will ensure a better understanding of youth work and young people and the potential contribution of youth work across ministerial portfolios and departments and in delivering cross-cutting objectives. We will work with other policy makers and agencies to promote the role and methods of youth work and ensure that representatives of the youth work sector are involved in developing policies affecting young people where youth work has a potential role to play.
- We will ask local authorities to take a similar approach, ensuring that decision-makers not directly involved in delivering youth work are still aware of its role and benefits, not least in community planning activities and in provision of children’s services, school education and wider services to help young people make successful transitions to adulthood and post-school education, training and employment. The benefits of universal youth work provision are recognised in the substantial allocation for community learning and development and we expect local authorities to reflect this in their own allocation of resources, including their funding of voluntary organisations.

The Outcome we want:

For more young people to be aware of and take advantage of the availability of more youth work activities and to benefit from increased opportunities available.

The Action we propose:

- ⇒ We will ask Young Scot to make sure that the Youth Opportunities Database (YODA) being developed for young people, and covered in more depth in section 7, provides:
 - excellent local information for young people on youth work opportunities and groups in their local areas;
 - case studies giving young people themselves the opportunity to understand the benefits available to them and their peer group; and
 - user-friendly information for young people, who are at risk or have particular problems or needs, on opportunities in their own area.

Priorities for youth work in the 21st century

2.16 The consultation highlighted a range of priority areas for youth work in the future. These related both to outcomes and benefits for young people taking part and to support for the sector in delivering the best possible youth work opportunities. The action proposed in this strategy is intended to address these areas in ways which contribute to expanding the youth work sector in Scotland.

2.17 For young people, priorities were:

- **Developing qualities** such as self-respect, self-reliance, self-confidence, responsibility and a good work ethic in young people – young people taking their place and making a difference in the world today and in the future;
- **Developing life skills**, particularly communication and social skills;
- **Being listened to and being able to influence** provision of youth work opportunities and other services and policies which affect them; and
- Ensuring the **inclusion of all young people** regardless of background, race, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

2.18 In relation to support for the youth work sector in delivering for young people, the key priorities were judged to be:

- The provision of **safe, modern, local facilities** for young people;
- **Funding** for youth work provision – of particular concern to voluntary organisations; and
- Recruiting and retaining **youth workers and volunteers** and providing high quality training and support.

2.19 The following sections of the strategy cover these key concerns and set out how we intend to support the improvements necessary to deliver better outcomes. We consider how best to strengthen the youth work sector:

- ⇒ **at national level**, through improved funding arrangements, through YouthLink Scotland as the national agency for youth work, through capacity building in the voluntary sector and through more cross-professional working;
- ⇒ **at local level**, through local youth work networks, by improving facilities, and in planning broader services for young people, particularly by seeking more emphasis on outcomes delivered through youth work in Local Authority Outcome Agreements, linking to Regeneration Outcome Agreements (ROAs) where appropriate;
- ⇒ **by supporting youth workers and volunteers**, particularly in relation to training, recruitment and recognition; and
- ⇒ **by listening to, and responding to, what young people want from youth work**, on a general and personal level, whether that is participation and influence nationally and locally through the Scottish Youth Parliament or in the planning and development of local services. Also by ensuring the right kind of support and recognition from employers and others for the skills and qualifications young people achieve through youth work and informal learning.

3. SUPPORTING YOUTH WORK AT NATIONAL LEVEL

3.1 National support structures and systems are critical in underpinning the youth work being delivered in Scotland today. Voluntary organisation headquarters, which the Scottish Executive support through the Unified Voluntary Sector Fund, and national organisations like YouthLink and Young Scot play a key role in supporting delivery at local level. It is clear from the consultation that much is working well but improvements can still be made with a greater focus on building effective capacity and achieving best value for the funds available.

Funding and quality improvement

3.2 Consultation responses raised a range of concerns relating to funding. The need for more, easily accessible funding and resources was identified by 46% of the adult and organisational responses. Within this, respondents identified a need for more funding and particularly for sustainable long term funding. Availability of funding to provide adequate opportunities is the central concern, but voluntary organisations in particular expressed frustration about short term funding programmes which cause instability for the projects and pressure on paid staff.



- 3.3** The Executive provides financial support for voluntary organisation headquarters through grant delivered by the Children, Young People and Families Unified Voluntary Sector Fund. This covers a wide range of organisations, from organisations like Youth Scotland who in turn support many local youth clubs, to organisations like Fairbridge and Venture Scotland who work intensively with young people who often face especially challenging circumstances, to uniformed organisations which are open to young people across the country in their own communities. We appreciate the value of what they achieve for young people and the commitment and skill of the many volunteers who make this possible. We do however recognise that the voluntary youth sector is, in itself, extremely diverse, and that organisations within it will have different needs and priorities in order to build capacity and grow.
- 3.4** We have recently reviewed the Unified Fund and made some changes to address concerns about the short term nature of funding and to enable the Fund to be used more flexibly to provide the best possible outcomes and value for money. It is essential that the funding we give to organisations is used to deliver agreed objectives successfully and lead to significant positive impact on young people’s lives. We want to be able to increase funding in the future for organisations which deliver excellent outcomes for young people but funding levels cannot be sustained where organisations fail to deliver the outcomes promised to receive their grant. We will continue to review awards made through the Unified Fund to ensure agreed priorities and objectives are being met. We will also consider how new organisations with fresh ideas can be allowed access to the fund given it is cash limited.
- 3.5** Each year, we commission HMle to conduct reviews of a sample of national voluntary youth organisations. In line with other changes in inspections, HMle is reviewing its approach to these voluntary organisation reviews. The new focus will place greater emphasis on the outcomes achieved by voluntary organisations and support to help them to continuously improve their outcomes.

The Outcome we want:

For voluntary organisation headquarters supported through the Unified Fund to have stable funding which results in increased ability to plan and deliver better outcomes for young people locally.

The Action we propose:

- ⇒ We will move towards longer term funding arrangements for organisations who successfully deliver the outcomes agreed for the support they receive and can demonstrate the highest standards of monitoring and evaluation.
- ⇒ We will also ask HMLe to develop a review cycle for the national youth organisations similar to that now in place for Community Learning and Development provision within local authorities to ensure the sector receives the highest quality support at national level.

Building capacity in voluntary youth work organisations

- 3.6** It is clear that the voluntary organisations working at local level rely heavily on support from their national headquarters. In particular national headquarters support training needs, build capacity to deliver more opportunities and establish quality standards for local volunteers and groups. We know that providing sustained high quality training to volunteers can be a challenge for many voluntary organisations. So, as part of the **Year of Action** on youth work, we are setting up a support fund for voluntary organisations where they can bid for funding to take forward specific proposals for training or capacity building.

The Outcome we want:

For national voluntary organisations to be able to provide the best possible training opportunities for local volunteers, to improve the support given by them in delivering high quality outcomes for the young people they work with and to enhance and expand the sustainability of their work in local areas.

The Action we propose:

- As part of the **Year of Action** on youth work we will provide £0.5m in 2007-2008 for a Voluntary Organisation Support Fund to help national voluntary organisations provide better training and strengthen their capacity.
- We will continue to support young people volunteering through Project Scotland to build on success to date.

Building capacity in national organisations

3.7 We are also keen that national organisations supporting the youth work sector are able to share resources where possible. We will therefore ask YouthLink, Young Scot and the Scottish Youth Parliament to develop a National Youth Hub, combining back office and other functions where possible with a view to achieving a more joined-up strategic service for young people and the youth work sector and achieving best value for money.

The Big Lottery

3.8 The Big Lottery Young People’s Fund supports the well being of young people in Scotland and has provided £20m over the past 2 years to helping organisations which engage young people in learning new things and taking part in healthy and positive activities. This fund will be drawing to a close this autumn. Building on the success of the Young People’s Fund, we will explore with the Big Lottery how future funding can be best linked to delivering on this strategy and achieving positive outcomes for young people through youth work.

Role of YouthLink as the National Agency for youth work

- 3.9** Over the past year YouthLink Scotland has refocused its aims and efforts to reflect and respond to the needs and demands of the youth work sector, both voluntary and local authority providers. The progress that has been made is reflected, not only in the responses to this consultation which call for it to have a strengthened role in supporting the sector, but also in an improved interim follow-up review by HMIE and Audit Scotland and in their successful administration of this year's Youth Work Capital Fund.
- 3.10** Consultation responses called in particular for YouthLink to offer more opportunities for networking and sharing good practice. Use of technology to disseminate information was also mentioned specifically. Networking events and joint training opportunities were also seen as a way YouthLink could support the sector effectively. YouthLink's role in providing a link between voluntary sector and local authority youth work providers was also regarded as important. As was its ability to represent the youth work sector in policy and decision-making forums on issues relating to young people.
- 3.11** The Scottish Executive has sought to involve YouthLink and others in policy forums such as the Summits on Sectarianism and the advisory group on alcohol. We are keen that the organisation continues to contribute its expertise in developing policy and in raising awareness of Government policy in the youth work sector.

The Outcome we want:

For YouthLink Scotland to focus its capacity and resources on supporting the youth work sector nationally and locally through:

- the provision of opportunities for networking and training;
- identifying and sharing best practice, through its website and publications, supporting a National Youth Work Week and other means;
- strengthening links between voluntary sector and local authority youth work providers and delivering one-off sector-wide initiatives; and
- representing the sector in a wider national policy context to ensure other professionals and policy-makers understand the role and nature of youth work and its potential in reaching young people.

The Action we propose:

- The Scottish Executive will recognise YouthLink's role as the national agency for youth work in Scotland and, where appropriate, involve representatives of the organisation – staff or members – in representing the youth work sector in wider policy forums.
- We will agree a workplan with YouthLink for 2007-2008 and a business plan for 2007-2010, both of which are directed to delivering the priorities identified in the consultation and in the outcome stated above. While we recognise that YouthLink member organisations may wish to fund additional activities, the core support from Government will be focused on delivering support for the sector and advocating the role and strengths of youth work in a national policy context. We will expect to see excellence and maturity in delivery of these roles in taking forward the 2007-2008 action plan and the HMle action plan following the 2005 review of the organisation.



Working with schools, teachers and other professions

- 3.12** A theme emerging from the consultation, from young people, adults and organisations, was a desire for closer links and better communication with schools, social workers and other providers of services for young people. 27% called for more interaction, collaboration and joint working, but with clarity around the role of different professional groups. Young people expect to be able to find out about youth work and informal learning opportunities at schools and closer liaison between youth workers and teachers could benefit young people and ensure their needs are met better.
- 3.13** The ‘Getting It Right For Every Child’ (GIRFEC) agenda puts children and young people at the centre of service delivery, with the expectation that all professionals will work together and do what is necessary to meet the needs of an individual child or young person. We want to see youth work and youth workers very firmly involved in delivering GIRFEC, with their unique skills and perspective recognised by other professionals and with youth workers themselves demonstrating increased flexibility and a willingness to work across professional barriers to deliver the best outcomes for the young people they work with. The consultation pointed in particular to youth workers’ ability to build relationships and trust with hard-to-reach young people and to negotiate future learning and development with them. This can put a youth worker in a uniquely insightful position to help identify a young person’s needs and help communicate these to other professionals.
- 3.14** *More Choices, More Chances*, the Executive's strategy to reduce the proportion of young people aged 16-19 not in education, employment or training similarly puts young people at the heart of its agenda. It requires local partnerships to focus on the needs of this group of very often vulnerable young people and requires services to work together to prevent young people from becoming NEET and to help those already in this category. Both pre- and post-16, youth work has a significant role to play, particularly in engaging some of the harder to reach young people, to help them develop the skills and confidence they need throughout their lives.

The Outcome we want:

For young people to benefit from all youth workers adopting the principles of the 'Getting It Right For Every Child' (GIRFEC) and 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET) agendas, and for youth workers to be supported by their employers and by YouthLink to work effectively with other professionals.

The Action we propose:

- ⇒ We will ask all local authorities to involve youth workers in developing and delivering the GIRFEC and NEET agendas in their local area.
- ⇒ We will also ask YouthLink to encourage youth workers to help develop GIRFEC proposals in their local area and to work with local authorities and the voluntary sector to cover the GIRFEC agenda in the training programmes, newsletters and information they offer to youth workers and member organisations.

3.15 Young people clearly see their schools as an obvious place to get information and we need to make more of the potential for good links to benefit schools, youth work projects and, especially young people. Young Scot and the Dialogue Youth initiative have already resulted in significant progress in some parts of Scotland with this work. Responses also called for youth workers to be held in the same professional esteem as other professions, with a recognition that youth work and informal education complement and support young people's more formal learning and personal development.

3.16 We would ask voluntary organisations generally to foster links with local schools and ask local authorities to consider in their Integrated Children's Services Plans, Community Learning and Development Strategies and NEET plans how joint working and information sharing between youth workers, schools, colleges, Careers Scotland and other relevant post-school service providers in their area can be a part of delivering the best outcomes for young people locally. Learning and Teaching Scotland are keen to forge close links with the youth work sector and we will work with them to set up a co-ordinator post based in their organisation to work on strengthening links between schools and youth work.

The Outcome we want:

Young people to be able to access information on youth work opportunities at school and for schools to fully understand and appreciate the unique role and methods of youth work and the benefits and achievements young people gain through youth work opportunities.

The Action we propose:

With Learning and Teaching Scotland we will jointly fund a 2-year youth work co-ordinator post to work with schools and the youth work sector to increase mutual understanding and highlight good practice. They will also promote the benefits of the GIRFEC approach, A Curriculum for Excellence, the recognition of informal learning, achievements and qualifications and wider NEET preventative strategies.

Peer Education

3.17 The value of peer education in providing information and advice for young people by young people, featured strongly in consultation responses and many called for continued support for projects and training for young people involved in peer education. For the past 3 years, **the Executive has funded the pilot Peer Education Network based within Fast Forward and we will continue to do so as a core element of Fast Forward’s work.**

Healthy Choices

3.18 The importance of healthy living and helping young people to make informed choices is recognised. This is particularly the case when it comes to choices about alcohol and drugs. We will continue to support organisations through the Unified Voluntary Sector Fund which help educate and support young people to make positive choices about drugs and alcohol. We will also continue to fund the Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland Partnership Drugs Initiative which supports local organisations which work with young people at risk from, or affected by, substance misuse.



Transport access

3.19 Transport costs were raised by some young people as a contributing factor in deciding whether they could or could not access youth work opportunities. In January 2007 a Scotland-wide concessionary travel scheme for young people was launched which offers all young people aged 16 to 18 and full time volunteers up to age 25 a third off single bus fares and a third off rail fares across Scotland. Young people on Scottish islands also get two free ferry journeys to the mainland each year. Giving young people cheaper travel will make a real difference, whether by enabling them to access youth work opportunities, get to school or college, look for jobs or to see more of Scotland.

Equal Opportunities

3.20 Young people in particular voiced some concerns about feeling excluded if they belonged to a minority group. It must clearly be a priority for youth organisations and groups to develop their understanding about the diverse needs of young people and ensure that mainstream provision appeals to and meets the needs of young people from minority groups. Young people will also be better supported by youth workers who understand diversity issues and are equipped to deal with situations in a youth work context where young people from minority groups might feel uncomfortable.

3.21 2007 is the European Year of Equal Opportunities and we need to make sure that the youth work sector demonstrates the highest standards of equality across all its provision. We recently published *Same Difference?* www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/samedifference, a guide to working with equalities groups in community learning and development, including youth work, and are developing further ideas for taking forward work in this area. We are keen to support provision which actively seeks to meet the needs of vulnerable young people. Therefore bids for funding which demonstrate positive steps to include young people from minority groups will be welcomed for both the Youth Opportunities Fund and the Facilities Improvement Fund.

The Outcome we want:

For young people from any minority group to feel included and supported in any youth work activity or facility and for the youth work sector to be completely free from discrimination or exclusion.

The Action we propose:

- ➔ We will ask YouthLink to offer training and opportunities to share good practice on how groups can deliver opportunities which appeal to minority groups and meet their needs. This should also cover the handling of issues and discussion relating to ethics, morals, equality and faith issues which might arise in working with young people in a youth work context.
- ➔ We will ask Young Scot to ensure that the information they provide covers issues of particular concern to young people from minority groups.
- ➔ We will continue to support organisations which specifically work to support young people affected by, or at risk from, alcohol and drugs misuse.
- ➔ We will work with organisations which deal specifically with young people from minority groups to discuss how best to make befriending and mentoring support available for these young people.
- ➔ We will ask groups taking forward these initiatives for minority groups to include monitoring and evaluation as integral aspects.

4. SUPPORTING YOUTH WORK AT LOCAL LEVEL

- 4.1** The consultation also brought out a clear demand for more support in delivering youth work at a local level, with 27% of responses calling for more interaction, collaboration or joint working. One local authority response said:

“Liaison groups for staff from different sectors/agencies should exist and their role and structure communicated to all staff”

Others called for local or regional co-ordinators to facilitate forums, networking, information sharing and Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

- 4.2** While respondents felt that opportunities should be open to all young people, there was also a recognition that different areas face different challenges. For example, rurality and transport issues may be a key factor in involving more young people in some areas while in others not at all.



Local funding and local outcome agreements

- 4.3** The bulk of funding for youth work is channelled through local authorities with the Executive providing around £120m every year for community learning and development within the annual core local government finance settlement grant. This covers both youth work, adult learning in communities and support for community organisations. Local authorities are able to decide their own priorities but achievement through learning for young people is identified as a national priority for community learning and development in *Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities* (2004) and it must remain a top priority for local authorities today.
- 4.4** Youth work has unique potential to lead to positive outcomes in a number of priority areas and to prevent costly problems which can arise when young people have little to do and stimulate them. We therefore intend to discuss with local partners the possibility of using Local Outcome Agreements for Children’s Services, soon to be piloted, to place more emphasis on outcomes.
- 4.5** Local authority youth work has been subject to inspection by HM Inspectorate of Education for many years. More recently, partnership approaches to community learning and development have led to the inclusion of some voluntary sector partners in inspections in local areas. The HMle publication *How Good Is Our Community Learning and Development? 2*, provides a self-evaluation framework to help youth work providers test the quality of their work. The new edition of *How Good Is Our School?* will place greater emphasis than before on young people’s experiences out of school and the contribution made by youth workers in school. By 2008, it is planned that inspections will focus much more on integrated services for children and young people and we see youth work being a significant part of this approach.

The Outcome we want:

For local authorities to deliver positive outcomes for individual young people and communities.

The Action we propose:

- ⇒ We will explore the possibility of local outcome agreements with a view to developing pathfinders with four local authorities through 2007-2008. We will monitor the effectiveness of this measure, with a view to including it universally if it adds value.
- ⇒ We will support the continuation of HMIE inspections of community learning and development in local areas as a means of improving quality in youth work and identifying and disseminating good practice. We will also ensure the inclusion of youth work within future inspections of services for children and young people.

4.6 It is important that this strategy helps local providers work together, plan provision more effectively and develop more expertise together. More effective local support should help providers advocate the benefits and outcomes of successful youth work locally and, as a result, have more success in accessing funding to expand their opportunities for young people. Young Scot and Dialogue Youth units have an important role to play in these areas and in promoting local opportunities for young people. And in forging links with established local organisations such as those offering cultural and sporting activities in their communities.

4.7 We are anxious neither to add an additional layer of bureaucracy, nor to cut across existing structures such as Community Planning Partnerships where these are already working well for youth work. But the consultation process highlighted demand for more local networking opportunities specific to the youth work sector and we do recognise that local youth work providers would welcome the opportunity to share good practice and work more effectively together for the benefit of young people.

4.8 We are keen to encourage opportunities for people in a local area to share knowledge and expertise and work together. We are therefore asking YouthLink to assess demand for local and specialist networks and run pilots in 2007-2008. In working with partners locally, they will be expected to take account of existing strategic approaches, such as those developed by Community Learning and Development Partnerships. Where local providers are willing and able to collaborate in developing a more strategic local approach, they will be able to present stronger, more coherent bids for funding to local funders, in particular local authorities, and nationally. Major Trusts in particular have indicated that they would welcome local funding bids which demonstrate a strategic or collaborative approach. Networks should also be able to help local voluntary organisations access and influence community planning processes, something which, individually they tell us they find difficult to do effectively. We would also encourage the establishment and growth of more networks where specialist youth workers can share information personally or on-line and join together for specialist training events.

The Outcome we want:

To improve provision in local areas by giving youth work providers more opportunities to network, train, share expertise and work together to identify and fill gaps in provision for young people.

The Action we propose:

- We will ask YouthLink, as part of their Executive-funded work for 2007-2008, to pilot local and specialist networks, e.g. for detached youth workers or practitioners with a particular interest in music, physical activity or mental health, or who work with particular minority groups such as young people from ethnic minorities. Throughout the **Year of Action** resources from the Youth Opportunities Fund will be available to individual groups for start-up grants/costs.



The Outcome we want:

For local providers working together to be able to access additional funding to help address gaps in provision and work together more to provide more youth work opportunities.

The Action we propose:

- As part of the **Year of Action** for youth work we will set up a **Youth Opportunities Fund**. This will offer a total of £2.5m into which local groups and partnerships can bid for:
 - funding for projects, particularly in areas of multiple deprivation, which fill gaps in provision and will deliver agreed outcomes for young people in those areas;
 - funding for organisations which support young people involved, or at risk of involvement, with alcohol, drugs and/or antisocial behaviour;
 - projects specifically intended to promote inclusion of minority groups or which address inclusion as a priority;
 - funding for special events or conferences, run locally; and
 - contributions to one-off costs of setting up local or specialist networks.

The Fund will also be open to individual voluntary organisations, both local and national, to bid for funds to support local recruitment campaigns for volunteers.

Apart from these volunteer recruitment bids, particular consideration will be given to bids from partnerships involving both local authorities and voluntary organisations and bids which involve some form of matched funding.

The Outcome we want:

For local networks and youth work providers generally to have clear accessible information on funding opportunities and criteria offered by charitable trusts.

The Action we propose:

- ➔ We will ask the main charitable trusts for young people in Scotland to collaborate with YouthLink and Young Scot in creating and maintaining a section of their websites which provide up-to-date information and application advice. This should enable organisations or groups seeking funding to identify which funding source is most likely to be in a position to respond positively to each separate funding request.

5. IMPROVING FACILITIES

5.1 One of the key challenges respondents believe face the youth work sector in the 21st century is the accessibility and availability of good quality youth work facilities. The problem appears not just to be a lack of premises, but that suitable existing premises are not always accessible for young people and their youth workers at the times they need them. Schools in particular were mentioned as difficult to access out-of-hours, despite offering premises already designed with young people in mind. The cost of opening up existing facilities to young people when and where they need them must be a priority for local authorities and others and must often be more cost effective than providing new premises for youth work. There will, of course, also be situations where purpose-built new facilities are relevant, perhaps serving a variety of groups and uses. In developing new facilities it is expected that the principles of sustainable development are taken into account, particularly in the application of sustainable design principles.

5.2 The strategy has already discussed the benefits of national voluntary organisations sharing facilities and we believe this is also relevant locally. Other capital-rich organisations such as the Scottish Youth Hostel network are also well placed to offer accommodation and facilities for youth work provision, not only residential. And, where local youth work networks are piloted, these will also have a role to play in identifying suitable local facilities and securing their use for young people where appropriate. There are of course many excellent facilities including sports, arts, music and theatre venues and centres designed for and by young people where they can genuinely feel ownership of the space. Making the best use of all these facilities, making them affordable for youth groups to use and opening them up to a wide range of young users, is particularly important.



- 5.3** In the spirit of ‘Getting It Right For Every Child’ and our NEET Strategy, ‘*More Choices, More Chances*’, we expect all those with responsibility for providing and funding youth work provision to do what they can to make existing facilities available where this is in the best interests of young people locally. The cost of opening premises rarely outweighs the benefit to the young people using them and we would encourage those in charge not to let opportunities fall due to lack of accommodation where suitable accommodation exists. This applies not just to schools but also to sports facilities, art and drama centres or church halls which may be suitable for youth work provision.
- 5.4** We are keen to support the upgrading of youth work facilities for young people, particularly where the groups using them have limited funds and few alternative sources of support, and where support will clearly lead to significant positive outcomes for more young people.
- 5.5** In 2006-2007 the Executive provided £2.5m for a Youth Work Capital Fund which resulted in 259 awards of up to £50,000 to improve facilities and buy new equipment and vehicles for youth groups and organisations in all parts of Scotland. We are pleased to be able to offer during the **Year of Action** on youth work an increased fund for 2007-2008 which will be available from the start of the financial year to encourage larger-scale bids for refurbishment or improvement.

The Outcome we want:

For youth groups and organisations to be able to bid for capital grants which enable them to directly enhance opportunities and outcomes for the young people who use their facilities.

The Action we propose:

- ➔ Through the **Year of Action** on youth work we will ask YouthLink to administer a Youth Work Facilities Improvement Fund of £5m for 2007-2008. The funds will be available from 1 April 2007 with the capital works completed by 31 March 2008. Bidders must be able to demonstrate that funding will lead to positive outcomes for young people and particular weighting should be given to bids to improve facilities and premises for vulnerable young people or in areas of deprivation. Where appropriate, bids will also be expected to reflect that the principles of sustainable development have been taken into account, particularly in the application of sustainable design principles.

6. SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS AND THE YOUTH WORK WORKFORCE

- 6.1** Throughout the consultation there were numerous mentions of the need to raise the profile of youth work and to recognise the value of the contribution made by volunteers and youth workers.

Supporting volunteers

- 6.2** The contribution of volunteers of all ages is particularly important to the youth work sector. People of working age and older people who give their skills and experience freely enable young people to take part in life-enhancing activities which have a lasting positive effect on their lives. We recognise and appreciate the commitment of volunteers across Scotland and the difference they make to so many young people. Volunteering opportunities for young people have been boosted by Project Scotland, with over 800 young people having taken part since 2003. A particularly popular area for this is environmental volunteering as young people are often inspired by environmental issues and want to make their own contribution. The Scottish Executive recently launched its approach to environmental volunteering *Playing Our Part* which aims to increase opportunities for young people to improve the environment in their local communities and elsewhere. A wide-range of exciting opportunities will continue to be available in the organisation of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and should Scotland be successful in its bid, the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.
- 6.3** Adequate support for volunteers through training and mentoring was identified as important during the consultation, with volunteers feeling valued and able to see the benefit of their work. Respondents also noted that, with many volunteers in full-time employment, they needed flexibility to be able to participate in training and commit to supporting their chosen youth work project.



- 6.4** Over half of all adult/organisational responses mentioned that some form of recognition or value was needed to recruit and retain volunteers. Respondents also called for more support, training and mentoring, and accreditation where appropriate. There were differing views on whether they needed the same support and training as professional youth workers, given the limited time they might have available and the wide range of activities volunteers take on.
- 6.5** A significant proportion of respondents called for more publicity or promotion to encourage people to volunteer. Respondents also pointed to bureaucracy, and in particular perceptions of difficulties surrounding the disclosure process, as off-putting for prospective volunteers. A key aim of The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Bill, currently being considered by the Scottish Parliament, is to reduce the bureaucracy around the disclosure process. By removing much of the need for multiple disclosures and through introducing continuous updating of records, the Bill should ultimately lessen the burden on voluntary organisations and volunteers, and help support the sector. We are fully committed to working with the voluntary sector and other stakeholders to tackle and resolve to their satisfaction the implementation issues currently causing concern.

The Outcome we want:

For volunteers to feel valued and supported in the roles they choose to take on; and have access to the training and support they need. And for more people to volunteer to work with young people. In particular that voluntary organisations are able to provide high quality training for volunteers and are equipped to explain procedures involved in the necessary disclosure process and the reasons behind it.

The Action we propose:

- ➔ As part of the **Year of Action** we will work with the voluntary sector to develop a specific Action Plan for Volunteering in the youth work sector. This will cover issues such as recruitment, developing participants to help run projects, sustaining volunteers' contribution and training and support. As already agreed in the *Strategy for a Scotland with an Ageing Population*, this will apply to volunteers of all ages so will include the benefits of older people acting as role models, coaches, instructors and mentors in youth work projects.
- ➔ £0.5m will be available through the Voluntary Organisations Support Fund to train volunteers, and the Youth Opportunities Fund will be open to applications aimed at running campaigns locally to attract new volunteers.
- ➔ We will work with voluntary organisations to ensure clear information is available on disclosure checks and that they are fully aware of the new arrangements under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Bill.
- ➔ And we will ensure that volunteers are able, though not compelled, to register with the new Community Learning and Development Standards Council so that they can benefit from high quality training and recognition of achievement.

Supporting youth workers

- 6.6** Respondents mentioned the need for clear career paths, more job security in an uncertain funding climate and for better, more accessible training and development opportunities.
- 6.7** Ministers recently agreed to establish a new Standards Council for Community Learning and Development (CLD). This offers the chance to strengthen standards across CLD, including the youth work sector, and address many of the concerns raised by youth work practitioners and young people. The new Council will support the sector to develop an articulated framework of training that will provide pathways and progression through learning. This along with a framework of continuing professional development (CPD) will offer youth work practitioners the opportunity to develop their practice and improve services with and for young people in Scotland today. The new Council has also been invited to establish an inclusive registration system for practitioners as an essential contribution to ensuring high standards of practice.

The Outcome we want:

For improved opportunities for young people delivered by youth workers able to benefit from excellent opportunities for CPD and career progression. And for volunteers who choose to register, an opportunity to gain recognition for their skills and experience.

The Action we propose:

- We will ensure that the new Standards Council recognises and provides for the unique skills and qualities required of youth workers and volunteers. And through its work encourages more people to choose youth work as their profession or as a volunteering option.



Training for youth workers

- 6.8** We have already identified opening up training and networking opportunities as one of YouthLink’s key functions as the national youth work agency. In particular we would ask them to work with other organisations to identify the demand for, and organise, regional training open to a range of providers on some of the key issues identified in the consultation where more information and training is viewed as necessary. In particular a significant number of respondents indicated they would welcome more support with self-evaluation and identifying and measuring outcomes and impacts. We recently worked with the sector to produce *Delivering Change – Understanding the outcomes of community learning and development* – a resource to help people in the sector understand and identify outcomes relevant to their work. We expect that this will be used with other tools to help people understand the importance of evaluation and outcome delivery and implement it in their work as a matter of course.

The Outcome we want:

For all youth workers and those supporting them to understand the importance of evaluation in delivering the best outcomes for young people and best value for money. And to be able to access high quality materials, guidance and training on setting and evaluating outcomes. Funding applications and business plans should become more outcome-focused, with positive impacts on the quality and effectiveness of opportunities offered to young people.

The Action we propose:

- ➔ We will ask YouthLink to work with HMle, Evaluation Support Scotland, and other experts in evaluation to scope current resources and offer advice and training on a range of tools for people involved in the youth work sector.

Specific provision for youth workers' training within the Community Education Degree

6.9 Consultation responses responses calling for more support and training on core youth worker competences such as evaluation, suggest that these issues would be helpfully addressed as part of the degree course for youth workers. We recognise too that the skills and qualities needed by youth workers in 21st century Scotland may be different from adult education workers. It will be important to be sure that the needs of youth work are recognised specifically and addressed within the degree courses on offer to ensure that tomorrow's youth workers graduate with the skills and expertise they need to thrive in their chosen profession. We also need to ensure that the youth work workforce reflects cultural diversity in Scotland.

The Outcome we want:

For Community Education graduates entering the youth work profession to be equipped to meet the challenges of youth work today.

The Action we propose:

- ⇒ We will discuss with the Scottish Funding Councils, providers and the Standards Council for CLD how best to ensure the priorities set out in this strategy are taken account of in developing and delivering degree level provision for current and prospective professional youth workers.

7. LISTENING TO WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE WANT

- 7.1** A key purpose of this consultation was to find out what was important to young people, so that all of us who provide information, youth work or participation opportunities can understand better what they want and need.
- 7.2** Close to 20% of young people who responded see youth work as predominately a way to socialise, make new friends and learn new skills. They also recognised the role that youth work has in increasing their confidence and self-esteem. They stressed the importance of their youth worker being friendly, approachable and easy to talk to. What they want more of, to ensure that all young people can take part and benefit, is for all young people to be treated equally, that they should be encouraged to work together and importantly that they should be asked what they want.
- 7.3** They commented that they want to know more about what is going on – whether through websites, posters, leaflets or emails and that they want more young people to be involved in planning and running projects. Almost one in every five young people that responded said they wanted adults to listen to them. They want to be asked their opinions whether through meetings or discussion groups, questionnaires or surveys but most of all they want to know that their opinion counts.
- 7.4** Young people who responded also expressed that they want the Government, local authorities and other organisations who make decisions that involve them to have youth representatives so that they are consulted, included and can have a say on what matters to them.



Information for young people

- 7.5** The importance of relevant, user-friendly information delivered in formats that young people want was clearly demonstrated in consultation responses. Young people focused on the means of communication with more calls for leaflets and flyers as well as websites, and on the importance of involving them in developing information. The work of Young Scot was referred to, particularly in responses from adults and organisations.

The Outcome we want:

For all young people to be able to access high quality, up-to-date information on issues of interest to them and opportunities open to them, in a variety of formats.

The Action we propose:

- We will work with Young Scot to agree a workplan for 2007-2008 and business plan for 2007-2010 which reflects priorities identified in the consultation. In particular:
 - roll-out of the Youth Opportunities Database currently under development which will provide young people with information on youth work opportunities and other things to do in their local area;
 - developing information in different formats including leaflets and posters which young people asked for in the consultation;
 - including information particularly needed by vulnerable young people including young offenders or those from minority groups, and involving them in its preparation; and
 - developing more information for young people who have left school.

Influencing national policy

7.6 Consultation responses, particularly from young people, showed a disappointingly low level of awareness of the role of the Scottish Youth Parliament in representing the views of young people in Scotland. This is particularly concerning in view of the intensive Government funding directed at the SYP in particular over the past 2 years for the organisation to become more representative and to reach young people through schools and other means. It is essential that, to have credibility, the SYP must be able to reach young people and demonstrate that it engages with and speaks for large numbers of young people in Scotland. It is receiving funding from the Big Lottery for the *Roars not Whispers* project and we propose that for the foreseeable future, the funding it receives from Government is directed at achieving significant improvements in engaging with, empowering and representing young people in Scotland.

The Outcome we want:

For all young people to be more empowered in influencing decisions affecting their own lives and those of their schools and communities. For them to be aware of the SYP’s role in supporting them in this and to have their views taken account of when the SYP makes representations on behalf of young people.

The Action we propose:

- ➔ We will agree a workplan with the SYP which commits them to focusing their efforts and their funding from Government on delivering the key priority areas identified in the strategy consultation. Funding will be tied to the organisation’s ability to demonstrate evidence of improvement in these key areas:
 - engaging with young people through schools, teachers and youth workers;
 - empowering young people by helping build their capacity to influence their school or local community, and generally on matters of concern to them;
 - ensuring that all MSYPs are aware of their responsibilities in representing other young people and engage actively to ensure the views they put forward are genuinely representative; and
 - increasing significantly the numbers of young people consulted when determining their policy direction and making the case for policy changes to Government and other decision-makers.

Influencing decisions locally

- 7.7** Young people must also be able to influence and shape policy locally as well as nationally, and contribute to decision-making on services and facilities in their own communities. Consultation responses called for young people to be asked their opinion and be valued, for youth friendly structures such as youth forums to be supported and for communications to be made more young people friendly.
- 7.8** We would urge all those involved in community planning to seek the views and involvement of young people and youth work providers in taking forward local decisions and to reflect these in Regeneration Outcome Agreements (ROAs). As part of their work in building a picture of the views and concerns of communities, Community Planning Partnerships should be developing an awareness of the diverse needs of children and young people in their area. This responsibility is shared by all members and all services, not just those traditionally recognised as having a role in working with children and young people. The Executive has been working for some time with partners to develop an advice note on consulting young people through the Community Planning process, including good practice and a list of contacts and resources. The note has now been published and can be downloaded at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/11/09140609/0>. The Dialogue Youth Initiative, supported by Young Scot and local authorities has already developed examples of good practice in enabling community planning partners to consult young people.

Recognising achievement

- 7.9** Over a third of consultees recommended the use of some form of award to ensure young people receive recognition for their informal learning. Most notably, national awards schemes were mentioned as the most successful way to value and acknowledge the importance of informal learning.
- 7.10** We know that awards such as Youth Achievement Awards, ASDAN and The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award are valued by young people and others. There is an increasing interest in exploring how these learning programmes can be described in the same way as more formal learning, such as SQA courses. This would enable increased understanding of these programmes and allow them to be understood and accepted in the wider learning context. The Scottish Executive is currently exploring the suitability of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework to accredit some of these more informal learning programmes.

The Outcome we want:

For young people who achieve awards through participation in youth work to know that the value and nature of their awards are recognised by employers and others. We want to see employers' understanding of the benefits of youth work increase generally with more support through their corporate social responsibility programmes, e.g. for employees who volunteer or in allowing youth groups to use suitable premises.

The Action we propose:

- ⇒ We will support ongoing work to ensure benchmarking of appropriate informal learning qualifications against the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.
- ⇒ During the **Year of Action** on youth work we will work with employers' representatives to increase employers' understanding of skills young people are acquiring through involvement in youth work and encourage their support for youth work as part of their corporate social responsibility programmes. We will hold an event for employers by the end of 2007 which showcases youth work opportunities and skills to employers.
- ⇒ Through Learning Connections we will work with youth workers and others in the CLD sector to develop awareness and understanding of learning and use of SCQF.

Involving young people in taking forward the youth work strategy

7.11 Comments from young people suggested that they found the full version of the consultation paper difficult to follow and some of the questions hard to answer. We want young people to understand that this strategy is designed ultimately to ensure that they have more and better opportunities and achieve better outcomes through youth work and to realise that their involvement in this consultation has led to specific actions and improvements.

The Outcome we want:

For young people to understand that this strategy is designed to provide better opportunities for them and that their involvement in the consultation process has helped shape the proposals.

The Action we propose:

- We will involve some of the young people who responded to the consultation with helping to shape and take forward the Action Plan outlined in the Youth Work Strategy.



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

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