

UK YOUTH

**Response to Labour Party
Building a Statutory Youth Service
Consultation**

November 2018

National Charter for Youth Work

- What do you think should be the role of a statutory youth service?

The role of a statutory youth service should be to ensure positive outcomes for children and young people through the provision of high quality and universally available non-formal education, informal education and development opportunitiesⁱ.

We propose the following **outcomes** be set for the statutory youth service:

- Young people thriving in safe, cohesive communities
- Young people treated fairly and given access to equal opportunities
- Young people as active citizens, benefiting from and contributing to society
- Young people in education, training and work to enhance the economy
- Young people politically engaged and building a sustainable future

These outcomes should be achieved through an **asset-based approach to youth services**, with the emphasis being that children and young people are capable and able to overcome barriers and solve their own issues when they are given access to appropriate education, training, support and opportunities.

Youth services are most effective when they are designed and delivered as part of a wider ecosystem of provision. The new statutory youth service must therefore be designed with this in mind and take account of the myriad other services many young people interact with in their day to day lives, ranging from formal education and social services, to criminal justice, health care, housing and benefits.

We should also be mindful of the many activities and opportunities young people can benefit from that are not traditionally considered part of the statutory youth sector, including sports clubs, art and drama groups, social enterprises, after school clubs and uniformed youth groups. These activities all contribute to the richness of a young persons' social development journey and, like more traditional youth services, they should be accessible, affordable, open to all, and encouraged by the central youth organisation.

- What amendments, if any, should be made to the principles outlined in the draft National Charter for Youth Work?

Our recommendation is to move away from describing the Labour Party offer as a 'National Charter for Youth work'. We recommend a bolder, more ambitious approach that goes beyond traditional youth work to encompass a broad range of touch points in a young persons' life.

We would re-brand it a 'National Charter for Children and Young people'.

We call on the Labour Party to consider the following National Charter for Children and Young People to form the foundation of the new statutory youth service.

1. Young people have the right to live in safe, welcoming communities
2. Young people have the right to fair and equal treatment
3. Young people have the right to access vital services and opportunities for advancement
4. Young people have the right to learn, work and contribute to the economy
5. Young people have the right to influence issues that matter to them

In order to deliver on this vision, the Labour Party would need to design an appropriately funded strategic delivery framework. UK Youth have consulted widely across the youth sector to understand and articulate what such a framework might look like.

We propose building a strategic delivery framework around three interconnected pillars;

- **Influence** - Amplify and act on the voices of young people
- **Opportunity** - An offer that is accessible to every young person, everywhere
- **Quality** – Safe, appropriate, high-quality services for young people

These pillars encompass informal education, non-formal education and development opportunities for young people. They have been created from the perspective of a young person, rather than through the lens of any current or pre-existing youth work delivery framework.

In building a statutory youth service around three simple pillars, it becomes easier to identify key priorities, set outcome targets, measure progress, and communicate the offer in a compelling way to the electorate.

b) Labour's vision

- What amendments, if any, should be made to Labour's vision for delivering a statutory youth service?

UK Youth supports Labour's vision to create a quality service for all young people. We agree that this service should be protected in statute.

We support the creation of a local youth service partnership, but we are calling for this to be broader than young people, parents, professionals and councilors. Our vision is for a public health model within which stakeholders from across the community are encouraged and supported (with funding and resources) to work together to understand the social development journey young people in their local area go on, and map how they can better support this journey by working together.

Through sharing data and knowledge about young people across schools, healthcare settings, social care, criminal justice and youth services, it would be possible to tailor support to young people's needs, identify what works, share learnings and implement continuous improvement cycles.

Rather than placing responsibility for youth services with the Secretary of State, UK Youth recommends that delivery of the National Charter for Children and Young People should be the responsibility of a **Minister for Children and Young people**, working in close partnership with the Minister for Education.

The remit for the Minister for Education would remain focused on educational attainment outcomes delivered through formal education and training, whilst the remit of the Minister for Children and Young people would be to deliver the holistic outcomes set out in the Charter.

- Young people thriving in safe, cohesive communities
- Young people treated fairly and given access to equal opportunities
- Young people as active citizens, benefiting from and contributing to society
- Young people in education, training and work to enhance the economy
- Young people politically engaged and building a sustainable future

This would enable the Labour Party to centralise responsibility for a range of important areas

including (but not limited to); children and young people with physical or mental disabilities, children and young people in care, loneliness and mental health, discrimination, physical activity, youth employment, serious youth violence, and youth offending.

The Minister for Children and Young People would achieve these outcomes through the implementation of the strategic delivery framework. Namely by focusing on the three pillars of Influence, Opportunity and Quality.

We support the Labour Party commitment to ring fence funding to oversee youth service provision across England. This would be a very welcome move.

UK Youth also supports the appointment of a national body to manage this funding. However, we are calling on the Labour Party to identify an existing VCSE organisation to take on this role, instead of building a new entity from scratch. This will avoid the need to reinvent the wheel and mitigate against the risk of a new quango being set up only to be dismantled 5-10 years down the line. A well-established VCSE with a good track record is more likely to survive in the long term with or without government funding.

Furthermore, **we recommend that this body acts as a funding and knowledge centre for the sector but does not take on responsibility for all delivery work.** The youth sector is made up of many effective, entrepreneurial, resilient organisations that have built up experience, expertise and credibility in their communities over time. UK Youth recommends that the Labour Party directs the central body to work through these existing organisations wherever possible. A rigorous sector mapping process to understand which organisations offer expertise in each of the key delivery areas could be used as the starting point for a funding strategy.

We are calling for funding from the mandated national body to flow to VCSE's that lead the field in England in one or more of the three pillars we have identified.

- Influence - Amplify and act on the voices of young people
- Opportunity - An offer that is accessible to every young person, everywhere
- Quality - Safe, appropriate, high-quality services for young people

These foundation partner organisations would be well placed to form partnerships with, and distribute grants to, regional and local VCSE's, local government, and wider stakeholders to build a strong, diverse national youth service.

We believe that, in addition, funding should also flow from the Minister for Children and Young People direct to local government in a way that incentivises partnership working with VCSEs and wider stakeholder groups. This two pronged funding approach would facilitate a public health approach to service design for children and young people.

The focus of central government funding, directed by the Minister for Children and Young People, should be on investing in infrastructure and capacity building that will **equip the sector to survive and thrive with and without government funding.** This must go far beyond small grants to train staff in topics such as social investment. It should be bold and well thought through, with a focus on long term sustainability and impact. For example funding is needed to;

- Train a flexible, professional workforce to operate at a consistently high level across a wide range of services for young people within and beyond the traditional youth sector. New staff entering the workforce should be able to move seamlessly between youth clubs, schools, sports centres, art and drama clubs, police forces, secure estate, hospitals, social enterprises, corporates and more – wherever the need exists for their expertise.
- Strengthen national, regional and local volunteer networks so they can withstand

changes in policy and society over the next 100 years – implement low cost cascade management systems, plus centralised record keeping, safeguarding, professional training, support and guidance for all volunteers.

c) Service delivery

- **At what age should statutory youth services be available to young people?**

We recommend allowing young people to participate from the ages of 5-25 (or up to 27 with disabilities). Young people should have the opportunity to complete their social development journey over the course of their engagement with youth services.

- Social Engagement
- Social Learning
- Social Action
- Social Leadership

It can be valuable to start young, when youth services can have the most impact on a young person's development. However, not everyone will have the opportunity to engage early and not all young people develop at the same rate. Every young person has a unique journey. There must be flexibility to account for this and young people should be supported and encouraged to move between different services to suit their needs. Youth services need to be adaptable to change with the constantly changing needs of young people.

- **What should be the balance between open access and targeted youth work?**

UK Youth does not recommend setting a pre-determined split between open access and targeted youth work. Young people benefit from both forms of support, along with many other services and opportunities, as they progress into adulthood. We recommend an approach that enables us to move away from the existing "postcode lottery" where some areas offer both open access and targeted support, whilst others do nothing.

During our consultation with youth workers and young people in the UK Youth network, there was a strong sense that there should be a mixture of both targeted and open access youth work, but that the emphasis should be on open access. Young people tell us they like having a choice and there is a need for both, but services have to be more flexible than just Monday-Friday 9am-5pm.

"With open access, some young people could be wasting resources and other people could be missing out, but open access evolves into targeted youth services when you find out what the problems are."
Orla Devlin, UK Youth Voice member

"Open access youth work finds the problems you need to target. There should be more open access initially to identify what targeted support is needed."
Leto Dietrich, UK Youth Voice member

- **What role should national programmes such as NCS, VCSE, faith groups, businesses and commissioning play in supporting statutory youth services?**

UK Youth are recommending a National Charter for Children and Young People that encompasses all the groups referenced above.

The youth sector has responded to government cuts and become innovative in their models and

funding, creating unique and interesting youth provision that responds to the needs of the young people in their area and society's problems. Forming strong local partnerships, building local capacity, and recognising will be vital to make Labour's vision a success.

There is not one model in place anywhere in the UK, so each local area will have a different set of arrangements that need to be considered. There is huge variability in place across the regions in terms of which services remain and our members have huge concerns about the position of infrastructure support for the voluntary and community sector and how it continues to be eroded.

Building sustained collaborations in local areas absolutely needs to reflect on the current context, which can be competitive and complicated. UK Youth believe a statutory youth service should integrate into community-led projects, keeping the community links that already exist. Young people are worried that the youth clubs and organisations they have loved and cherished for so long could be jeopardised under the move back to a statutory youth service.

We are recommending the collaborative funding model set out earlier in this paper. UK Youth is in favour of mixed provision, bringing a wealth of expertise of all levels, championing the experience and knowledge of the voluntary sector and utilising the resources of the private sector and independent funders as well as statutory funding.

d) Youth Voice

- **How can we ensure young people's voices are at the centre of a statutory youth service?**
(response by UK Youth Voice)

UK Youth empowers socially excluded young people from across the UK with the skills they need to be able to access opportunities, share their views and influence their own lives and the world around them. Through the UK Youth Voice National Board, we have recruited 28 passionate young people from diverse backgrounds who would otherwise not engage in formal structures. This personal development programme aims to enable them to have the opportunity to share their views on a local, regional and national level, increase their aspirations and connections, and progress to further social leadership roles.

To enable young people to be at the heart of decision making in central and national government, we would recommend a dedicated national youth policy board to design and co-create a statutory youth service. As well as formal decision making structures, the next Labour Government should consider creative and innovative ways to engage young people in decision making, for example using peer networks, social media and digital technology.

Young people have the right to be involved in decisions that affect them directly and in order for them to practise this, they should have the opportunity to learn about democratic processes so that they have the knowledge to know how they can make change in their local communities, and then have the confidence to be able to put this into practice. Whilst there are a number of programmes and projects that are working with young people to get their voices heard, current research shows that young people continue to feel disengaged in decision making as a whole. More needs to be done to involve young people in policy making in a meaningful way and where young people are already involved, decision makers should make sure that they feedback to young people on the outcome of their involvement to ensure they keep engaged and take ownership of their involvement.

During consultation with our UK Youth Voice members, they had lots of ideas about how to ensure young people's voices were at the centre of a statutory youth service. They discussed the aforementioned national steering board at great length, along with the local and regional consortiums of the youth sector players and young people in each area. They were keen to point out that young ambassadors or committee members should be representative of the issues they

are discussing and talking about, with a stipulation to include voices from a diverse range of backgrounds.

Youth participation needs resourcing and investment. This needs to be taken into account right from the very beginning in the time, funding and planning dedicated to building a statutory youth service to ensure meaningful empowerment of young people. Meaningful youth participation will then reap great benefits for a new statutory youth service but also for the young people in their personal leadership and confidence and trust in the service. UK Youth Voice believe that the only way to truly involve young people's voices in the development of a statutory youth service is to be committed to it from the early stages, ensuring decisions are accountable and young people can see where their opinions and voices are heard.

e) Workforce

We support a statutory national register for youth workers (both paid and volunteer).

There are over 16,000 individuals within UK Youth's direct membership's workforce. Volunteers greatly outnumber paid staff - for every paid staff member, there are two volunteers. This tallies with research from Unison which notes that around 1,660 youth work jobs were lost between 2014 and 2016, following the loss of almost 2,000 posts between 2012 and 2014. The majority of the losses were part-time workers.

Infrastructure organisations, delivering services at scale across local or regional networks, have the greatest reliance on volunteers, making up nearly 90% of their workforce. Organisations delivering services directly to young people from a single locality, such as a youth club, have the highest proportion of JNC (Joint Negotiating Committee) qualified youth and community workers, yet they are also very reliant on volunteers. As expected, larger organisations, turning over more than £500K, have the greatest number of full-time staff, likely to be employed in management functions such as finance, HR and strategy.

During the consultation of members, staff and young people in the UK Youth network, they were unanimous in stating that a national body such as the JNC should exist in order to protect youth workers. This should be optional for youth workers to join, and flexible in line with modern working practices.

"Establish competitive salaries and conditions plus a recruitment policy that looks outside of statutory services. Potential workers, previous and potential future recruits are out there but need motivation and incentives to get on board." UK Youth Network member organisation.

f) Evaluation

The most effective way to evidence the outcomes and impact of youth work is through long term, appropriate evaluation.

Short term funding, unrealistic delivery expectations and the competitive nature of youth sector funding make it almost impossible for youth organisations to carry out longitudinal studies that truly measure the impact of an intervention on young people months or even years later in their lives. Strategic investment into this area and the creation of a central database of outcomes would be very much welcomed.

Appendix 1: Strategic Framework

1. Influence

Amplify and act on the voices of young people

Central staff team to develop national strategy, coordinate and support Young Advocates and Members of the Youth Parliament, including commissioning research to inform best practice

Network of Young Advocates from under represented groups to amplify & act on voices of their peers

Network of Members of the Youth Parliament (MYPs) elected in an annual vote to give young people democratic representation

Harness latest tech to enable young people to connect with each other and with decision makers

Advocacy and youth social action opportunities in every community

Targeted local and national youth voice and advocacy initiatives

Research into what young people think and feel

Tangible action by central and local government in priority areas identified by young people

2. Opportunity

An offer that is accessible to every young person, everywhere

Central staff team to develop national strategy, coordinate Young Peoples Champions and Young Leaders, including commissioning research to inform best practice

Network of hyper local Young Peoples Champions (volunteers & youth workers) to provide support, guidance and mentoring to young people with complex needs

Network of 'Young Leaders' working in partnership with Young Peoples Champions to connect their peers with opportunities

Harness latest tech to enable young people to find appropriate opportunities, activities and services

High quality, well funded, social development opportunities, activities and services for young people in every community

Targeted local and national programmes for young people

Pathways to learning, training and work

Showcase and replicate what works

3. Quality - Safe, appropriate, high quality services for young people required by statutory guidance

Child Protection in Youth Services Unit

Youth Safeguarding Partnership

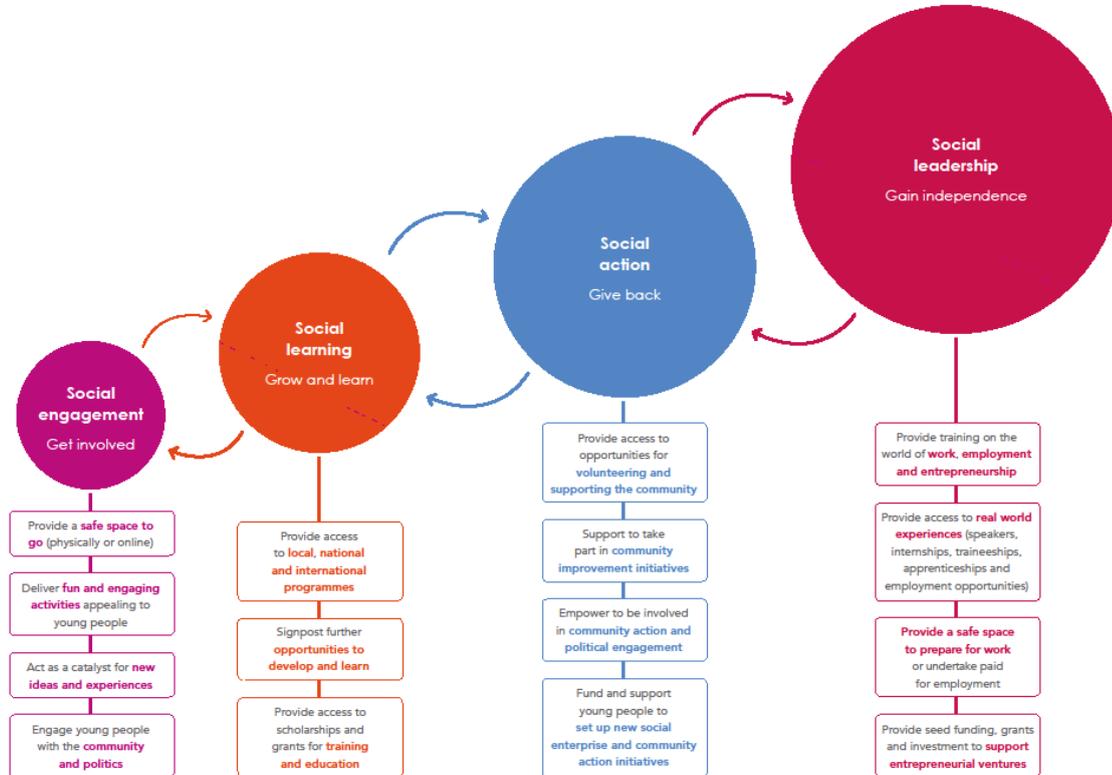
Youth Mark for accredited youth organisations

Central list of accredited youth workers and volunteers

Professional qualifications framework for youth workers and volunteers

Appendix 2

UK Youth Social Development Journey.



Appendix 3

About UK Youth

Founded in 1911, [UK Youth](#) improves social mobility by providing high quality services for young people aged 9 to 25 that are delivered through a network of locally accessible youth organisations across the UK. Together we offer support, advice and training and since our merger with Ambition, we reach an estimated 4 million young people to equip them with vital life skills and help them engage in education, volunteering and employment.

Our vision is for all young people to be empowered to build bright futures, whatever their background or circumstances.

Our reach- we work primarily with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, from a wide range of religious and cultural environments, family settings, academic ability levels and geographic locations across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

During 2016/17:

- We invested £4.8 million in direct delivery to young people in our network and almost 100,000 young people directly benefitted from our programmes.
- 23,000 young people visited our outdoor centre Avon Tyrrell, 30,000 young people took part in a UK Youth programme and over 43,000 received online support from us
- 77% of the young people on our programmes faced at least one personal barrier (these include low income family, not in employment, education or training, young carer)
- 52% of the young people come from the 30% most deprived areas in the UK
- Our programmes consistently deliver high impact to young people who begin our programme reporting low emotional and social capabilities (91% improved their communication skills, 96% improved their receptiveness and 91% improved their resilience)

Our members range from small voluntary led community groups and local infrastructure organisations to larger regional and national charities providing direct support to young people. Members of UK Youth providing local or regional infrastructure report working with over 2,000 youth clubs across England, offering local, on the ground support where it's needed most. Although this is not an exact figure on the number of youth clubs and organisations within the UK Youth membership network, it can be estimated that it is representative of a sizeable proportion of the sector.

Skills programmes

UK Youth work with young people, members and our partners to co-create high quality skills programmes that are delivered through our network of youth organisations. 77 % of young people UK Youth reaches through programmes and membership are classed as disadvantaged.

For example, the Starbucks Youth Action programme (SYA) is an initiative that is delivered in partnership with Starbucks and empowers young people who are under-25 and not in employment or education (NEET) to develop their employability and leadership skills through participation in social action. In 2015/16, the programme awarded 113 grants totalling £177,481 to young people across England, Scotland and Wales. As a result, 93% of Starbucks Youth Action participants become more self-aware, 89% became more receptive, 90% became more motivated, 95% became more confident, 89% became more resilient, 94% became more effective communicators and 94% became more responsible.

Outdoor Learning

We provide educational opportunities for young people through our leading outdoor activity centre Avon Tyrrell, in the New Forest where we deliver a range of activities all year round, dedicated to the continuous development of young people. The historic centre creates adventures that enable young people to build bright futures, leaving with essential life skills as well as incredible memories.

Through outdoor learning, tailored programmes, apprenticeships and traineeships, disability and wellbeing weekends and bursary schemes, Avon Tyrrell recognises and rewards achievements made outside the classroom, providing the opportunity for everyone to experience, learn and develop. Last year over 23,000 young people visited Avon Tyrrell, showcasing our commitment to involving young people in non-formal education.

References

ⁱ Definitions of formal, non formal and informal education from www.infed.org

Formal education: the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded 'education system', running from primary school through the university and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialised programmes and institutions for full-time technical and professional training.

Informal education: the truly lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment – from family and neighbours, from work and play, from the market place, the library and the mass media.

Non-formal education: any organised educational activity outside the established formal system – whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity – that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives.

The distinction made is largely administrative. Formal education is linked with schools and training institutions; non-formal with community groups and other organizations; and informal covers what is left, e.g. interactions with friends, family and work colleagues.

Combs with Prosser and Ahmed, 1973.