

23 March 2017

National Youth Agency

Purpose

For discussion.

Summary

In light of changes both to local authority funding and the needs and experiences of young people, it is an appropriate time for the LGA to consider how councils can best deliver their duties towards young people, and how it can support them to do so.

The National Youth Agency is the national body for youth work. The Agency will present to members information on its current work, and views on the changing landscape of youth service provision, to help inform LGA policy in this area.

Recommendations

The Children and Young People's Board is asked to;

1. Discuss the key issues facing councils in fulfilling their youth services duties and consider how the LGA could support councils in this area; and
2. Approve a roundtable meeting with partners to support the development of LGA policy around youth services.

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National Youth Agency

Background

1. Under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996, local education authorities in England must, so far as is reasonably practicable, make sure that young people aged 13-19 (or up to 25 for those with learning difficulties) in the authority's area have access to sufficient educational and recreational leisure-time activities, and facilities for those activities, which are for the improvement of their well-being.
2. Following several years of significant budget cuts, most councils have changed the ways in which they provide services for young people, for example through different structures, outsourcing or more specific targeting of services.
3. Unison's "A future at risk: Cuts in youth services" report¹ in 2016 found that:
 - 3.1 Spending on youth services had been cut by £387 million since 2010
 - 3.2 3,652 youth work jobs were lost and 603 youth centres closed between 2012 and 2016
 - 3.3 138,898 places for young people were lost between 2012 and 2016
4. On a broader scale, young people face a range of challenges that have become more acute over recent years, from difficulties accessing housing when they leave home², to the increasing likelihood of suffering from a mental health disorder³.
5. In light of changes both to local authority funding and the needs and experiences of young people, it is an appropriate time for the LGA to consider how councils can best deliver their duties towards young people, and how it can support them to do so.

Recent policy developments

6. National policy around youth services, and the ways in which councils deliver them, is already changing. Some of the key developments include:

National Citizen Service

7. National Citizen Service (NCS) is the Government's flagship scheme for 16 and 17 year olds living in England, in which young people take part in a social action scheme in their

¹ <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2016/08/23996.pdf>

² <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/housing-options-and-solutions-young-people-2020>

³ http://www.youngminds.org.uk/training_services/policy/mental_health_statistics

area to encourage personal and social development by working on skills like leadership, teamwork and communication.

8. The National Citizen Service Bill, which is currently going through Parliament, will extend provision of the scheme to 247,000 young people by 2020/21⁴ – a recent reduction from the 360,000 initially announced, following concerns from the National Audit Office that no recruitment targets had been met by the scheme since 2010. Approximately 93,000 16- and 17-year-olds took part in NCS in 2016. Funding of £1.26 billion has been granted for the scheme between 2016-20⁵, up to £75 million of which is due to be spent on advertising and marketing the scheme⁶.
9. A report⁷ published by the Public Accounts Committee on 14 March 2017 stated that The Office for Civil Society (OCS) and the NCS Trust, which manages the scheme, expected to spend £1,863 for each participant in 2016. The Committee concluded that, although the Scheme appears to have a real impact on those participating, it may no longer be justifiable if it is unable to cut its costs while meeting targets for increasing the number of participants and achieving its long-term societal aims.
10. As part of the Government's digital strategy, NCS will be working with education charity the Raspberry Pi Foundation to pilot the introduction of digital skills and careers programmes, including coding and digital entrepreneurship, to encourage young people to consider careers in the digital economy.
11. The NCS Trust is considering ways to work with councils to encourage take up of the scheme, including longer-term engagement with hard-to-reach or disadvantaged groups. It is also looking at co-commissioning of services to ensure that programmes are best suited to local areas.

Youth Investment Fund

12. In September 2016, the Government announced £40 million funding, in conjunction with the Big Lottery Fund, to support schemes targeted in disadvantaged communities across England through the Youth Investment Fund (YIF).
13. The YIF will support voluntary, community and social enterprise youth organisations to deliver, expand and create high quality local youth provision in targeted communities in the following areas:
 - West Midlands Urban
 - London East

⁴ <http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/2003131/national-citizen-service-recruitment-targets-cut-by-more-than-100-000>

⁵ <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/national-citizen-service/>

⁶ http://www.mytenders.org/search/show/search_view.aspx?ID=JUN126816

⁷ <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmpubacc/955/95502.htm>

- Tees Valley & Sunderland
- Bristol & Somerset
- Eastern Counties
- Liverpool City

14. Funding will be available up to 2020 to help organisations invest and plan for the future. Young people will be involved in the design and decision-making for the new fund, with the first awards expected to be made in Spring 2017.

New Youth Policy Statement

15. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport will shortly be announcing a call for evidence on a new youth policy statement, which will set out the Government's vision and priorities on non-formal and informal learning opportunities for young people. It is expected that this will be launched during the last two weeks in March, with engagement events to encourage views from local government along with other stakeholders.

16. No new funding to accompany the statement is planned at this stage.

Changes to service delivery

17. As budgets have been reduced since 2010, councils have been seeking new ways to deliver services.

18. One option being pursued by a number of councils is the establishment of Youth Mutuels. These are organisations that are no longer under council control, but are delivering public services, with employee voice a significant factor. More information on public sector mutuels is available on the [gov.uk website](http://gov.uk). Councils currently running this model include Knowsley and Lewisham.

19. A further option currently being considered by some councils is Social Impact Bonds (SIBs). These are designed to help improve the social outcomes of publicly funded services by making funding conditional on achieving results. Investors pay for the project at the start, and then receive payments based on the results achieved by the project. These are clearly defined, measurable "social outcomes" rather than outputs, for example improved health.

20. Social Impact Bonds are currently not widely used for the delivery of youth services, but the Government's Youth Engagement Fund has funded four SIBs to help prevent young people from becoming Not in Employment, Education or Training:

- 20.1 Unlocking Potential Ltd: working with up to 4,040 young people with behavioural, mental health or wellbeing issues aged 14 to 17 in Greater Merseyside.
- 20.2 Prevista Ltd: working with up to 1,000 young people aged 14 to 17 in London, 70% of whom will be gang members, ex-offenders/at risk of offending, in care/care leavers, and those with high levels of school absence.

- 20.3 Futureshapers Sheffield Ltd: working with up to 1,319 young people aged 14 to 17 in Sheffield who have poor attendance at or have been excluded from school, who have experience in the youth justice system, are 'looked after', have special educational needs or disability, or are teen parents.
- 20.4 Teens and Toddlers Youth Engagement LLP: working with up to 1,680 young people aged 14 to 17 years in Greater Manchester who are in care/edge of care, have a history of offending/at risk of offending and/or other risky behaviour (eg drugs/teen pregnancy), have behavioural or mental health issues and are truanting.
- 20.5 Evaluations of these projects are not yet available.

The National Youth Agency

21. The National Youth Agency is the national body for youth work, promoting youth work through:

- 21.1 **Championing youth work**—showcasing good practice, supporting new approaches, and promoting more understanding of the value and depth of the discipline among policy-makers, educators and employers.
- 21.2 **Professionalising youth work**—training youth workers, setting occupational standards, offering accreditation for professional development and researching and improving the methodologies and practice of youth work.
- 21.3 **Enabling youth work**—making it happen through networks of front line youth work providers, and through innovative links and funding arrangements with commercial and public sector partners.

22. The NYA will present to members information on its current work, and views on the changing landscape of youth service provision, to help inform LGA policy in this area.

Future Work

23. It is suggested that, to further this presentation, a roundtable is held with key partners to consider the future delivery of youth services in England in order to inform LGA policy in this area, with a report submitted to a future meeting of the Board.

Implications for Wales⁸

24. None.

⁸ The WLGA pays a membership fee to the LGA on behalf of all Welsh councils and we lobby for them on "non-devolved" issues - e.g. DWP work. The WLGA provides "top-slice" for workforce support, but none for "improvement".

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Financial Implications

25. None.

Next steps

26. Members are asked to:

- 26.1 Discuss the key issues facing councils in fulfilling their youth services duties and consider how the LGA could support councils in this area; and
- 26.2 Approve a roundtable meeting with partners to support the development of LGA policy around youth services.