

LLOYDS TSB FOUNDATION FOR SCOTLAND PARTNERSHIP DRUGS INITIATIVE COMMENTS ON YOUTHWORX STRATEGY

This was a useful and informative document. We found the clarity within the document enabled us to easily identify and respond to the questions contained in the consultation.

Q1: For youth work to have the best outcomes and be most effective young people have to voluntarily engage with services. However this will not always be the case and there will be occasions for compulsory requirements for youth work. To enable compulsory youth work to achieve similar positive outcomes to voluntary participation the following needs to be recognised:

- Development of relationship between worker and young person. A trusting relationship with a positive adult role model will help engagement and participation.
- Opportunities for incentives. Young people will often participate more effectively if they have something to work towards. This can be anything from an opportunity to participate in a diversionary activity to working towards a planned goal.
- Intensive support. Positive outcomes for compulsory youth work will often require more intensive resources. This is highlighted in the Scottish Executive's evaluation of 4 PDI funded projects
www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org/publications/abstracts/proj_yp_tsb.htm.

Q2: The Partnership Drugs Initiative (PDI) works with over a 100 projects throughout Scotland and has many examples of good practice in relation to youth work including;

- Café Youth Project based in Arbroath. Part of this project is offer diversionary sporting activities in local communities/neighbourhoods throughout Angus. The project offers a regular diversionary activity that young people fully participate and engage with.
- West Lothian Youth Action based in Livingston. The PDI has funded the streetwork element of this project, which has worked well to build relationships and engage with young people. Through these relationships the project has encouraged young people to access other elements of their service and helped young people achieve facilities or youth provisions within their own local communities.
- Ruchill Youth Project. The PDI has supported the 14+ group where young people are provided a space to access diversionary activities as well as group sessions on the issues around drugs and alcohol. The project has developed strong links with the local community police officer who along with the project is building up relationships with young people in the community.

Q3: Youth work should be available to all, although recognition must be given to vulnerable young people who will generally not always engage with more mainstream provision. It is important to highlight incentives and opportunities for young people to feel they can access services. The PDI has examples of projects that have developed a non-stigmatising approach to ensure a service feels available to all. To help achieve this emphasis has to be placed on the importance of empowerment of young people in the service.

Q4: A range of organisations are able to deliver youth work throughout Scotland. There needs to be reinforcement at a local statutory provider level of the depth of experience and knowledge in the voluntary sector. Experience of the PDI has shown that many voluntary sector organisations bring a level of flexibility to meet the changing needs of the client group. Commissioners should provide a level playing field when planning services for both statutory and voluntary sectors. In turn both voluntary and statutory sector services must ensure a level of clarity in their intended outcomes, how they will measure these and demonstrate the evidence of this at reporting stages. Ensuring that all bodies are working inline with these principles will help the delivery of services in line with local and national strategies. This message is highlighted in the recently published evaluation of the partnership drugs initiative (Summary Section, pages ii and iv).

Q5: Young people who have accessed and been supported in services should have the opportunities available to them to volunteer within the service. This will provide them with an opportunity to develop and build their skills. Encouragement and promotion of volunteering should also be offered to local communities, particularly in more vulnerable communities.

To assist in the encouragement incentives could be provided to potential volunteers as well as the development of an Accreditation scheme. The need to engage and promote volunteering within wider client groups will also assist with other Scottish Executive strategies e.g. the NEET agenda. Again the PDI has examples of where volunteering has been promoted with clients within their own local communities:

- Aberdeen Foyer Lifeshaper Programme
- Dundee Drugs & Aids Project – The Angus Web Project

A question has to be raised about lower numbers of adult volunteers linking into youth work services. Is there an issue around the potential risks associated when working with vulnerable children and young people or fear of how to deal with child protection issues? Is more consideration required to provide support, training and guidance for volunteers in dealing with child protection and risk assessment?

Q8: Further funding to assist in capacity building with particular emphasis on support for self-evaluation.

Q9: No views in relation to YouthLink Scotland.

Q10: Is there an opportunity to develop a strong core network (potentially virtual?) with smaller thematic off-shoots. Through the work of the PDI we have substantial anecdotal information as well as it being highlighted in the interim findings of the external evaluation of the benefits from; networking, sharing information and good practice amongst projects and peers. Given the importance placed by projects on sharing information and practice there may be potential to develop a similar model to the Effective Interventions Unit, which focuses on providing up to date guidance and support on practice and self-evaluation.

There may also be a need to give consideration to develop mergers between larger youth work support organisations. Such a body could form a strong, core body in Scotland that could promote and develop some of the suggestions highlighted in the previous paragraph.

Q12: Commission young people to produce information that they find useful and beneficial. This links to the outlining ethos of youth work (empowerment and engagement with young people). Is there a potential model of using youth-led businesses set-up through economic development activities, or the Princes Trust, to deliver work?

Q14-19: Within the PDI very few of the services we fund currently access more marginalised groups of young people, so we are aware of very few examples. One of which is highlighted below:

Ruchill Youth Project developed a drop-in service during the afternoons for young people not attending school to give them the opportunities to access more informal approaches to education and training. This will also involve the project providing advocacy support with the young person, their family and the school.

There is a real need to engage and support young people from LGBT, BME communities who are likely not to be accessing mainstream services. There may be a need to offer funding opportunities that allow projects to learn from successes and challenges, take risks and think out of the box to meet the needs of these groups. A model similar to the PDI funding model would allow this type of funding opportunity which supports developments but also places an emphasis on self-evaluation to reflect on learning, demonstrate the impact and share models of good practice.

Q20: There is still a need for more emphasis on the practicalities and support to help project's aim to work better in partnership. This should include the challenges and the reality that partnership working involves. The PDI has core principles in relation to partnership working, which are identified as a success factor in the recent external evaluation of the programme (page 26). We have highlighted below some practical examples that can assist in this development:

- Ensure matched funding from partners (particularly local statutory planners)
- An emphasis of outcomes with back-up support
- Develop a **written partnership agreement** (different to SLAs) that all partners sign-up to ensure consistency, development of a strong platform to take forward partnership

Q21: There must be greater acknowledgement and engagement with the voluntary sector by CPPs. Often CPPs do not acknowledge the added value and recognise the impact achieved by voluntary organisations in local areas. This again is highlighted as a key message within the PDI programme evaluation (summary iv). Are there further opportunities to encourage and promote the role of the voluntary sector? The Scottish Executive needs to take a very firm position with CPPs that do not actively and affectively engage with the voluntary sector. To assist this then voluntary sector need to be able to effectively demonstrate the outcomes they achieve, be able to demonstrate their value for money.

To deliver locally, partners need to have open discussions to effectively deliver an integrated model. These discussions should focus on identifying the most appropriate service that will meet the needs of young people, rather than services delivering something not matching the need just to ensure security of funding. Partnership working is unlikely to occur in competitive environments, such as the use of tendering.

Q23: The perception of schools can be purely 'an educational environment for teachers'. There is a need to see schools as community resources providing access to a range of youth providers, offering opportunities to engage, support and offer alternative activities.

This point needs to be emphasised on a wider basis for both statutory and voluntary organisations to share resources, knowledge and information. Projects and staff need to see the benefits and impact sharing resources and capacity will have on the outcomes for the young people.

Q26: No, not enough support in relation to self-evaluation. Self-evaluation should be a central element to the development and delivery of a service. Self-evaluation should highlight the importance of learning about what works, the impact that services have, and provide supportive documentation to aid planners/commissioners. Support, encouragement and training to help all services to be able to demonstrate their outcomes are a key factor to succeeding in this area. The recent PDI external evaluation has again highlighted this, and the PDI has developed a model of training support to help projects achieve the aim of improving their demonstration of impact. The model is based on a 3-day learning set which is split over a period of time and goes from the planning stage, to collecting information through to analysing and reporting.

Q27: "Why can't health workers etc build relationships with youth workers?" Is there a need to think of a youth worker as a central role that will build an effective relationship with a young person? By looking at it this way could youth workers not build a real promotion/advocacy role to health etc?

Q28 & Q29: Potential to expand both these areas to ensure recognition is given in all areas.

Examples of projects already trying to reward these are to create their own certificates for young people, encouragement and support to develop CV's with achievements through elements of youth work programmes (e.g. participation on advisory groups). The need to demonstrate life skills gained through youth work in this type of format. This again highlights the importance of self-evaluation and how evaluation tools can be used with young people.

Employers need to understand how more informal accreditation fits with the educational system. Can any elements of informal systems be mirrored against elements of SVQs?

Q31: The ability to engage and build effective relationships with young people. This is highlighted in the Scottish Executive's evaluation of 4 PDI funded projects (www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org/publications/abstracts/proj_yp_tsb.htm (page 3 of summary)).

Q32: As above.

Q33: To retain staff, projects need to offer stable employment. This effectively means to offer longer-term funding.