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CYP Review Team  
Her Majesty's Treasury  
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### **Children and Young People's Review – London Youth**

We are pleased to enclose our short submission to the Children and Young People's Review. Our response is related to the Strategy for Youth Services section of the review.

London Youth is a network of 400+ youth clubs creating meaningful activities for more than 75,000 young people across the capital. We are London's only city-wide youth charity.

London Youth welcomes the review and the clear signal that it sends as to the priority given to youth services by the Government.

However, we believe that the capital's unique political make up means that it is facing a particular set of circumstances. In short, there is a pressing need to ensure that current and future youth service provision is not fragmented across the boroughs. Our field work highlights a great risk of weak regional strategic direction.

If there is any aspect of our response that you or your team would like to pursue please do not hesitate to make contact.



## Introduction

**London Youth** is a network of 400+ youth clubs creating meaningful activities for more than 75,000 young people across the capital. We are London's only city-wide youth charity. Last year alone our own programmes trained 700 youth workers, found opportunities for more than 800 young volunteers and gave over 13,000 young people a challenge at our two outstanding training and outdoor centres.

**London Youth's** objectives are:

- To provide a safe and stimulating environment for London's young people to realise their full potential through a range of cultural, issue-based and sporting activities including adventure breaks out of the city in our residential centres.
- To focus particularly on young people who have less chances in life – those from disadvantaged and ethnic minority backgrounds who experience racism and lack of self-belief, as well as those with mental and physical disabilities.
- To create a living network of clubs who collaborate to share best practice and to inform and up skill youth workers/volunteers with a training programme at the cutting edge of youth work practice today.
- To develop volunteering opportunities and resources for both young people and adults wishing to participate in youth work.
- To advocate for youth work and its contribution to the development of young people in London.

**Our response to the key questions within the Youth Strategy are:**

**Q: What is the current distribution of youth services and youth engagement activities available across the country?**

A: Because local authority funding to youth provision is largely discretionary, there is an inconsistent spread across the city. Pan-London projects are well placed to support a wider service to young people, particularly where government funding is stretched in some areas. We believe that some funding should be provided for pan-London projects focusing on specialist needs that are specific to young Londoners.

**Q: How is that likely to evolve following the Youth Green Paper?**

A: London Youth welcomes the increase in financial support offered by government through the Youth Opportunities Fund and the Youth Opportunities Card as well as through other agencies. However, the distribution is still likely to evolve unevenly because of the number of relevant voluntary organisations fighting for funding from disparate sources.

**Q: Is there more that could be done to improve and sustain the effectiveness in the delivery of existing services and activities?**

A: We would like to see more London-wide initiatives that will be able to break down borough boundaries and that will therefore be better situated to provide specialist provision for particular young Londoners from different communities and address London-wide issues including gang culture, mental health and racism. For example, London Youth is currently developing a youth-led project called Face the Fear addressing young peoples' fears of terrorism. This is a project specific to London and we know from our surveys and focus groups that it is a significant issue for young people right across the capital and from very diverse communities. Face the Fear is a youth led project which will facilitate groups of young people from all London boroughs, to build links with each other and to unite together to look at joint solutions.

**Q: What are the particular barriers faced by different groups of young people, including disabled young people, in accessing services and what are the policy issues that arise.**

A: Transport in London is still a major issue. Borough based initiatives may mean access is denied young people if they come from the wrong borough.

**Q: How can we best combine demand led provision for young people with provision that is planned and structured to have the best impact on outcomes for children and young people?**

A: We believe that the youth worker is key to developing high quality provision that responds to the changing and various needs of young people. Youth workers are very often the first person that a young person will turn to when things go wrong and they need support. Youth workers need to have constant professional development. London Youth provide ongoing training for youth workers in many different fields such as training on how to combat homophobia, or how to develop effective arts projects etc. In there is a pressing need for accredited youth worker training. Although this is seen as essential for youth workers today, there is very little training being done in FE colleges and elsewhere. We are continually frustrated that demand for our training far exceeds supply indicating a real lack of affordable training for youth workers. Many boroughs will buy in their training from an organisation such as London Youth, but there needs to be a London-wide project around *specialist* training that is over and above the accredited youth work training, in order to help youth workers to deal with some of the issues that they are facing on an ongoing basis and to improve the quality of youth work across the capital.

**Q: What principles and priorities should guide the allocation of current and future resources? And who do we need to target?**

A: Principles include

- youth involvement and leadership,
- high quality and continual improvement,
- recognition of long term impacts of projects (ie no quick fixes).

In London, the main priorities include:

- gangs, drugs and street crime and the young person as victim as well as perpetrator,
- mental health
- fear of terrorism and racism
- financial literacy