

## Annex A – Covering Template for Responses

Please complete the attached cover sheet when sending evidence, indicating the set of questions to which a response is being provided and contact details of the person for any follow-up queries.

Contact details for respondent	
Name	
Job title	Director
Do you represent an organisation?  (if so, name of organisation and type: e.g. voluntary, public body, private company).	Youth Access  Voluntary sector
Postal address	2, Taylors Yard, 67, Alderbrook Road, London SW12 8AD
Telephone number	020 8772 9900
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	Which area of the review are you responding to? (please mark X)
Prevention strand	X
Review of disabled children	
Strategy for youth services	X
Review of high cost, high harm families	

## Youth Access

### Response to Comprehensive Spending Review of Children and Young People

## Youth Access

- Youth Access is the national membership association for young people's information, advice, counselling and support services (YIACS). We provide a range of services including information, advice, training and consultancy to promote and support the development and best practice of these services to young people.
- Youth information, advice, counselling and support services (YIACS) offer a flexible response from multi-disciplinary teams of paid/volunteer staff providing for example advice on housing and homelessness, sexual health services and counselling for a range of mental and emotional health issues. The majority are local voluntary sector providers working across the age range 13-25 years.
- In a recent Ofsted report summarising the best practice evidenced in Youth Service Inspections, YIACS were referenced as models of good practice. The SEU Report Young Adults with complex needs also showcased a number of YA members.

## SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

We have drawn on the following sources in preparing this submission:

Youth Access published evidence

**Breaking Down the Barriers (BDB) Project.** This DH funded project generated 3 reports. The work won a British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy research award and has been referenced in a number of other works including the SEU's reports on mental health and young adults with complex needs.

**BDB Key Findings (2001)** A national evaluation of data from a survey involving 109 youth counselling agencies and 62 young people using services. Data includes views about the nature and benefits of counselling and the barriers to its sustainability and further development

**BDB Case Studies (2001)** Examines partnership working from the perspective of both voluntary youth counselling agencies and their statutory mental health service equivalents. Includes two examples where it is working well and two examples where improvement is required. Report also identifies some of the key ingredients for good partnership and joint working

**BDB A strategy in development (2002).** Based on the ten barriers identified in the Key Finding document, this strategy involved consultation with over 500 statutory and voluntary agencies. The report identifies the actions required to address the barriers and improve mental health services for 16 -25 year olds, to increase access to the early intervention services of counselling and to secure better joint working.

**Access to Counselling (2006):** The findings from an evaluation of the current relationship between youth counselling agencies and CAMHS. Findings arise out of a survey involving 79 youth counselling agencies, followed up by interviews with a sample of agencies and CAMHS commissioners.

**Rights to Access (2002).** This Youth Access publication is a literature review of the best available evidence regarding young people's need for advice, their advice seeking behaviours and the services to meet these needs. Recommended reading by the then Chief Executive of the Legal Services Commission, this report has been widely acknowledged within the advice sector as an influential report to supporting better access to services for young people.

**Young People Need Advice Too,** article in *Legal Action* by James Kenrick, June 2005

**Youth Access: Responding to young people's legal advice needs,** article in *Youth Policy Update* by James Kenrick and Barbara Rayment, October 2005

Other sources of evidence referenced here:

- Depression in children and young people: NICE Guideline 28 September 2005
- Minority Voices: research into what young people from Black and ethnic minority backgrounds and the staff who work with them say about mental health services *Young Minds* (2005)
- Time Trends in Adolescent Well-being, *The Nuffield Foundation* (2004)
- Transitions: Young Adults with Complex Needs, *Social Exclusion Unit* (2005)
- Paths to Justice, Genn, H. (1999)
- Causes of Action: Civil Law and Social Justice, Pleasence, P. *Legal Services Commission* (2004)
- Annotated analysis by Youth Access of Legal Services Research Centre data on young people's social welfare needs and advice-seeking experiences
- Analysis by Youth Access of Legal Services Commission contract data
- Streetwise Community Law Centre Impact Report
- The Impact of Advice – A brief report Advice Services Alliance
- The Case for Advice – Advice Services Alliance 2006
- Understanding the Impact of Connexions on Young People at Risk, Hoggarth and Smith, Universities of De Montfort, Bristol and Derby, *DfES Research report 607* (2004)

## Key Questions

### 1. *What should be the role of universal services in providing access to protective and preventative support, risk assessment and referral?*

- Generally staff in universal services can play an improved role in supporting access to more specialist help by **increasing their ability to recognise potential risk factors** for young people; improving their ability to assess needs and recognise the **limits of their competence**. They also need the capacity to **increase knowledge** of the **appropriateness and effectiveness** of different **interventions** and the range of local service **providers**. The Common Assessment Framework will only support these kinds of improvements, if staff are properly trained to use it. In the past, Youth Access members have reported the reluctance of some practitioners/agencies to refer young people onwards; sometimes only doing so once a crisis has been reached.
- Universal services can only function well in referring young people to more **specialist help**, if there is **sufficient local capacity**. The development and expansion of the generic help available within Connexions and the increased capacity to identify additional needs amongst young people was hampered by the lack of any complementary strategy for more specialist help and support. While effective local needs assessment, planning and commissioning by LAS as part of the Every Child/Youth Matters agenda may improve this, there remain concerns this may happen again in some local areas unless there is a better investment in developing specialist support.
- One way in which **universal services** could help to identify the need for increased capacity in specialist services is by **capturing data** on all the issues raised by young people. Data on young people's **presenting issues** and the success or inability to refer onwards due to a service gap should be captured and fed into the LA needs assessment, planning and commissioning processes. The inability of for example the Connexions Services information systems to produce data about young people's presenting issues e.g. housing, benefits, mental health is a flaw. Social policy could be greatly improved and the provision of services better planned and commissioned if universal services were to capture data that went beyond their immediate remit.
- In our experience there is often a **resource problem** in the **referral activity** of both universal and some statutory specialist health services. Many of our members offering counselling report high levels of referral activity by GPs, school nurses, CAMHS, adult mental health and others. While the referral is often itself appropriate, resources do not follow need. For example, in a recent national survey on the relationship between youth counselling agencies and CAMHS, 22% of counselling agencies receive direct referrals from CAMHS<sup>1</sup>. However, the policy gap in relation to counselling services – which remains an outstanding area for consideration by the DfES/DH as part of the Youth Matters Targeted support proposals - means there is no funding stream to support these services. It therefore means that **voluntary agencies are meeting identified health needs** amongst young people, which they have to resource through their own **independent fund raising efforts**.
- Youth Access promotes a service model for young people, which provides a **universal access point** to a range of **specialist and non-specialist** help **under one roof** on a self-referral basis. The **Youth Access 'under one roof' model** of

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<sup>1</sup> Access to Counselling Key Findings

service provision – highlighted by **the SEU** in their recent work on Young Adults with Complex Needs – enables young people to access help with a wide range of issues **without risking a label** or identifying themselves as having a particular concern as they make first contact. In our experience universal access points are an important and **non-stigmatising route to specialist help**. Youth Access developed national quality standards for youth information, advice, counselling and support services in the late 1990s, which include a set of self assessment tools. We have also developed specific training to support counsellors in assessment processes.

## 2. **How can targeted and specialist services intervene earlier to address problems before they become acute?**

- *“Just under three quarters of all YIACS rely on one off non renewable short term funds. Many are unable to secure funding to maintain the infrastructure of their agencies.”*

*Breaking Down the Barriers Key Findings*

The capacity of **VCS specialist services** must be better secured to enable them to respond more adequately to need. Too many services are built through **short-term project funding** with consequences for staff retention and inevitably leading to services being contracted or withdrawn. Local authorities' role in needs assessment and the shift to commissioning, rather than short-term project funding may help to address some of these difficulties – but only if commissioning works effectively.

- *“Young people who feel unhappy, in distress or at risk want to access quickly and easily to ‘someone to talk to’, who can provide confidentiality, practical help and support that is non-judgemental and young person friendly”*

*Breaking Down the Barriers Key Findings*

If services are to be more responsive then **barriers to access** need to be addressed as one aspect of providing earlier intervention. Young people's need for help once they identify their needs is often urgent; they do not want to face barriers in accessing help due for example to **long-waiting lists**. Services must be easily accessible by young people, operating with few barriers in terms of **physical and psychological access**. In our experience **self-referral services** offering both **drop in and/or appointment** based provision is seen as **helpful** by young people. There is also a need to ensure a mix of provision and delivery mechanisms. This includes face to face provision that is sufficiently localised to support young people's engagement, as well as internet-based information and email and telephone advice services

- It is also critical that early intervention strategies are not conceptualised around the needs of a younger age group. Many young people may only be ready to access help and deal with their issues in **later adolescence and young adulthood**. Furthermore some mental health problems only develop in later adolescence e.g. early onset psychosis. It is not too late to intervene at 21 or 22. Indeed there is likely to be a more successful outcome for a well-engaged 21 year old who has sought help independently, rather than a 12 year old who feels compelled or unready to make use of the help available.

- It is critical that the issues of **transition from child/adolescent to adult services** and the needs of **young adults with complex needs** highlighted in the work of the SEU's work on Transitions are built more strongly into LA planning and commissioning activities. As demonstrated in the SEU report, the **VCS** already **crosses the age barriers** of many statutory services. Youth Matters with its narrower focus on 19-25 year olds compared to the DfES Transforming Youth Services agenda is already causing concern to a number of our members. They fear that future public sector funding will restrict their ability to sustain services to meet the needs of many 19-25 year olds. LAs must take the lead and work with other bodies such as health, Learning and Skills Council etc to ensure there is better attention paid to this group and that resources continue to be made available to support the VCS to continue its operations across the age divides created by policy.

### 3. **How can the impact of intervention to prevent young people with complex needs repeatedly moving in and out of contact with targeted services be sustained?**

- Research suggests both **mental health problems**<sup>2</sup> and **social welfare issues**<sup>3</sup> are likely to **increase** with the age of the young person. This means that far from reducing support **at 16+** there needs to be better recognition of this transition point. There are some concerns that Youth Matters will target the younger age range and within school settings at the expense of the older adolescent and community-based provision.
- There is a need for **more investment** to support the development of an **evidence base** for a range of interventions, particularly those in the VCS. For example, there is a **gap** in effective and appropriate tools for measuring the outcomes of **counselling and rights-based advice needs**. While Youth Access is currently piloting a new tool for rights-based advice (See Qu.10) and we have worked with Strathclyde University to pilot a counselling outcome tool for 13 - 16s, there is no appropriate counselling outcome tool for 16-25s. Funders have developed their interest in outcomes relatively recently and the development of tools, particularly for specialist areas needs to be supported through more national programmes within the VCS to ensure their relevance to both young people and the services they use.
- It has long been our view and this seems to be supported by the work of the SEU that a **holistic view of needs** and intervening with a **complementary** range of **interventions** at appropriate points is likely to ensure a more **sustained impact** on the complex needs of young people. Certainly the **YIACS 'under one roof' model** has been developed on the premise that this results in **better outcomes** for young people. We also have to accept that working with young people with complex needs is not going to be a quick fix and that there is a need to provide help over a sustained period of time. It is unhelpful when funding alone drives the provision of a service. For example if only six – eight sessions of counselling are made available by providers because a funder has said this is what needs to happen, when the young person's need is for a much longer contract. Not responding flexibly and appropriately with the right amount of help to individual needs can mean young people do not get the help they really need and thus end up re-presenting with the same issues, and sometimes at greater levels of crisis.

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<sup>2</sup> Time trends in adolescent well-being

<sup>3</sup> Rights to Access

**4. What would be the impact of more preventative services and early intervention on the life chances of young people and on the value for money of public spending on children, young people and families?**

*“Younger people were more likely to have experienced justiciable problems than their older counterparts”*

*(52% of 18-24 year olds compared to 23% of people aged 65+)*

*“Younger respondents were less likely to obtain advice than older respondents.”*

*(45-54 year olds were 3 times as likely to obtain advice as 18-24 year olds)*

*Paths to Justice Genn, H. 1999*

- We would cite evidence from the 2001 and 2004 English and Welsh Civil Justice Survey on the **protective benefits of advice on legal problems**. This includes problems such as the refusal of a welfare benefit, discrimination at work, the threat of eviction or overwhelming debt, which often constitute the most significant barriers to young people achieving their full potential.
- Rights-based advice work can help young people to:
  - gain **secure incomes** and **housing**;
  - resolve problems at **work**, in training or at **school**, thus breaking down barriers to learning and work;
  - exercise their **rights** as **citizens, consumers** and **service users**;
  - avoid and combat **discrimination** and **injustice**.
- There is growing **evidence**, for example, linking the provision of housing and benefits advice to **better health** and **reductions** in rates of **re-offending** and **young runaways**. Similarly, the provision of advice on debt and benefits has been shown to alleviate **depression, anxiety** and other **mental and physical illnesses**. Long-term outcomes from advice work are likely to include reductions in the levels of youth homelessness, youth offending, teenage pregnancy, drug misuse, unemployment and child poverty, and increases in financial literacy and the number of young people in education, training or employment.
- The **Youth Matters policy** on the development of information, advice and guidance is **largely silent** on the development of **better access to rights-based advice** i.e. advice on key areas of risk such as homelessness and debt. In consequence, there is little evidence to date within many local Children and Young People Plans that these issues have been properly considered.
- **Streetwise Community Law Centre** is one of the most developed examples of the Youth Access Law Centre-model. Based in a young people's information, advice and counselling project, Streetwise enables young people to access **generalist and specialist help**. They have demonstrated the **impact** of their work in protecting young people at risk from further **harm** and **exclusion**.<sup>4</sup>
- *“The availability of counselling as an early intervention for young people is important because it doesn't carry that psychiatric stigma”*  
*(CAMHS Clinical Services Manager)*

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<sup>4</sup> Streetwise Impact Report

Youth Access Breaking Down the Barriers findings show that young people who have received **counselling** in a YIACS report the following outcomes: they feel “**stronger, more stable and able to cope**” and they gain in “**self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem**”. They also report other improvements in their lives, including **better** quality **relationships**, feeling more in **control**, increased **social functioning**, a significant **decrease** in **drug** and **alcohol** use and a clearer sense of self and their direction.

- The economic **costs** of depression and **poor mental health** have been documented elsewhere. Where young people are able to access **counselling**, they are **less likely** to find their mental health problems escalating to **crisis** levels or to require more **expensive health services at a later stage**.

**5. What evidence is there of major barriers to developing a preventative system? Are there examples where you have overcome these barriers?**

- Youth Access in its Breaking down the Barriers work identified **ten barriers** to a better response to young people's **mental health** needs; to an increase in access to counselling and to a better relationship between statutory mental health services and voluntary sector counselling agencies.

The barriers included:

- Under half of YIACS reporting they could get virtually **no help for 16-18** year olds from statutory mental, health services in their area
  - 16-25 year olds experiencing a **mismatch** between their **needs** and **services** available to meet those needs
  - Professional **value conflicts** operating as barriers to joint working
  - a **lack of resources** and inadequate and patchy services resulting in young people not being able to access the services they need
- This year Youth Access has published further findings on the relationship between youth counselling agencies and CAMHS<sup>5</sup>. This shows that while **22.8%** of the 79 responding agencies now receive **CAMHS funding** – varying from between £2000 to £113,225 p.a. in the case of one agency – **39%** of agencies say they continue to have **no or a limited relationship** with CAMHS. In many areas, it remains doubtful whether young people are receiving the best access to an early intervention and prevention approach to mental health needs.
  - In our view there remain continuing **problems in 'joining up'** the **policy** agenda. While Government nationally has clearly seen in its Youth Matters agenda the need for a distinctive and overarching policy to meet young people's needs, recent proposals in the DCA's Community Legal Services (CLS) strategy fail to properly address these needs, despite the evidence. In our view the **DCA's proposals** to meet disadvantaged client groups' needs through outreach work by large Community Legal Advice Centres (CLACs) and other mainstream services stand **little chance of meeting young people's needs** any better than the CLS has hitherto. It is important to understand that mainstream advice agencies' historical failure to provide adequate services to young people is **not simply a matter of access** – although that is crucially important – but is also related to **knowledge and skills deficits** on the part of advisers and lawyers. Gallagher, for example, found a gap between the legal knowledge of solicitors and the kinds of information, advice and

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<sup>5</sup> Access to Counselling Key Findings

representation that children and young people had identified as being relevant to them.<sup>6</sup> The LSRC has reported recently:

*"Our results show that young people experience different types of problems compared to all other age groups. The high incidence of homelessness problems indicates that, when they do report problems, the youngest respondents in the LSRC national survey report problems of a severe nature."<sup>7</sup>*

- Youth Access has recently undertaken some analysis of Legal Services Commission contract data, which suggests that **changes to legal aid** contracts will further fail to meet young people's needs; thus **severely reducing the preventative** nature of work with young people at high levels of risk undertaken by currently contracted services.

#### **6. What evidence is available on how funding can be freed up at the acute end of provision to spend on preventative services?**

- **Croydon** provides a good example of how local funding is being used to support the **preventative counselling** services of two youth agencies in the borough. The borough is helped by the fact that the local authority **boundaries** are **co-terminus** with those of Health. Both counselling agencies are in receipt of **CAMHS funds** with active cross-referral processes in place. In addition, one of these agencies also receives funding from **adult mental health services** and has done so for a number of years. To our knowledge this is a unique example of adult mental health supporting the provision of counselling for working age young adults in this kind of youth setting.
- The Croydon example shows what is possible in terms of bringing funding to the frontline of more community-based prevention services for young people; creating a more accessible service for this group. However, the evidence suggests these funding relationships have evolved primarily because of the work of **local individuals** and **not** the result of specific **policy**. Unless there is a more urgent requirement for local authorities, CAMHS and adult mental health services to work together to ensure support for self-referral young people-friendly counselling services then an expansion of funding to preventative services along the lines of the Croydon model will be a long time in development for most areas.

## **Strategy for Youth Services**

#### **7. What is the current distribution of youth services and youth engagement activities available across the country? How is that likely to evolve following the Green Paper?**

- There is **underdeveloped access** to young people specific **counselling and rights-based advice services** i.e advice addressing issues such as welfare benefits, homelessness, etc. The evidence from De Montfort University in examining the role of Connexions in meeting the needs of young people 'at risk' showed that where PAs had neither the skills nor 'interest' in addressing

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<sup>6</sup> *Children and Young People's Voices: The law, legal services, systems and processes in Scotland*, R. Gallagher, Scottish Child Law Centre, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> *Social Exclusion and Civil Law: Experience of Civil Justice Problems among Vulnerable Groups*, A. Buck, N. Balmer and P. Pleasence, *Social Policy & Administration* (ISSN 0144-5596), Vol. 39, No.3, June 2005, pp.302-322.

needs such as housing, homelessness, benefits, young people felt that Connexions had not served them well.

- While we support a locally driven service, there are also tensions in ensuring young people get a **more consistent entitlement** in terms of “integrated support”. While young people’s needs may be similar across a region, a locally driven process may result in unequal access to interventions. Currently **“integrated support”** continues to be inadequately defined to ensure clarity about the range of potential interventions to be included.
- **Access to counselling** services for young people remains very **patchy** and dependent on whether young people are simply lucky enough to live in an area where a service exists. These are cost effective services which young people are happy to make use of and which if included as part of the Youth Matters strategy could become available to all young people regardless of where they live.

**8. Building on the Green Paper is there more that could be done to improve and sustain the effectiveness in the delivery of existing services and activities?**

- Despite evidence of youth **counselling’s contribution** to young people’s **mental health** and the fragmented nature of its funding raised as an area for action in the SEU report, we are concerned that the ability of services to improve and sustain their effectiveness may be **jeopardised** without better recognition of counselling’s role alongside information, advice and guidance activities **within Youth Matters**.
- There is a greater need for ‘talking therapies’. The publication of **NICE Guidelines** on Depression in Children and Young People (September 2005), in which ‘**psychological therapies**’ are **recommended** as the first line treatment for all young people experiencing moderate to severe depression (p. 26) is unlikely to be delivered by the statutory sector alone. Youth counselling agencies could help to meet this recommendation. However, the effective **exclusion of counselling** in Youth Matters **undermines** the effective **implementation** of NICE Guidelines.
- As pointed out at Qu. 5, we remain concerned about what we see as a continuing failure to **link the policies** of the **DCA** and **Legal Services Commission** in ensuring better access to legal advice with the development of **Youth Matters**. This gap occurred in the initial development of Connexions and was only belatedly picked up in some areas. There is a need to build on the strengths of both areas of policy to ensure there is **young people specific provision** based on our current knowledge of what works to meet their needs.

**9. 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 Young Minds report ‘Minority Voices’ quoted examples of **youth counselling** services successfully **engaging Black and Minority Ethnic** young people with emotional and mental health needs where CAMHS had been unable to reach these groups.

- The National Institute of Mental health in England (NIMHE) awarded a **YIACS** in Plymouth a best practice award for its innovative Early Intervention Service for young people with Psychosis. The service enables young people with **complex mental health problems** to access treatment in a young person-friendly setting, where they can also make use of a range of other services alongside other young people. For young people experiencing a first episode of psychosis, this project has significantly **reduced** the **fear** and **stigma** associated with accessing help. Few other YIACS have been able to establish this level of contact with the EIS.
- A significant gap remains for many young people aged **16-25** in accessing **age appropriate mental health services**. Despite the injection of additional funds to CAMHS we remain concerned that older adolescents and young adults remain poorly served by statutory services; many young people at 18+ fail to meet the threshold for access to adult services. A **“joined-up” national policy** response is still needed to address 16 – 25 year olds needs; one which would also support YIACS to continue to deliver services to this group
- **18-24 year olds** report **more problems**, proportionately, than the rest of the population, in relation to 10 of the 18 problem types identified in the Civil and Social Justice Survey. This includes **rented housing, homelessness, welfare benefits, employment, domestic violence and unfair police treatment**.
- The Justice survey data does not cover under 18s, but evidence from the Youth Access Law Centre projects suggests **16-17** as the peak age for demand for advice on homelessness problems. Their evidence suggests **local authorities** are **routinely failing** to fulfil their responsibilities under the Homelessness (**Priority Need for Accommodation**) (England) Order 2002. Much of the problem appears to arise from the **overlapping duties** between housing and social service. There is also evidence of a sharp rise in 16 and 17 year olds being placed in unsatisfactory bed and breakfast accommodation.
- Despite **high** levels of **need** amongst young people for rights-based advice, the evidence also points to the **barriers** they find in **accessing appropriate help**. Most of the **mainstream advice sector** such as the Citizens Advice service fails to meet young people's needs. However, where local CAB have developed young people specific services, they have worked as successfully as YIACS in attracting young people. While young people often approach young people specific services in high numbers, many services are **underdeveloped** in their **capacity** to tackle the complexity of the issues presented. Youth Access is working to tackle these gaps.

**10. What is the national and international evidence on the effectiveness of different types of services and activities in terms of better life outcomes?**

- There is a need to **increase** the **resources** available to address the question of **effectiveness**. There is an underdeveloped evidence base on the effectiveness of youth counselling in the settings of youth information, advice and counselling services. Where there has been an investment in developing an evidence base, the positive impact of counselling in for example primary and health care settings has been shown. There is some data from young people who have used youth counselling that demonstrates positive outcomes. However, the **national voluntary sector infrastructure** cannot compete with that of the health service and thus voluntary youth counselling services in a number of localities remain disadvantaged in terms of

demonstrating their effectiveness to a statutory sector which is to some degree sceptical about its results.

- Youth Access is currently working towards **improving the evidence base** for rights-based youth advice services. Unfortunately this evidence is not available to submit to this review. You may however wish to note our processes. We are currently developing and evaluating a pilot scheme based on our Youth Access law centre model (See Appendix) which is intended to promote improved access to advice services for young people. As part of the evaluation process the following activities are taking place:
  - A **new outcomes tool**: This is currently being piloted in a number of advice agencies across the country over the next 6 months. The tool is capable of yielding data about both the results of the rights-based advice matched with the benefits to young people in terms of the five ECM outcomes.
  - **Longitudinal study**: As part of the project we are also conducting a small scale longitudinal study looking at the impact of advice on young people over the longer term. We are particularly looking at how the rights-based advice has sustained its impact on young people and addressed the 5 outcomes

The results of this work are expected in late Spring 2007

- In addition to the above we are also beginning work with the Legal Services Research Council to undertake a **further analysis of data** from the Civil and Social Justice Survey in relation to young people. The findings from this research will be presented at a seminar in February to which policymakers and planners will be invited to consider the implications for current policy and practice.

### **11. 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?**

- If there is a real commitment to getting provision 'right' with and for young people, then we ought to be working towards a position where these are **mutually reinforcing**. We would question whether there will be demand for 'voluntary' services unless **young people know** and **understand** the **value** of them and even services which young people are compelled to use will not be successful unless they successfully engage young people. Youth Matters should be about helping to secure the involvement of all young people (however great or small) in knowing about and understanding the benefits of activities and interventions designed to help and support them through adolescence and into young adulthood. Some services and interventions will not offer easy journeys and while the process of getting to a good outcome maybe painful, young people should still be able to recognise its benefit to them!

### **12. What more can we do to support and enable young people to exert a strong demand side influence on provision? What would we expect in return from young people – their rights and responsibilities?**

- While it is clear that local authorities are now making better attempts to consult with young people, it is important those in the most **'hard to reach'**

groups are also included. It is considerably easier to ask young people through more formal and structured routes if they want more fun, places to go, things to do etc. It is harder to identify **needs** which may be about needing someone to talk to. **Fear, shame** and the **stigma** attached to more personal emotional and mental health difficulties for example may be less readily identified. There is a need to ensure services in touch with these young people are resourced to ensure their voices are heard in local consultations.

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

- The principles and processes published in the Every Child Matters **commissioning framework** if **effectively applied** should create a transparent and robust process which identifies priorities based on needs and the impact of the interventions. We would want to see a fully transparent process, particularly including decisions made about resource allocation.
- There is some **anecdotal evidence** from our members suggesting local needs analysis have not been as thorough as they would wish. Agencies have experienced providing considerable amounts of data to local needs assessment processes only to find none of it reflected in the resulting Children and Young People's Plans. Given the importance of the CYP Plan in commissioning, **effective analysis of need is critical**. There is a need to ensure that while the management information systems of the VCS lack the investment of statutory sector, they nonetheless have much useful data to contribute, which needs to be properly acknowledged.
- There is also a need for an **even playing field** regarding the gathering of outcomes data. The internal infrastructure of **small to medium VCS** providers does not match the large national VCS or the statutory sector, which may have consequences for their data gathering processes. We need to ensure a more level playing field between the sectors if outcomes are to be used as a measure for judging the continued commissioning of services.
- The **voice of young people** must be heard in making judgements about the continued **value of a service**. If particular groups of young people do not use or fail to engage with services, this must be seen in terms of a failure of the service, not the young people. Services must be required to change or be de-commissioned where they continue to fail to meet needs they are established to address.
- Need to acknowledge the **evidence** about the **delayed** and **non-linear transitions** to adulthood for many young people. This means that need to ensure age sensitive policies and services resourced to support young people into young adulthood, which includes building on the evidence provided in the SEU report on young adults.

**14. What measures and milestones need to be in place to ensure that performance can be assessed and delivery monitored at a local level?**

We suggest the inclusion of the following performance indicators, linked to the Every Child Matters '5 Outcomes':

- % of school age young people who say their school helps to keep them safe from bullying (Health or Stay Safe)
- % of 13-19s who have a trusted adult to talk to about relationships and emotional wellbeing (Health)
- % of 13-19s offered counselling as a first line treatment for mild/moderate depression (Health)
- % of 13-19s who have a trusted adult to talk to about their rights-based advice needs (Economic well-being)
- % under 19s helped to avoid homelessness (through advice, community education etc.) (Economic well-being)
- % 16-17 year-olds presenting to LA as homeless who are referred for independent advice (Economic well-being)
- % 16-17 year-olds accepted by LA as homeless who are placed in Bed & Breakfast accommodation (Economic well-being)
- % under 19s living independently who live in a home that does not meet the set standard of decency (Economic well-being)
- % YP living independently who become homeless as a result of housing debt/rent arrears before age 21 / who have possession action taken against them due to housing debt/rent arrears (Economic well-being)
- % school-age children receiving financial literacy education (as part of PSHCE curriculum, youth work, community education etc.) (Economic well-being)

We would also want to see additional PIs on:

- Improved access routes to meet 19-25 year olds mental and emotional health needs
- Improved access to rights based advice services across the 16 -25 year old age range
- A locally mixed economy of provision to meet young people's needs that includes small to medium VCS providers

#### **Supplementary questions:**

#### **What are the barriers and enablers of effective Third Sector provision, including statutory commissioning capability?**

- There remains a risk for many services in the **VCS**, that their success in securing future contracts will depend largely on how **well placed** they are **strategically**

within local authority forums. It means that services with a **greater capacity** to engage at strategic level may **succeed**, while smaller services where managers have few other paid staff and rely on volunteers will lose out to larger competitors. While large national VCS organisations will have the infrastructure to compete for commissions locally, national membership bodies such as Youth Access do not have the resources to support our members in the same way. We think there is a **case** to consider the role of a body such as Youth Access in **developing** its **capacity** to provide more active **negotiating role** – although a commitment to this on would change the nature of the relationship that members currently have with a body such as ours.

- Small VCS can be very helpful in working at grass roots level, but it is important to create **systems and processes** which are **commensurate** with the **size** and **culture** of their operations and which support the ability of the VCS to participate. The VCS needs **well-applied** and **transparent** support and **decision-making** regarding commissioning. There is a need for VCS **infrastructure support** that relates to both the **generic** and **specialist** nature of the provision available and which recognises the **local/national dimension** required to meet the sector's needs

**Which projects and programmes in the last five years have had a proven and sustained impact and brought innovation to delivery of services for young people?**

- Please see Streetwise Law Centre Impact Report and the attached appendix.

## **APPENDIX**

### Youth Access Law Centres: A new model

This appendix describes a set of ideas developed by Youth Access in association with The Law Centres Federation for improving young people's access to justice.

Youth Access is currently supporting existing youth advice agencies and Law Centres to pilot the Youth Access Law Centre (YALCS) model which aims to improve young people's access to casework and specialist help services in a given geographical area. The model combines the principles and most effective elements and skills of youth advice agencies with those of Law Centres to meet young people's needs

There are different routes for the development of YALCs, including:

- a) Part of an existing youth advice agency;
- b) Part of an existing Law Centre;
- c) A new agency established specifically for the purpose.

As a minimum, YALCS provide front-line services, but may also develop to offer 2nd tier services to other front-line agencies locally/regionally.

**Front-line services** can include:

- Information, advice, casework and representation for young people on a wide range of legal issues, including housing, benefits, debt, employment, education, discrimination, immigration, human rights, consumer etc.
- Information and advice on other issues affecting young people, including sexual health, drugs & alcohol, relationships, careers etc.
- Delivery methods include face to face as well as telephone and ICT.

**2nd tier regional services** provided by YALCs can include.

- Training
- Casework consultancy to advisers in other agencies:
- Casework referral service:

### **Other Functions**

YALCs also have the potential to develop a range of other services depending on local/regional needs. This includes

- The provision of citizenship education sessions in schools and youth clubs to raise awareness of young people's rights and when, where & how to seek advice.
- Training young people to become advice workers and lawyers.
- Development of local & regional referral networks of agencies working with young people to ensure a seamless service.
- Advice to local mainstream advice services on how to improve access to young people.