Dear Colleague,

TARGETED YOUTH SUPPORT GUIDE AND THE FIT WITH INTEGRATED YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES

I am delighted to send you our newly published guide on targeted youth support. We have produced this guide to provide practical help as you take forward the reforms to targeted youth support in your area, in the context of establishing integrated youth support services (IYSS) for all young people. I recognise the complexity and challenges of the changes that you are implementing. I also continue to be impressed by your enormous commitment to this agenda and know how hard you are working to improve the lives of young people in your area. This letter aims to introduce the targeted youth support guide, explain the fit between targeted youth support and integrated youth support services and set the context by providing further details of our vision for integrated youth support services.

High-quality, targeted support for vulnerable young people is at the heart of our vision for IYSS - it is integrated service delivery in action for vulnerable teenagers. We have produced the guide in response to earlier work with the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit which identified that we needed to provide both greater clarity about how local services should deliver targeted support and more practical help that draws on good practice already visible in some areas.

The reform of targeted support is an important step in the implementation of Youth Matters. But the delivery of integrated youth support services is a complex reform and wider than just targeted support. While TYS is about helping vulnerable young people with complex needs to access the intensive support they require, IYSS is about providing services to all young people according to their needs. This will include universal access to information, advice and guidance on education and health issues and to positive activities and personal development opportunities, alongside more targeted work with those at risk of poor outcomes and highly targeted support for the most vulnerable. The development of good quality integrated youth support services will be crucial if we are to achieve the key positive outcomes for young people which will be embedded in a new suite of PSAs and indicators currently being negotiated.
During the past few months some of our partners have requested further information about what approach they should take to ensure successful delivery of IYSS and the fit with targeted support. We have subsequently worked with a number of Directors of Children’s Services, heads of third sector organisations, and Chief Executives of Connexions Partnerships to understand precisely what further advice is needed. This has identified the need to restate our vision for youth support and development, the key underpinning principles, those aspects of delivery that are non-negotiable and clarify the relationship between IYSS and our reform of learning. This letter covers those issues.

It is worth restating the original rationale for integration as set out in Youth Matters and Youth Matters Next Steps and its importance to delivering our vision of young people fully prepared for adulthood. This was for all agencies and services working with young people – including the LSC and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) - to integrate their work **around the needs of all young people** to deliver the following core functions:

- Improved information advice and guidance to help young people make positive choices about learning, raise their aspirations and equip them to make safe and informed choices about sexual health and substance misuse. This includes supporting parents to help them to raise young people’s aspirations, guide their choices and talk openly about issues such as relationships and risk taking behaviour.

- Improved opportunities for young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, to develop their social and emotional skills through positive activities and informal learning.

- Better ways to identify vulnerable teenagers as soon as possible and provide the right support to turn around their lives, stopping their problems from becoming more serious – in essence, effective targeted youth support.

- Ways to enable all young people, but particularly the most disadvantaged, to have a real influence over provision and be actively involved in delivery – for example involvement in Youth Opportunity Funds.

**While it is useful to talk about these functions separately they cannot be neatly divided in terms of how they are delivered to young people.** They are highly inter-dependent and need to be built around rigorous consultation with young people and a good understanding of their needs and circumstances. As with other aspects of Every Child Matters, we are convinced that Directors of Children’s Services, working closely with PCTs and other relevant agencies, should have the flexibility to respond to local circumstances. Our informal consultation has confirmed that you also believe that this is the right approach. Needs and priorities will vary from one local authority to another so we do not want to be overly prescriptive but we should be clear that redesign of services must be driven by the following key principles.

**Principles**

Overall IYSS should be driven by the same principles of ECM reform – inter-agency governance, integrated strategy, integrated processes, and integrated frontline delivery – and the same focus on outcomes and users.
In practical terms this involves:

- Young people’s needs and aspirations being at the heart of the local offer and there should be active involvement and engagement of young people in the planning, design and delivery of the services provided for them – in particular disadvantaged young people. It is also important that parents (and carers) are engaged.

- Young people should be fully aware of the opportunities and support services available to them. There should be clear access for all services whatever the starting point of the young people and there should be no wrong door.

- Recognition that young people move in and out of risk and the need for preventative approaches. Services should be flexible and adaptable enough to recognise this.

- There should be closer integration of the planning, commissioning and delivery of local services across the public, private and third sectors supported by the rationalisation of government funding streams. There must be recognition of the diversity of providers and the need to build a strong local market for young people’s services.

- IYSS should be planned and delivered alongside complimentary policies such as Sure Start Children’s Centres and extended schools.

- Recognising transition points particularly at the boundaries pre-11, age 16, and post 19.

As the recent Green Paper *Raising Expectations: Staying in Education and Training* sets out, integrated youth support services are also an essential part of the drive to enable young people to remain in learning and the successful delivery of 14-19 reform through:

- Helping learning providers and employers to identify and respond effectively to young people’s needs and know how to draw in extra support.

- Bringing a range of support services, IAG services and providers of positive activities to work in and with schools (in partnership with Extended Schools) and other learning providers, to address young people’s needs, develop their social and emotional skills, promote their health and help them make positive choices.

- Providing a diverse menu of positive activities outside school that build skills and attitudes that support learning and young people’s wider development.

- Providing a personal adviser for young people with multiple needs, to coordinate interventions and provide one-to-one support. This includes support in advance of and during transitions at 16 to prevent disengagement from learning.

This means establishing effective local partnerships across young people’s services (including the third Sector), schools, colleges, the LSC and age specialist services provided by councils and PCTs to ensure that 14-19 reform and youth matters implementation are mutually reinforcing.
Non-negotiable responsibilities

Importantly, a number of statutory duties should govern how integrated youth support services are implemented:

- to co-operate to improve the wellbeing of children and young people [Section 10, Children Act 2004]
- to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people [Section 11, Children Act 2004]
- to ensure that careers services are provided for school and college students [Section 8, Employment and Training Act 1973 amended by the TU Reform Employment Rights Act 1993]
- to secure the provision of services which encourage, enable or assist effective participation of young people in education or training [Section 114, Learning and Skills Act 2000]
- to assess young people with learning difficulties and disabilities [Section 140, Learning and Skills Act 2000]
- to secure young people's access to positive leisure time activities, taking account of young people's views and publicising up-to-date information about the activities and facilities available [Education and Inspections Bill 2006]

In conclusion, we know that you share our commitment to an integrated approach and that many of you are advanced in your thinking about how it can be delivered. We encourage you to push ahead with the necessary system reform, to share progress with each other, and to make a real difference to the lives of all the young people in your areas.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

ANNE WEINSTOCK
Director, Supporting Children & Young People Group