



*Aiming high for young
people – three years on*

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Ministerial foreword



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Secretary of State for the
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Rt. Hon John Denham MP
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Rt. Hon Andy Burnham MP
Secretary of State for Health



Rt. Hon Ben Bradshaw MP
Secretary of State for
Culture, Media and Sport

Our aspiration is for every young person in England to enjoy their teenage years and develop into a well-rounded, successful young adult.

Nearly 3 years ago we published *Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities*¹. This was the latest in a series of documents that together have driven a huge shift in Government policy for young people since 1997. Over this period we have reversed decades of chronic under-funding in our youth services and demonstrated the value our society must place on young people, stimulating this process of change with over £900 million of investment.

We have been consistently clear that this additional funding is being made available only in return for fundamental reform. Public services need to recognise that today's teenagers experience a very different adolescence compared to previous generations, and ensure what they offer them matches the challenges they face. That's why we have said that creating more 'things to do and places to go' and putting on more structured positive activities, run by trained adults, is essential. Getting involved helps young people to build their self-confidence and resilience. It also develops their wider skills and enhances their employability, complementing the benefits for them of all

¹ HM Treasury, 2007: *Aiming high for young people: a ten years strategy for positive activities.*
www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/Youth/aiminghigh/aiminghigh/

our reforms to education and training. Every young person has something to gain from these developments, but research and practice demonstrate that vulnerable and disadvantaged young people have most to gain of all.

Much has been achieved in partnership with local services and communities. We have hugely increased the opportunities available for young people, and we have made big strides towards putting them in the driving seat when decisions are made about the kind of provision that should be on offer. And this has had an impact: fewer young people are getting into trouble and communities are less worried about teenagers 'hanging around'; no youth services are failing any more; the culture of involving and empowering young people is taking root, locally and nationally; and many more young people have benefited from experiences that were previously beyond their reach, be they in sport, culture or other areas. Through **myplace** we have used capital investment to raise the bar on quality, innovation and partnership, and set ambitious targets for better facilities in every area. And we have increased the funding and support for the thousands of committed professional youth workers and volunteers who play such a crucial role in many teenagers' lives.

But we have not yet reached the tipping point needed to deliver a twenty first century vision of young people's services – one capable of transforming every young person's future for the better. We have not yet achieved such a comprehensive and universal set of reforms for youth services as we have for children in their early years with our 3,500 Sure Start Children's Centres.

We dismiss any suggestion that it is acceptable for young people's services to be in any way second best or a second order priority: we must not slow down the pace of reform. The case for investing in young people and the services that can help them remains as strong as ever. Supporting young people to make the most of all the opportunities available to them depends on us going to the next level.

At the heart of this document is a vision of a country in which a young person's background and family circumstances are no barrier to participation in sports, culture and all other kinds of positive activities. Where there are high quality places to go in every community by 2018 that demonstrate that we value young people and their contribution. Places where young people can access the range of dedicated youth health services they need. Places where provision is so attractive and engaging that young people no longer complain of having nothing to do, thus preventing communities from having to suffer the consequences of boredom fuelled anti-social behaviour. In return, we will expect young people to make the most of these opportunities and give something back to their communities, including through volunteering and taking part in community action.

6 *Aiming high for young people* – three years on

This offer will also demand an approach to the next phase of implementation similar to that we have taken in the early years – a ‘Sure Start for teenagers’ that uses our investment to promote transformational change.

We are also determined to maintain our focus on supporting the most deprived neighbourhoods. We are raising our expectations on local services to work in new ways – with more outreach and street based work by youth workers and the police, and making sure that positive activities are available when young people and communities need them the most. Our increased investment can double the provision open on Friday and Saturday nights if local agencies target their resources effectively. We will expect the police, the voluntary sector and local authorities to work together to achieve this.

To realise our ambitious vision at a time when all services need to achieve greater value for money will require tough decisions in local areas. Total Place has shown that we can deliver better outcomes at less cost when local services put citizens first and work across organisational boundaries to meet their needs. Working together like this agencies are able to agree where best to invest resources to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged young people at the same time as ensuring there is a good offer of activities and opportunities for all. Local authorities will need to commission from the best providers – not automatically resort to in-house provision. And alongside the further integration of all the key services for young people, there will be a need to promote and extend the exciting, developing partnerships with police, fire services and community groups, so every area can gain. To support this we will set out how we will increase flexibility in children and young people’s budgets without compromising the progress towards sharper accountability for improved outcomes. We must extract maximum gain from the police, health services and local authorities aligning expenditure and priorities within Children’s Trusts.

This is a vital stage in our ten year reform programme, and young people and communities depend on us to maintain the momentum and increase the positive impact.

March 2010

Executive summary

1. Our ambition is for every young person in England to enjoy happy, healthy and safe teenage years and to make the most of the wealth of opportunities that are available to them both inside and outside the classroom. The evidence is clear that a young person's achievements, activities and experiences during adolescence will shape the adult that they will become, the contribution they will make to society, and whether or not they will have the skills that employers demand.
2. It is almost three years since *Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities* was published, setting out the Government's long-term vision for services for young people. Since then we have set out ambitious plans for both the education and training opportunities available to young people through 14 to 19 reforms and to the support that they receive, culminating in historic legislation which will mean that every young person will be in learning until at least age 18.
3. The focus of *Aiming high* was to increase young people's participation in positive leisure-time activities, supported by strong evidence which showed how getting involved can help teenagers to develop important social and communication skills, build their self-esteem and self-confidence, improve their attitudes to school and help them avoid taking risks such as experimenting with drugs, or being involved in crime or anti-social behaviour.
4. The commitments in *Aiming high* followed three main principles:
 - **Empowerment** – experience shows that giving young people genuine influence over local services is the most effective way of increasing participation.
 - **Access and inclusion** – ensuring all young people are able to access the opportunities available to them, with a particular focus on removing barriers to access for those facing disadvantage.
 - **Capacity and quality** – raising the quality of services and opportunities for young people by investing in building the capacity of the very best providers from the public, voluntary and community sectors, as well as supporting those working with young people to employ the very best practice.
5. This document celebrates our achievements so far against these three principles. It also reiterates the case for focusing on the development of social and emotional skills through participation in positive activities. It sets out how we intend to support local authorities to sustain services for all young people and to make the best use of the funding available to make sure they reach out to more teenagers in need. It also discusses how important changes to services for young people will affect the future delivery of the commitments in *Aiming high*.

Making a reality of opportunities for our country's young people

6. We have achieved a great deal over the last three years:
- 2.5 million young people have already benefited from new positive activity provision through the **Youth Opportunity Fund** and the **Youth Capital Fund**, which have given them the power to decide how money is spent on projects and facilities in their area.
 - Through **myplace** we are investing £270 million² to deliver world class facilities for young people; and since 2006 an additional £120 million³ has been invested through the Youth Capital Fund, which has also helped to open or refurbish over 100 new places for teenagers to go in the 50 most deprived areas of the country.
 - Thousands more young people living in the most difficult situations have been engaged through Positive Activities for Young People programmes which provide year-round intensive support and activities, supported by a key worker.
 - 90 per cent of young people are participating in up to two hours of sport a week and, as part of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Legacy, we are investing £780 million to enable every teenager to access up to five hours of sport a week.
 - Over two thirds of young people aged 11 to 15 are already enjoying cultural activities in and out of school for five hours a week or more.
 - Voluntary and community organisations have received support through the **Youth Sector Development Fund** to build their capacity and reach out to over 29,000 vulnerable teenagers.
 - Over 2,000 senior and middle managers responsible for youth services have benefitted from support and training promised in **Aiming high** to develop their own leadership and management skills to improve the quality of services they deliver.

7. **Before we started our reform one in three local authority youth services were judged by Ofsted to be failing their young people, now there are none.** Spurred on by this progress, we need to maintain this momentum and pace of reform. In these difficult economic circumstances it is vital there is sustained investment in high quality opportunities and support services for all young people, but particularly for those who are most in need. This is crucial if we are to continue to support teenagers to succeed and thrive in the 21st century.

2 £61.7 million for fast-track projects expected to complete by April 2011; £178.4 million to Round 1 standard track projects expected to complete by the end of summer 2012; and £31.0 million to round 2 projects expected to complete by the end of summer 2013.

3 Spend through the Youth Capital Fund since 2006: £26.5 million in 2006-07; £26.5 million in 2007-08; £26.5 million in 2008-09; and £26.5 million in 2009-10 plus an additional £22.6 million through YCF+ in 2008-09.

Understanding the importance of developing wider life skills

8. Since *Aiming high* was published, a growing body of research evidence has confirmed that our future outcomes are influenced by the development of our social and emotional skills during childhood and adolescence. There is a clear link between academic qualifications, functional skills, such as literacy and numeracy, and our prospects in the labour market as adults. But evidence also shows that the development of a wider set of skills is just as essential to success in the 21st century.

9. Both sets of skills work together to support our overall level of achievement and further development. For example, analysis shows that having good social skills in early adolescence strongly supports achievement of academic qualifications. Moreover, as employers increasingly demand wider skills and abilities, in addition to formal qualifications, developing social and emotional skills during the teenage years will be important for future employment prospects. Crucially, the development of those wider life skills does not just benefit outcomes in adulthood, but is also associated with reduced likelihood of truancy, smoking and becoming involved in anti-social activities.

10. Although experiences in earlier childhood remain important in shaping our prospects as adults, the evidence clearly shows that what happens through the teenage years makes a big difference. Participating in structured, positive leisure-time activities has been shown to support the development of young people's social and emotional skills, as well as providing opportunities for fun, relaxation and socialising with friends.

11. Strong families with interested and involved parents remain the biggest influences on young people's social development. Sadly not all young people grow up in such circumstances and, as a result, can disengage from formal education. It is these young people who can benefit the most from getting involved in positive activities.

Challenges and opportunities for future delivery

12. While the importance of developing wider life skills is clear, the current fiscal climate provides a particular challenge to the delivery of *Aiming high*. Historically, youth budgets have often represented a soft target when savings need to be made. This cannot be the case now – investing in young people during their adolescence ensures that they are equipped with the skills they need to play their full role in society as adults and to contribute positively to the country's economy. Equally, not investing to prevent minor problems which emerge in adolescence can result in higher costs to public services when those problems become more serious later in life.

13. Since *Aiming high* was published there have been some important developments which have changed the way services for young people will be delivered in the future. These changes do present challenges, but at the same time provide an important opportunity for greater collaboration between services for young people – collaboration which can bring together, more than ever before, services which support all aspects of young people's development.

14. Firstly, through *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system*⁴, we have established new expectations for schools' contributions to these goals. Through the **Pupil and Parent Guarantee**, we have set out for young people their learning entitlements and the sporting, cultural and community opportunities and services to which they should have access. Ensuring all young people secure their entitlement will require schools to give even greater focus to working more effectively with each other and with wider local services, including those commissioned by local authorities.

15. Secondly, our ambitious aim to ensure that all **young people continue learning until they are 18** will require a step change in the level of services provided by local partners, in particular those which provide information, advice and guidance and those which work to remove barriers to learning. Our plan for raising the participation age provides a new stimulus for local authorities to commission services which help develop academic, practical, functional and social skills in an integrated strategy, and to ensure that every young person can find a learning pathway to suit them.

16. And thirdly, recent changes implemented to strengthen Children's Trusts mean that they are now central to planning, commissioning and delivering high quality services for every child and young person. This will mean looking at how all young people will experience a seamless offer of high quality learning opportunities and wider activities in their area, through making best use of the full range of budgets and resources available, and by services working together better to achieve the greatest value for money.

17. Within this context, continuing to deliver the vision of every young person participating in positive activities will require improvements to be made against each of the three *Aiming high* principles:

- **Empowerment** – continuing to make youth engagement central to the design and delivery of positive activities and services locally. We will expect local authorities to expand effective approaches and:
 - ensure that many more disadvantaged young people are given the opportunity to influence local decisions over services and to direct funding to the things to do and places to go that they want; and
 - build on the success of the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds and **myplace** by devolving a greater proportion of their funding for services for young people to young people, working towards our aspiration of at least 25 per cent by 2018.
- increasing **Access** – focusing investment to reach out to those most in need, at the same time as ensuring all young people are able to participate.

We expect to see:

- an exciting offer to young people in every community that draws from the best provision across sports, arts, culture, youth work and volunteering organisations – with more priority given to making this a reality in the most deprived communities through better outreach and much more provision on a Friday and Saturday night;
- real time information for young people that exploits innovative technology and sets out their entitlement through the Pupil and Parent Guarantee;
- greater priority given to ensuring that the most disengaged young people are participating in high quality activities that will help them develop confidence and resilience. With schools and targeted youth support services working closely to ensure that they participate in both learning and in positive activities, including through Learning Support Agreements and personal tutoring; and
- continued progress in delivering our commitment for a new or improved youth facility in every constituency by 2018, with tens of thousands young people benefiting from **myplace** centres and more benefiting from our campaign to both have facilities open at key times in areas with high anti-social behaviour and youth crime and to double the number of positive activities available on a Friday and Saturday night.
- building **Capacity and quality** – continuing to drive up the standard of provision and supporting the workforce to make best use of the available resources to deliver high quality services and opportunities.

We expect to see:

- local authorities commissioning the highest quality activities from those organisations with the strongest track record of working with young people, and increasingly more third sector organisations delivering Government funded provision – with local authorities making a reality of their role as strategic commissioners with support from the Children’s Trust Commissioning Support Programme;
- new quality standards providing shared expectations for young people, parents, communities, commissioners and providers about what good activities should involve. This will include more transparent, publicly available information about performance and better engagement with communities that are concerned about lack of things for teenagers to do;
- Children’s Trust partners collaborating effectively and pooling budgets and resources to deliver the highest quality and most cost effective provision for young people, including involving key partners like the third sector, Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), and the police in commissioning; and
- improvements in the young people’s workforce, so that those working with young people have the skills to help every teenager to realise their potential – with new standards for the most advance practitioners.

Chapter 1: Empowerment

Increasing young people's influence

1.1 Experience shows that giving young people genuine influence over local services is the most effective way of increasing participation. In *Aiming high* we made a series of commitments designed to give young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, greater control over local funding for positive activities and to enable them to get involved in service design and delivery.

1.2 *Aiming high* also acknowledged that today's young people are faced with a culture that has widespread negative perceptions of them and committed to do more to celebrate their achievements.

Putting resources and responsibility in young people's hands

1.3 In *Aiming high* we committed an additional £220 million⁵ to extend the **Youth Opportunity (YOF) and Youth Capital Funds (YCF)** through to 2010-11, which give young people the power to decide how money is spent on activities and facilities in their area. Established in 2006 around 900,000 young people a year are now benefitting from the funds, with young people's panels approving 39,000 grants for new activities. YOF and YCF have proved successful in increasing the number of young people participating in positive activities, with young people's direct involvement leading to more diverse projects being funded. The independent evaluation of the outcomes of YOF and YCF, conducted by the National Foundation for Education Research⁶, has demonstrated the benefits to young people of being involved in the decision-making process, with 99 per cent of local managers responsible for the funds saying that the teenagers involved had gained new skills.

Youth Opportunity Fund gives village life for young people a boost

Although there were more than 30 young people in Wellow, a small village close to Bath, there was no youth club and no out of school activities for them to take part in. They felt they were 'invisible' with no voice or real place in their community.

A group of young people met to discuss how they could improve this in their village. They shared a number of different ideas. A photo album of young people out and about in the village was put together to highlight the lack of facilities. The group spoke to a range of young people in the village, finding out what they would like to do and researching what equipment would be needed and the costs involved in setting up a youth club.

5 YOF: £36.153 million in 2008-09; £41.153 million in 2009-10; £41.153 million in 2010-11. YCF: £26.5 million in 2008-09 and £26.5 million in 2009-10; £26.5 million in 2010-11. YCF+: £22.6 million 2008-09.

6 Golden, S; Bielby, G; O' Donnell, L; Morris, M; & Walker, M (2008). *Outcomes of the Youth Opportunity Fund/ Youth capital Fund*

A local parish councillor agreed to support the young people and backed their application to YouthBank for funds – a local panel of young people administering applications to the YOF in Bath & North East Somerset. This application was successful and a youth club was established in Wellow.

Since Wellow Youth Club has been running, it has increased its opening hours and members have become more involved in village life, running 'bring-and-buy' sales and barbecues. They now have a place to go and a voice in the village.

"It's cool, fun – something to do in the evenings." Youth club member

1.4 YOF and YCF continue to show impact, and local authorities will need to build upon their successes in delivering them to meet the *Aiming high* expectation that they will **devolve 25 per cent of their budgets for positive activities to young people's control by 2018**.

Young people's involvement in the Hartlepool Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

Despite the significant commitment to their youth participation strategy Hartlepool's challenge has been to involve young people as drivers and creators, rather than just reactors to documents created by adults. As a result, Hartlepool Young Voices (HYV) was created. This group of young people from a range of backgrounds and groups across the town, have devised and written their own participation strategy.

This Vision Statement is made up of seven statements describing how young people should be involved and is supported by a set of standards and training materials also devised by them. Branching Out enables organisations to provide evidence that they are responding to the seven statements of the Vision.

Six young people from HYV have been co-opted to be members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum and are involved in both investigations and decision-making with the aim to connect all Hartlepool children and young people's voices with the democratic process. The local authority wanted to make the influence of children and young people in decision-making not just a paper exercise, but a reality.

Following a number of meetings and training workshops, elected members involved in Children's Services Scrutiny have embraced the involvement of young people – arranging meeting times, procedures and content in order to involve them more fully.

The project has broken new ground by putting young people at the heart of local government and has had a significant impact on shaping services.

Widening the scope of devolved budgets

Blackpool has opened up additional funding to be managed directly by young people, further increasing the reach of positive activities and promoting a more positive image of young people to adults. The YOF panel aims to persuade applicants to seek out additional funding sources when awarding grants, encouraging partnership work and developing the valuable skills that applying for money gives young people.

The Junior Opportunity Fund of £3,000 per annum for 5 to 11 year-olds is a younger version of YOF. Started in 2007 the funds come from the Children's Fund budget. Grants are for services working with young people from 5 to 11 years old. Awarding up to £100, the fund is managed and administered by Blackpool's Junior Ambassadors – a younger local version of the UK Youth Parliament.

Evidence shows that devolving more budgets to young people can have a positive impact, making them want to be involved in designing and developing other projects. YOF panels have taken an active role in the research and completion of Blackpool's successful *myplace* bid and other young people are members of the Health Fund Group, tasked to commission NHS money under their Aim High Agenda. Here, funds are awarded to the young people's council from NHS Blackpool to engage young people in health service commissioning and to direct funds to address key health related issues for children and young people. All applications must show a clear commitment to involving young people.

Putting young people in the lead

1.5 To meet the commitment made in *Aiming high* to invest in young people as leaders, the **Youth of Today** – involving leading youth organisations – is funding activities nationally and locally to support young people to develop their leadership skills. With a budget of £6.22 million over 2009-2011⁷ the Youth of Today will increase the quality, quantity and range of youth leadership opportunities, including through a new fellowship programme and ministerial and local councillor shadowing schemes.

7 £720,000 in 2007-08; £2.8 million in 2008-09; £2.7 million in 2009-10.

A Youth of Today participant shadows a council leader

As part of the local leaders shadowing strand of the Youth of Today, young people have shadowed a local council leader over the course of a couple of weeks to learn more about local democracy and decision-making.

"I've really enjoyed my council shadowing and am so grateful for having had this excellent opportunity offered to me. The council welcomed me with open arms and have invited me to all sorts of different meetings, some more exciting than others, but always with consideration as to what I can participate in and giving me the chance to ask questions whenever possible. So many people have no idea what goes on in council – it's very easy for people to criticise different aspects of leadership and action taken in the community but the experience has radically changed my perspective of how everything goes on and how difficult it actually is for a council to take an idea from the planning stage to the eventual product or result at the end." [Sebastian Gray](#) with Ashford Borough Council

A Prime Minister's Global Fellow

The Prime Minister's Global Fellowship works with school and college leavers, youth community representatives and apprentices to give them a strong foundation as global citizens by interacting with one of the major countries of the new global economy.

Victor Bambigoye, from Cardinal Pole RC School in Hackney, travelled to Brazil in 2008 as part of the first cohort of Global Fellows:

"The Prime Minister's Global Fellowship gave me the opportunity to compete with young adults around the country in intensive assessments and interviews, and the sheer fact I was selected as one of the hundred fellows gives me great confidence going into the competitive world. I am currently studying Politics at the University of Surrey in Guildford and I am extremely proud of the fact I made it to university."

Victor has been an active member of the Fellowship since taking part in the 6 week programme in Brazil. At the age of 18 he was named Ambassador for Aimhigher in Hackney and was invited to sit on the MyBnk charity's youth advisory board. Victor has been offered a Windsor Fellowship which will offer him a year long internship with the Welsh Assembly on graduation.

1.6 In *Aiming high* we also committed to work with organisations that support marginalised young people to have greater influence in their communities. The **Youth 4 U Young Inspectors pilot programme** is enabling young people to scrutinise their local services. Teams of young people in 33 areas are inspecting services, including information, advice and guidance, health, neighbourhood renewal and transport, and reporting their findings to the service providers and the local authority. By February this year over 400 young people had been recruited as young inspectors, with 88 inspections already carried out involving 321 young people.

Young people influencing local services

“The young inspectors have visited three of our play service centres since summer 2009...it is really important to us that our service is open to scrutiny from young people and their recommendations are valuable in helping us establish what we are doing well and what we need to improve...their endorsement has helped us evidence how we use the views of young people to shape our plans, which is increasingly important in attracting future funding.” Local authority play development area coordinator, Calderdale Council

Young people as active citizens

1.7 As we set out in our response to the Youth Citizenship Commission report, we also continue to support many organisations that help young people to become active citizens. For example, the **UK Youth Parliament (UKYP)** plays a key role in involving young people in politics and potentially developing councillors and politicians of the future. The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) is working closely with UKYP to establish a youth panel that will provide advice to Government on topical issues.

1.8 Locally, the **Young Advisors Programme** also provides opportunities for young people to receive training to work as consultants, advising adults, community leaders and agencies on how to engage young people more effectively in community life and local regeneration. And, reflecting the important role young people can play in the running of their schools, from September 2010 all schools will be under a new legal duty to consult their pupils on important issues.

Improving perceptions of young people

1.9 To counteract negative perceptions of young people, in *Aiming high* we promised to do more to celebrate their achievements. In 2009 the first **national youth festival – Shine** – was held to celebrate young people’s talents and achievements. In total, over one million young people attended Shine events in their school and a further 140,000 attended other events that showcased their achievements to the general public. Shine 2010 will run from 12 to 16 July.

Celebrating young people

Shine week provides a focal point to generate positive stories about young people in the media and is a powerful stage from which to challenge negative stereotyping. The 2009 week produced 289 press articles of which 84 per cent were positive and reached 33 per cent of the adults in England.

Enterprise activities are becoming popular and make a lively contribution to the Shine Festival, with teenagers developing talents and skills which will be an asset throughout their lives.

Jack Royal, 14, was the national winner of the Talent2Trade competition which encouraged enterprising young people to realise their creative ideas and take them into production. The challenge devised for Shine was to design an eco-friendly bag. Chosen by a panel including internationally famous designer Cath Kidston and professional retailers from Tesco, nine regional winners were announced during Shine Week. They saw their bags being manufactured and sold in their local Tesco store. Jack also had the opportunity to visit Downing Street to take part in a debate on talent.

1.10 Over the last three years, the **Youth Media Fund** – Mediabox has funded activities to help disadvantaged young people have a positive voice in the media by developing their own projects using film, print, television, radio and online media. To date nearly 15,000 young people have been involved. Recent evidence has shown that those who participated have improved their technical, communication and team working skills and increased their self-confidence and esteem.

Youth Media Fund helping disadvantaged young people

Andrew Stirling, 19, from Newcastle, was funded through Mediabox to create a computer animation. Having been homeless himself, he chose to explore what it means to be rejected from your home and outcast from society. As a result, he has been inspired to apply for a computer animation course.

Andrew's final animated film was broadcast on the Community Channel, in July 2009, as part of the 'Meet the future' month of programming.

Andrew is now at University. He said: *"Mediabox let me do something that I always wanted, all in the bid to broaden my horizons and hopefully broaden my career prospects in the process. Two years ago I was homeless and wanted to make something of my life. By doing this one project I have learnt so many new skills and developed my confidence. I will see the effects of it throughout my entire life."*

1.11 To improve perceptions, the **Generations Together** demonstration project was set up in 2009 to evaluate the effectiveness of activity which aims to bring together young people with different generations from the community. From now, until 2011, 12 sites across England are showcasing a range of intergenerational projects and are sharing their best practice about breaking down barriers and improving understanding between generations.

Bringing young people and different generations together

Tall Ships Atlantic Challenge 2009 – Portsmouth

During the Challenge, 13 older people (aged 45 to 75) and 11 younger people took part in a six day and night voyage to complete their Royal Yachting Association Competent Crew Certificate. 'Buddying' old with young, the voyage saw strangers of all ages having to help and care for each other, whilst engaging in joint activities to share skills, increase confidence and self-esteem. Older and younger people sharing this experience developed very close relationships with each other, as set ideas were challenged, with younger people cooking and cleaning and older people using video cameras and writing blogs. The project was positive in many ways, including helping older and younger people to develop a shared understanding of each other that brought trust and respect between the generations. Since the voyage, participants have championed how negative perceptions across generations can be overcome in their local communities.

"I have gained a better understanding of older people and learnt that they aren't all the same. I didn't have much contact with them before but I'm sure I will be more willing to talk to them in the future." Mike, aged 18

"It's easy to get the wrong impression of the younger generation but they are not all as bad as they are painted in the media." William, aged 65

Chapter 2: Access and inclusion

Attracting and helping every young person to enjoy and benefit from positive activities

2.1 Our aim is for every young person, regardless of their background or where they live, to have access to a good quality local offer of positive activities and places to go in their free time, as well as support to take part. In *Aiming high* and our Children's Plan we set out commitments to ensure young people know what should be available in their area, improve the quantity and quality of what's on offer and remove any barriers they face to getting involved, such as cost and transport.

2.2 *Aiming high* acknowledged that disadvantaged and vulnerable young people – those who have the most to benefit from positive activities – are often prevented from getting involved and have fewer opportunities than those from higher income groups. We promised to support local areas to close this gap through new policies and investment.

Ensuring young people are aware of what's on offer

2.3 Through commitments set out in *Aiming high*, the *Children's Plan: building brighter futures*⁸ and *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system*, **every young person in England is entitled to have access to a package of activities and support**. While there will be different opportunities on offer to young people living in different areas of the country, the basic entitlement includes access to:

- five hours a week of sporting opportunities for young people up to the age of 16 and three hours a week for 16 to 19 year-olds;
- opportunities for young people to contribute to their communities, with an aspiration over time that they give up to 50 hours of their time by age 19;
- a wide range of out of school positive activities, delivered by a wide range of local providers including schools, as part of their core offer of extended services;
- opportunities to take part in artistic or cultural experiences every week such as making music, DJ-ing, the visual arts, digital arts and media, drama or dance; and
- support services, both inside and outside school and college, that will support young people to overcome barriers to participation in learning and developing their social and emotional skills.

2.4 This complements and can help provide routes into young people's wider entitlements to formal education and learning opportunities. The range of positive activities on offer will reflect the needs and views of local young people, which have been established through genuine engagement, not a simply a 'tick box' exercise. This will include responding to their views on when activities should be available including evenings, weekends and during school holidays. Crucially, where a pupil or parent feels that their entitlements are not being met they will have a right to redress.

8 Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007 – <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/childrensplan>

Cadets providing a route to qualifications

Luke, 16, joined Huyton with Roby Sea Cadet Core because he felt his dream of a career in the Royal Navy was slipping away from him. Having fallen into the wrong crowd of friends at a young age, he left school without any qualifications. He decided that a life of crime, violence and drugs was not the future he wanted.

“It was difficult for me to find the confidence to break away from this lifestyle, but joining the cadets, and then – as a result of encouragement from the cadet core staff – enrolling on the BTEC First Diploma in Public Services and the ILM Level 2 Team Leading Certificate, was the best decision I made.”

As part of the ILM Certificate, Luke aimed to recruit new cadets and offer other local young people from similar backgrounds the option to improve their lifestyles. He wanted to put something back into the community and organised local events. One innovative idea was running a sea cadet slot on his local community radio show.

“I have achieved more in the past year than I have my entire life. I have sailed ships, flown aircraft, learned how to work within a team and gained internationally recognised qualifications. Plus, I have managed to stay on the straight and narrow, keeping myself on the right side of the law. I found both courses useful in helping me prepare for a career at sea, while also giving me the qualifications which will allow me to meet the entry criteria into the Royal Navy.”

Luke has since passed the initial test for a career in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary where he hopes to progress further as the opportunity arises.

2.5 *Aiming high* set out how young people often do not access local opportunities simply because they are not aware of what is on offer. All local authorities have a legal duty, and receive funding, to publicise local positive activities. To support them to meet this duty an **Information and Signposting Project** has been working with 20 areas to determine the most cost effective methods and trial innovative new approaches including use of the internet and mobile phones. The findings from the first year of the project have been shared with all local authorities.

Publicising local positive activities

The Information Signposting Project (ISP) enabled the Knowsley local authority to look at how they collect information and to create a brand to promote activities in ways that young people respond to.

Having previously issued leaflets on activities around holidays and collated information using onerous spreadsheets, ISP decided to adopt a new approach. They adopted a web-based system allowing users to directly feed in information and continually update activities, filtering by area and then collating borough-wide. *“Bringing it all together made us see more clearly what was missing”* says Carol, Commissioning Officer for Youth at Knowsley Council, *“so it began to tie into commissioning.”*

Knowsley now have a new brand that they are marketing to young people, directing them to the website which links to a list of local activities. The service is also advertised to police and support officers, parents and residents.

Partners both within and externally to the council have seen how ISP can work and the improved feedback it has generated is starting to have an impact, with new activities being commissioned as a result of young people’s input.

“This has given us real momentum and now we want to get smarter about evaluation to ensure the activities we offer young people are the right ones for them. The project has really pushed our response to meeting the statutory duty to provide access to positive activities.”

World-class youth centres

2.6 In response to continuing demand for places to go, from young people, parents and communities, *Aiming high* announced unprecedented capital investment, which alongside Dormant Account funding will create new and improved places to go in every constituency over the next 10 years.

2.7 We have made excellent progress on improving places to go. Through **myplace**, the BIG Lottery Fund has awarded a total of £271.7 million⁹ of Government investment to 70 projects across the country through grants averaging approximately £4 million. **myplace** is creating world-class youth facilities across the country, which will offer a wide range of positive activities, opportunities and access to a wide range of support services.

2.8 The first three projects – OPEN in Norwich, New Horizon Youth Centre in Camden and the Salmon Centre in Bermondsey – are now open for young people to enjoy, and a further seven facilities will open their doors by the end of the summer.

9 £61.7 million for fast-track projects expected to complete by April 2011; £178.4 million to Round 1 standard track projects expected to complete by the end of summer 2012; and £31.0 million to round 2 projects expected to complete by the end of summer 2013.

Improving places to go

The OPEN youth venue provides the young people of Norfolk with a wide range of exciting activities and advice services from inside a dramatically refurbished Grade II listed building. The centre has a café, climbing wall, dance studio, recording studio and media lab, as well as an under-18s alcohol and drug free nightclub. It has a live venue facility with a capacity for over 1,000 people and spaces for information and advice services including a youth health centre and Connexions centre. Over 400 young people are now regularly attending events on Friday and Saturday nights, and every month, over a 1,000 young people are accessing advice and support from a world class youth venue they own.

"It is such an amazing and big place. They have everything we could want here. I came here with my friends to get out of the rain and play pool, and definitely think it's somewhere I will use. It's called OPEN and it's like the doors are always open. All the staff are really laid back and friendly." [Sam Harrons, 19, a student at Norwich Art School](#)



Leading the way in sexual health advice

Based in a building situated at the heart of Halton's Youth Quarter, C-RMZ, a **myplace** multipurpose facility designed and developed by young people, will be leading the way in providing specialist sexual health advice, in addition to a general health drop in service for young people.

Young People's involvement will be central to the governance, management and operation of C-RMZ including inspecting and evaluating the quality of services delivered. Listening closely to them on what C-RMZ should provide, they are clear it will:

- be a positive, engaging and motivating place offering activities such as healthy eating café, free gym and offer workshops on sexual relationships; and
- be a place for young people to get information, advice, advocacy and guidance including Connexions and sexual health outside traditional surgery/academic settings with specialist support for vulnerable groups.

Using branding designed by groups of young people on promotional material, mobile outreach services C-RMZ encourages young people to access services that meet their needs without any stigma attached.

2.9 We have also invested additional **Youth Capital Funds Plus (YCF+)** in the 50 most deprived areas of England. Over 100 facilities and mobile units will be open by the end of March this year in the most deprived neighbourhoods and estates – including on Friday and Saturday nights when young people and the communities say they are needed most.

2.10 Through **myplace** and YCF+ we are on track to meet the *Aiming high* commitment to deliver within a decade, new or improved places for young people to go, in every constituency.

2.11 Both **myplace** and YCF+ have started to transform how places to go are planned and delivered – ensuring that provision is driven by young people’s views and needs and that they take the lead on designing, planning and managing projects. **myplace** is also helping to drive better partnership working between public, private and voluntary and community sectors in individual local areas.

Young people take the lead in planning and delivery

Following a young people’s conference in 2008 involving representative organisations across Knowsley, a youth forum was set up to work alongside the council and voluntary and community sector partners to develop a successful **myplace** application. Young people from the forum are now jointly managing the project development from design to implementation, including working directly with architects. The forum took the lead on all consultations and facilitated workshops with other young people to further develop the project’s vision. They presented directly to the council’s Chief Executive. A new organisation will be created and managed by young people from the forum once the centre is up and running giving young people overall control of all aspects of service delivery, finance and outcomes.

“As soon as you talk about what you’re doing, they’re absolutely blown away. When they ask, ‘So what do you do in your spare time?’

I say ‘I’m just the Chair of a five million pound youth project’, and they ask, ‘How old are you again?’ and I say ‘18.’” Sean, 18, Chair of the youth forum

“I wouldn’t be the person I am today if I hadn’t been doing the voluntary work that I have done. I can go into a room and speak to anyone and do a presentation. I’m getting experience working with architects, the project management team and the head of the youth service. It helps you to think outside the box.” Jenna, 19, a member of the forum

2.12 Since *Aiming high* was published, Royal Assent to the Dormant Bank and Building Societies Act in November 2008 has opened the way for additional funding to be released for investment in the community, including a majority of these funds contributing to the *Aiming high* vision for new and improved places for young people to go. The process of setting up the Dormant Accounts scheme is now underway following Co-operative Financial Services recent decision that they intend to apply to the Financial Services Authority to set up and operate a Reclaim Fund – the organisation that will work with banks and building societies to manage the release of funds for distribution.

Enabling every young person to participate

2.13 The introduction of the **PE and Sport Strategy for Young People (PESSYP)** has already made a significant contribution to increasing young people's access to sport and dance opportunities. Through PESSYP, over the last two years, schools working in a national network of School Sport Partnerships, have met the Government's 2008 target to increase the number of young people taking part in two hours a week of high quality PE and sport. To raise our ambition and deliver even more for young people, we are investing £780 million to raise this to five hours of opportunities every week, as part of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic legacy.



Widening participation in sport

Based at Shaftesbury School, the Shaftesbury Climbing Club project ran over the autumn and spring terms and aimed to enable young people from the school and community groups (local scouts, cadet groups and youth centres) to enjoy the climbing wall at an open session. The sessions were led by a local instructor who also encouraged a few 16 to 19-year-olds to volunteer each week and gain further skills and knowledge by leading the sessions. The programme is being funded in its second year and is now being extended to a second venue and area.

Volunteering through sport

85 per cent of staff from the West Bromwich Albion Kickz project were participants before taking the step up to volunteering and in some cases becoming paid staff. The project aims to embed through football, a culture of 'getting involved' and providing local role models for other young people in their community.

Engaging with young people as participants is key to developing their skills. They begin by having small responsibilities, like taking charge of kit and equipment, progressing to refereeing games, which encourages them to go further.

After spending some time as a volunteer, the most recent recruit at West Bromwich Albion Kickz has just been trained as a coach and is being paid for six hours a week. *"It gives the young ones someone to look up to, a role model and shows them what they can do."* [Kickz project member](#)

2.14 We have also announced our ambition that all young people should have access to high quality cultural experiences – over time matching the sports offer of five hours a week inside and outside formal learning. The Find Your Talent cultural pathfinders are already working in 10 locations to test different approaches to offering children and young people regular involvement with arts and cultural opportunities both in and out of school. The pathfinders give young people, but particularly those who are less likely to get involved, the opportunity both to attend top quality performances and exhibitions at museums and galleries as well as to get hands-on experience of the creative industries including film making, radio and TV and learning a musical instrument.

2.15 Young people have often said that it is the cost of activities, which prevents them from getting involved. We have taken this issue seriously. Through the **Extended Services Disadvantage Subsidy**, we are enabling young people to participate in activities by benefiting from subsidies provided through schools. Around two thirds of the schools participating in the subsidy pathfinder have provided new and additional activities and have seen good improvements in access and quality.

Enabling young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and participate

A parent discussed what the subsidy has meant for her son:

“He now goes to street dance on Saturday mornings...when he comes home he’s full of it. It’s amazing the difference it has made...I knew that there were classes and then [the headteacher] spoke to us both about it...everything is so expensive and winter is the most expensive time of year. It costs £2.50 and this is a lot when you have to get the shopping in and pay the bills.” She added: *“We’ve been into Leisure World to see about swimming and he’d also like to do karate if it is set up in school and soccer also...it is all he talks about, dancing and karate...I do take him out and try to do things but it is hard...**now he loves school. It is his favourite place and he is doing well.** You need money for everything and it goes so fast and you don’t have any extra for these things.”*

2.16 In *Aiming high* we committed to support local areas to overcome transport barriers which we heard were too often preventing young people from getting involved in activities. In August last year, together with the Department for Transport and the National Youth Agency, we published **guidance for Children’s Trusts and transport planners** on identifying and overcoming the specific transport problems experienced by young people in their local areas. Engaging young people in decisions about transport is of crucial importance in overcoming these problems. In the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, we have legislated to require local authorities to consult young people on transport arrangements for post-16 learning and we expect local authorities to take a similar approach with transport to positive activities.



Overcoming transport barriers

A single journey on the Isle of Wight could cost a young person up to £3.60. The Student Rider concessionary fares scheme was introduced in response to representations from the youth council to reduce travelling costs and to raise the age of adult fares from 14 to 16. It allows children and young people aged five to nineteen in full time education to pay a £1 flat fare on all journeys.

The use of the scheme has steadily grown from 70,000 journeys per month when it was first introduced to over 140,000 now, with most journeys being made during evenings, weekends and holidays indicating usage to access leisure and social activity.

The scheme is funded by the local authority. Evidence suggests that the scheme has encouraged new young bus users and as it becomes more popular, the annual subsidy cost is reducing. *"I never went on the buses before the scheme as I'm not prepared to pay that much money to go anywhere."* [Young user, 17](#)

2.17 There have also been problems around activities being available at the times when young people want and need them, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights. We know that where popular weekend activities are available significant reductions in anti-social behaviour can be achieved. But in other areas there is very little provision available, particularly at these times. Through our **OPEN campaign**, we have raised expectation that local authorities will address these demands in areas where there are high levels of youth crime and anti-social behaviour. Recently Data collected has shown that the overall provision of positive activities has increased – with areas for which there was comparable data for 2009 reporting that the total number of activity sessions throughout the week has risen significantly from 27,223 to 64,761 sessions per week. This data also shows encouraging progress with a **53 per cent** increase in the level of provision available on Friday and Saturday nights.



2.18 Following the **Youth Crime Action Plan (YCAP)**, local authorities are making innovative use of street-based teams to engage young people who might otherwise get involved in, or become a victim of anti-social behaviour and crime. Last year street-based teams introduced over 50,000 young people to positive activities, which has proven to be essential in addressing alcohol misuse and other problems. In some areas, calls to police about youth anti-social behaviour **reduced by over 50 per cent**.

Street Sport prevents anti-social behaviour

Street Sport was set up by a partnership that included the Humberside Police Youth Diversionary Officer, the School Sports Partnerships, local extended schools, and the local authority Integrated Youth Services. It is a key strand in North Lincolnshire's sport and physical activity strategy, delivering 10 sessions each week with nearly 6,500 attendances from around 1,000 young people each year.

By involving all partners in commissioning provision and making decisions based upon data showing youth crime and anti-social behaviour levels they are able to target investment at areas that need provision the most. They are also able to show that the investment is making an impact. The project has secured further funding to expand from the Sport England Rural Communities Fund, Extended Services, Integrated Youth Services, LPSA and Leisure Services. Former participants are now volunteering, bolstering the Street Based team helping to improve integration between police and youth workers.

Young people taking part in Street Sport say:

- *'It's fun, it keeps us off the streets on a night.'*
- *'I'd be getting drunk but because I've been here every week since it started, it's stopped me from drinking.'*
- *'We get to play with mates without police moving us on. It's cool because it takes place in a car park.'*

2.19 The police have a key role in keeping young people safe. *Safe and Confident Neighbourhoods: next steps in neighbourhood policing*¹⁰ emphasised the importance of creating strong neighbourhood partnerships to help prevent anti-social behaviour and crime. It places an expectation on Children's Trusts to ensure that frontline police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in neighbourhood policing teams have a direct link into services for children and young people so that they can identify those children and young people who are at risk or of being a victim of crime or an offender. These young people at risk will then be offered support which will include positive activities.

2.20 *Safe and Confident Neighbourhoods* also emphasised the positive influence that neighbourhood policing teams can have on young people's behaviour and aspirations. In particular, PCSOs can play a critical role in building bridges between young people and the police, increasing trust in and greater respect for the law. It encourages Police Forces to continue to engage with young people in a range of ways, from social networking sites to cadet schemes. The Home Office will support

10 Home Office, 2010 – <http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/community-policing/safe-confident-neighbourhoods>

forces who wish to use the Government's future jobs fund to employ young people to work alongside neighbourhood policing teams, helping to raise their aspirations and engage other young people in the area.

Young people contributing to their communities

2.21 *Aiming high* set out plans to give young people more opportunities to volunteer and make a positive contribution to their communities. The independent youth-led charity, **v** – the National Young Volunteers Service, was established in 2006 to improve the quantity, quality and range of volunteering opportunities available to young people aged 16 to 25. Working in every local authority in the country, to date, **v** has created over 900,000 volunteering opportunities. To support our Youth Community Action programme its remit has been extended to cover the 14 to 16 age range.

2.22 The **Youth Community Action** programme is designed to empower and encourage all young people in England to play a positive and active part in supporting their communities. Supported by £146 million between 2009-2011¹¹ the programme will increase opportunities for teenagers to take part in community action in their school, college or learning programme – with the ambition that, in time, all young people will contribute at least 50 hours by the age of 19. Youth Community Action will deliver opportunities for young people to get involved through a number of routes including:

- as part of the Entry to Employment Programme, and from next year through Foundation Learning, young people will be able to take part in a full-time programme of community action;
- pilots in secondary schools in five local authority areas will test how we can best secure participation among 14 to 16 year-olds, benefitting at least 14,000 young people; and
- through secondary schools, which will benefit from a support package to help them to increase participation among their students and to identify suitable and safe activities in which they could participate in the wider community.

2.23 As part of the support package for schools, a secure new online facility will be created at **www.vschools.org.uk** for school staff working with 14 to 16 year-olds and for local authorities. This new section of the **v** website will offer guidance to schools on developing community action and allow them to create profiles for 14 to 16 year-olds and search for opportunities placed by the school, local authorities and other providers.

11 £68 million in 2009-10 and £78 million on 2010-11.

Reaching out to engage and support the most vulnerable young people

2.24 In *Aiming high* we set out a series of commitments and investment aimed at reaching out to engage and support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged teenagers. We have made good progress on delivering these commitments.

2.25 We have invested £222 million¹² to ensure that young people at risk and facing challenging circumstances benefit from year-round targeted and intensive programmes and where appropriate, support from a key worker. The funding for the **Positive Activities for Young People Programme (PAYP)** will double to £94.5 million from its 2008-09 baseline, providing opportunities for over 100,000 more young people to participate by 2010-11. The Home Office also invest an **additional £6 million per year**¹³ to engage vulnerable young people at risk of becoming drawn into substance misuse, anti-social behaviour and youth crime in positive activity, through the Positive Futures programme.

Linking local partners together

Oldham has brought together Connexions, youth crime prevention projects, substance misuse services, the youth offending service, PAYP holiday activities and the teenage pregnancy strategy into a 'basket of services', sub-contracted to Positive Steps Oldham (PSO), a local charitable trust. The trust joined with the Council's Integrated Youth Services (youth service, sport development, music service, outdoor and environmental education, extended services, schools linking and study support) to create an advanced model of Integrated and Targeted Youth Support for the area.

Both organisations have a clear remit, and maximising resources in this way has resulted in a universal and targeted offer of positive activities for young people to access alongside a range of targeted support services.

Participation in positive activities has increased significantly by over 14 per cent in the past 12 months. The Passport to Summer 2009 activity helped to support a 28 per cent reduction in youth anti-social behaviour during the summer period.

Other successful outcomes include:

- the teenage conception rate has fallen by 38.3 per cent over the last 10 years;
- a 35 per cent reduction in substance misuse;
- in a challenging economic climate, the rate of 16 to 18 year-olds not in education, employment or training has remained lowest amongst statistical neighbours for the last four years; and
- an annual reduction in first-time entrants to the criminal justice system of over 25 per cent.

12 £53 million in 2008-09; £74.5 million in 2009-10; £94.5 million in 2010-11.

13 Over the period 2008-11.

Bradley progresses through PAYP

Motorvations, in East London is delivering an alternative to mainstream education provision for at risk marginalised and excluded young people. It gives them skills, qualifications and confidence to enable them to progress into mainstream training or employment. Participants typically have poor levels of basic literacy, numeracy and social skills, some suffering violence and abuse and being excluded from mainstream education.

The project teaches young people motor mechanic skills, welding and fabricating, life skills, as well as basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information technology. An on-site careers adviser provides job-readiness programmes, helping with CVs, interview techniques and job applications and each young person has a personal development plan to meet their specific needs.

Referrals come from across youth support services and Motorvations staff play a lead role in case reviews with local authority staff. Young people are encouraged to get involved in the development of the project through open forums.

In nine years of operation, 72 per cent of participants achieved accreditation, and for the 16+ NEET motor mechanics project – 62 per cent entered employment, 21 per cent entered training and 75 per cent obtained qualifications.



“School wasn’t my thing. I didn’t like it. Plus I used to get into a lot of fights. My teacher suggested I come to Motorvations, so I came and had a look and liked it. I’ve learned a trade and loads of different things here. I learned how to talk properly with people and not just lose my temper. If I hadn’t come here I would have been kicked out of school a lot sooner and probably in trouble with the police as well.” Bradley, 16

2.26 This investment has taken place alongside significant reforms of **targeted youth support services** in every local authority in England. The reforms are aimed at ensuring local authorities can identify and target services at the most vulnerable young people, through the support of a lead professional. The vast majority of areas now have better arrangements in place that meet needs earlier and better.

Targeting services at the most vulnerable young people

"I wasn't going to school, I was just going out with my mates and hanging on the street. Me and my friend were seeing older boys and staying out 'til all hours. Sometimes I didn't go home at all. Once we went into this abandoned house and smashed it up and we got arrested. My brother's key worker referred me to the inclusion team. If it wasn't for that I'd still be in Manchester doing what I was doing before." Sarah, aged 13

The Youth Inclusion Team completed an assessment to explore both risk and positive factors and a lead professional supported Sarah, creating a relationship of trust. Sarah was encouraged to take part in diversionary activities including Fortalice, a woman and girls counselling service, and a young women's boxing group.

Sarah said *"You can talk to the staff here. They treat you with respect. Lucy talking to me about the trouble I could get in, like getting snatched or raped, was what made me change."*

"Sarah now has a more positive outlook on life. She is more confident and happy and she is back in school. Having the backing of a multi-agency team meant we were able to give her the right support at the right time and address her problems quickly before they escalated." Lucy Kavanagh, Farnworth Inclusion Team

2.27 We have already tested new ways of combining financial and personal support to help the most disengaged young people back into learning through piloting including programmes such as **Activity Agreements** and **Entry to Learning**, and through **budget-holding lead professionals**. These approaches have demonstrated how local authorities can use combinations of financial support, access to positive activities and personal support to reengage this group in learning.

An Activity Agreement supporting a young person to re-engage in learning

Basic skills, anger management and personal hygiene were holding John, 16, back from mainstream provision. John was referred to a personal adviser through the Family Intervention Project (FIP) when his family were at risk of losing their tenancy due to him playing loud music throughout the night and verbally abusing neighbours.

Through the Activity Agreement Pilot (AAP), with close engagement with his personal adviser, John's life has been turned around, supporting him to identify and overcome barriers. AAP allowed the adviser to buy in specialised bespoke provision to meet John's needs and interests which were not being fully met by mainstream learning providers. He organised basic skills, personal development and anger management courses. John was clear he did not want to be embarrassed in front of other young people by taking part in basic skills work. His adviser arranged one to one basic skills tuition and accompanied him to courses meeting him each day. He also encouraged him to get involved with local activities involving other young people to build his confidence.

John is now settled in mainstream provision. The FIP said without AAP involvement, it is highly likely the family would have lost their tenancy.

[Activity Agreement Pilot, Connexions Hub Services in Tyne and Wear](#)

2.28 In *Aiming high* we committed to invest in the expansion of residential activity-based opportunities for young people. Over the last two years, through the **Do it 4 Real programme** over 18,000 young people have participated in activities through residential summer camps. Of these, 58 per cent were from low income households and 72 per cent of all participants said it would be their only annual holiday. Evaluation has demonstrated how the activities provided; such as water sports, survival skills and performing arts can support the development of an individual's social and emotional skills and raise vulnerable young people's self-esteem. There are high levels of satisfaction amongst both parents and young people – when rating their experience of Do it 4 Real camps, 90 per cent of young people said that they had learned new skills.

2.29 Building on the successes of Do it 4 Real, in 2008-09, 930 young people took part in a pilot scheme which brought teenagers from different backgrounds together in one community, to take part in outdoor activities aimed at breaking down prejudice and misunderstanding.

Do It 4 Real brings more harmony to communities

Young people from Rochdale aged between 13 and 18, from different ethnic backgrounds, with limited spoken English and harbouring inherited prejudices about their neighbouring community were brought together for a four-night residential camp of activities designed to introduce high adrenalin, with challenging outdoor activities at Grinton Lodge, an isolated countryside setting. The challenging programme aimed to bring everyone, including those who wouldn't normally associate with one another, working together as a team.



Importantly, prejudices were not defined by race – Asian and white children from the same estate mixed very well – but by territory. Through intense activity, the group became less divided and more relaxed with each other.

Since returning from Grinton Lodge, a number of young people who took part have joined youth club sessions they would not have previously considered and some are encouraging new people from their local area to attend for the first time. The camp has broken down some of the barriers that had previously divided young people and given them new confidence to take part in things previously considered 'no-go' areas.

Chapter 3: Capacity and quality

Ensuring young people benefit from the very best services

3.1 In *Aiming high* we set out our vision for young people to enjoy and benefit from the very best services and positive activities delivered by the most effective local providers and staff from the public, voluntary and community and private sectors. While we have come a long way in transforming the standard of youth services overall, there is still a way to go to reduce variability and increase overall quality.

Driving up the quality of services for young people

3.2 Following the publication of *Aiming high*, consultation with practitioners in the youth sector has demonstrated the need for common **Quality Standards** for all commissioners and providers of youth services and positive activities. We are publishing these Quality Standards alongside this document.

What the Quality Standards will mean for young people

In developing the Quality Standards for Positive Activities, we held a number of workshops with young people and their parents and carers. Overwhelmingly, young people told us that in relation to positive activities “*poor quality means we don’t go*”.

The national Quality Standards are based on evidence from young people and their parents and carers about what is important to them, what quality provision looks like from their perspective and what prevents them from attending positive activities. By ensuring that providers and commissioners meet these standards young people will be able to say:

- Staff talk to us and find out what we want to achieve and then support us in this.
- We are helped to achieve things that give us a chance of getting a job.
- We get to learn something by having fun.
- We are supported to follow our own interests to achieve potential rather than being forced to do something.
- Staff show us respect and make us feel comfortable and can handle difficult people.
- Places are safe and secure, but no participants are turned away just because they look like they might ‘kick off’.
- We get a chance to socialise with people with different beliefs.
- Timings of activities suit us and don’t clash so we’re not forced to choose between different things we want to do and don’t miss out on other things going on.
- We decide together how money should be spent and councils tell us what they have spent their money on, to prove that young people are being listened to.

Supporting excellent voluntary and community organisations to reach out to more disadvantaged young people

3.3 In *Aiming high* we promised to support excellent voluntary and community sector organisations whose methods have proved successful in turning around lives. Through the **Youth Sector Development Fund (YSDF)**, we are investing over £62 million until 2011¹⁴ to support such organisations to sustain and expand their work. To date this investment has enabled these organisations to work with over 29,000 vulnerable teenagers.

Supporting the voluntary sector

London-based Leap needed to grow their capacity to tackle rising youth conflict by developing more skilled young leaders.

They knew they had to become more strategic and maximise business opportunities particularly making the sales team more effective.

Supported through YSDF, they identified areas where they needed to develop knowledge of the commissioning landscape and converted this to an income generation plan. They mapped opportunities in the London boroughs to identify where and to whom marketing should be directed, and were provided with advice and guidance on marketing support. This included advising them on the marketing capacity of their website.

Leap are now aware of the needs of the commissioning environment and have the tools to take advantage of it. More effective marketing activity has led to a commission worth £100,000 from Islington Council and sales of at least £450,000 are expected in 2010 compared with £240,000 for the whole of 2009.

“Support from YSDF has enabled us to build on the pathfinder grant to achieve income sustainability. We now feel far better equipped to attract commissioned work and sell our training and consultancy services. We can now look forward to the end of YSDF funding with a great deal more confidence.” **Tim Moore, Finance and Business Services Director**

14 £10.9 million in 2008-09; £28.2 million in 2009-10; £22.8 million in 2010-11.

Supporting organisations to work together more effectively

3.4 In *Aiming high* we identified considerable overlap in the roles of organisations that Government asks to deliver different aspects of services for young people. Through a call for evidence in 2008, we therefore consulted widely with organisations and individuals on the priorities for improving young people's services.

3.5 We published our response to the consultation in March 2009, committing to simplify the way in which we ask organisations to support both the development of strategy and the local delivery of policies for young people. This will be achieved through the introduction later this year of **Framework Agreements** with a number of organisations that have a proven track record of supporting the front-line delivery of youth policy in local areas. A number of organisations will be pre-assessed and approved as able to support delivery across *Aiming high*, enabling Government to commission support swiftly, without the need to undertake time consuming procurement exercises.

Strengthening accountability

3.6 In *Aiming high* we set out our intention to increase the national priority of young people participating in positive activities. We introduced a **Positive Activities Indicator** within the set of Local Authority National Indicators in 2008-09. This meant that for the first time we were able to measure the overall number of young people participating across all local authorities in England, so that local authorities can better benchmark their provision against others and improve their performance. We also introduced an audit of provision within local authorities. We will repeat this every six months, enabling changes in coverage to be assessed over time and local authorities to increase provision where it is needed.

Equipping the young people's workforce with the skills they need

3.7 Under the leadership of the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC), there has been good progress on our ten-year programme to reform the young people's workforce. This includes important new measures to strengthen leadership and management across the system. So far 267 senior local authority managers have already completed training on developing and managing youth support services; 2,000 front-line managers have completed a management development programme; and 150 aspiring, talented leaders have started a leadership development programme.

Strengthening leadership and management

Ruth Marriot, Chief Executive of The Zone, a Plymouth based voluntary youth organisation and the Chief Executive of Plymouth City Council both took part in the Leadership Enhancement Programme (LEP). Together they sought to identify ways in which the voluntary and community sector could contribute more to integrated youth support services (IYSS), and to build a stronger relationship with the local authority's IYSS lead.

The programme has resulted in practical plans being produced to establish a joint voluntary and statutory detached workforce in an area of the city which needs additional support. From this, lessons will be learnt and recommendations adopted before using the model elsewhere.

The LEP enabled Ruth and her local authority partner to establish a shared vision and some practical plans for taking this forward to benefit young people in Plymouth. It also helped key voluntary sector partners build relationships and think about how to use IYSS in the various voluntary sectors and consortia in the city.

"That dedicated time has created several practical outcomes benefiting Plymouth, its youth services and the young people they support. A forum to bring together senior managers from both sectors has been set up, a joint bid for funding developed, and a joint young people's workforce has been established in an area that needed additional support, the lessons and recommendations from all of which will be rolled out."

Ruth Marriot

3.8 CWDC is also developing a new **integrated youth support foundation degree** and **apprenticeship framework** which will be available from September 2010 and April 2011 respectively. This will help to recruit new staff who want to work with young people – including more young apprentices – and develop the existing workforce's skills.

3.9 Nine pathfinder areas are currently offering a mixture of measures to attract more people to enter the workforce, including advanced apprenticeships, foundation degrees and a graduate recruitment scheme in their area. These will be supported by ambitious new partnerships responsible for workforce planning and delivery.

Workforce development

In one integrated youth support service funded consortia in Cornwall and Plymouth the project will support opportunities for 11 Graduate Trainees, 25 Foundation Degree students and 30 Advanced Apprentices, through the development of existing staff and encouraging new entrants into the workforce as inspirational role models for young people. The project is bringing together 18 partners; drawn from local authorities, the voluntary youth sector and local training providers, to work together with a focus that includes high quality systems of supervision, mentoring and support and *the development of enhanced and sustainable cross-sector networks* which improve the practice of staff supporting young people. It will also utilise the third sector's creativity and ability to engage those teenagers most at risk.

3.10 Finally, in January this year CWDC published the **first-ever report into the state of the young people's workforce**¹⁵. It will help workforce planners, employers and others to understand the diversity and the needs of the young people's workforce and in the future will enable Government to assess the impact of the reforms now under way.

15 Children's Workforce Development Council, 2010: A picture worth millions: state of the young people's workforce. www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/young-peoples-workforce/state-of-the-young-peoples-workforce-report

Chapter 4: Aiming high continuing to deliver the ten year strategy

The case for continuing reform

4.1 The case for continuing to support young people to develop social and emotional skills through the delivery of high quality activities, opportunities and support services is as compelling as ever. As we enter this next critical phase of reform we must build on the successes achieved so far, while also addressing some difficult problems.

4.2 We have shown that by giving young people choice and influence they use it well and help create better services. Through the efforts of local partners, many teenagers who were previously not getting involved in any constructive activities – who were bored, experimenting or causing problems in their communities – are seizing opportunities to set up and take part in enjoyable positive activities.

4.3 We have also required local areas to improve and join up public services in three important areas of young people's lives – the information, advice and guidance they receive to help them with their learning, careers and other life choices; the activities available to them in their leisure time; and for those experiencing difficulties, swifter support to help them get their lives back on track. The development of integrated youth support services in every area has driven better joint working and given greater focus to young people's needs and aspirations, rather than the interests of service providers. Better, more targeted youth support has led to more focussed efforts to help those young people whose additional needs or difficulties would not previously have met traditional service thresholds.

4.4 But despite this success, we have to go further. Young people, parents and communities do not always see how Government funding is resulting in visible changes in communities. There are still too many teenagers who tell us that there is nothing for them to do and nowhere for them to go, and significant numbers are still not participating in any constructive activities in their freetime. And the recent Tellus survey shows that there is some way to go before we realise the 2020 ambition of all young people participating. Set against a backdrop of spending constraints and fiscal uncertainty, achieving this ambition will be even more challenging.

The crucial role of schools and colleges

4.5 We have made great strides in ensuring that both within and outside mainstream education young people's social and emotional skills are well supported. Schools and colleges already play a vital role in supporting young people to develop these skills – recognising the fundamental importance of wider social and emotional skills on achievement, the new secondary curriculum already incorporates the development of these skills as a fundamental part of everyday learning. Schools and colleges are also increasing opportunities to take part in positive activities through their extended services and focusing on wider skills development through Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTs) and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). To make sure that every young person is taught PSHE we intend, subject to legislation, to make it a statutory part of the secondary curriculum from September 2011.

Supporting young people through the school curriculum

Standish Community High School has taken a whole-school approach to supporting learners' personal development. Learners have open access to a purpose-built pupil services centre, where they can work with specialists including careers advisers, a school-based police officer, education welfare officers and health professionals. Two full-time mentors are based in the centre along with pastoral and teaching staff. Over 90 learners have been trained as peer mentors and special groups set up to support vulnerable learners.

Standish has focused on improving learners' self-awareness and self-management, supporting them in developing as members of communities and encouraging them to contribute to the life and work of the school. Pupils' views are actively sought through pupil panels and other mechanisms and taken into account when planning lessons and learning experiences. Learners are active in the community, taking part in projects such as fundraising, musical competitions and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

Learners have a greater sense of well-being and are better prepared to develop their potential as healthy, enterprising and responsible citizens. *"I've seen so many positive changes since I came here – it's a really friendly place to be".* [A Year 11 student, Standish Community High School](#)

4.6 PLTS are a core part of Initial Teacher Training and teachers need to demonstrate their competence in them to achieve Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). But there needs to be continuing professional development for teachers and lecturers in schools and colleges to strengthen and develop these core curriculum skills alongside all their efforts to help young people access positive activities. We have already provided significant support to schools and colleges, for example through the three year Secondary Curriculum Implementation Support Programme which is now drawing to a close and with continuing support through the 14 to 19 Workforce Support Programme. Building on this existing support **we have asked the Qualification and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) to produce guidance for schools on the effective teaching and assessment of PLTS by March 2011** to support schools to track and improve young people's progress. We will encourage schools to use the guidance to assess their effectiveness in supporting young people's wider skills development as part of their approach to curriculum planning and tracking pupils' progress.

4.7 An important aspect of taking the role of schools and colleges further will be improving their collaboration with local youth support services to ensure that efforts in and out of formal learning are joined up and achieving maximum impact. The best 14 to 19 partnerships already include youth services. Too often, however, this is still not the case, despite it being critical to supporting young people to remain

in learning and training and ensuring that they can take advantage of important new changes to the 14 to 19 curriculum. The successful introduction of foundation learning in particular, will be dependent on there being high quality opportunities available for young people to develop their personal and social skills.

4.8 We are determined to make further progress toward creating more and better opportunities outside the classroom which support the development of young people's skills. Our focus for future delivery builds on the momentum of delivering the commitments across the three principles of *Aiming high*.

Empowerment – building on success and increasing young people's influence

4.9 Overall good progress has been made to put decision-making and budgets directly into young people's hands, this progress has been achieved primarily through national programmes. These have continued to demonstrate how giving young people influence can lead to better services, improve outcomes, and improve perceptions of young people in their communities.

4.10 However there are a number of challenges going forward, including:

- how to mainstream the best approaches to youth empowerment to ensure that more young people have genuine influence over a wider range of budgets for positive activities;
- how to increase efforts to reach out to engage more disadvantaged and marginalised young people who have the most to benefit from taking part in positive activities; and
- how to increase the involvement of voluntary and community sector organisations who have been effective at reaching the groups of young people least likely to get involved.

4.11 Continuing to deliver existing national programmes for young people's empowerment in 2010-11 and giving young people more say over the decisions taken by local authorities, for example through taking part in local authority scrutiny reviews, will go some way to meeting these challenges. The Quality Standards also set a greater expectation about the extent of young people's influence over local services. But local authorities will need to undertake a much more rigorous review of their approach if we are to achieve our ambition of young people having direct control over 25 per cent of local budgets for positive activities by 2018.

4.12 To support areas to deliver this existing commitment **we will publish good practice and a self assessment toolkit later this year and make available practical support and training for local authority staff responsible for expanding young people's influence**. We will also build on the changes made to the local authority financial returns on young people's services this year **to ensure that we have an accurate national baseline through which to track progress against the 25 per cent ambition**.

4.13 In 2007, the National Youth Agency was commissioned by DCSF to consult with the youth sector about the implementation of budget devolution commitment. The resulting report¹⁶ posed two challenges. First, that the 25 per cent ambition should be extended across all of the budgets within the responsibility of local authority youth support services. Second, whether the 25 per cent ambition over a ten year period was a challenging enough aspiration.

4.14 When we have a clear baseline **we will review progress against the 25 per cent aspiration in April 2011**, to decide how we could raise the level of ambition either by extending it across youth support budgets or by including further selected budgets over and above those for positive activities.

Access – ensuring every young person is able to enjoy and benefit from positive activities

4.15 There are still too many young people who do not participate in any positive activities in their free time or get involved as often as they should. The reasons for this differ across the country, but there are some common problems:

- Young people still tell us that they do not always have basic information about what is on offer and when, and that services are not using the right communication methods to reach them, or giving them the information they need.
- In some communities, including the most deprived neighbourhoods and estates, there is still a lack of places suitable for young people to go and socialise with their friends, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights.
- For some young people, cost and lack of support is still preventing them from enjoying the opportunities available to them, and they do not always have a clear sense of what should be available in their area.
- Some local services are still not making full use of positive activities as a way of preventing young people from, for example, engaging in anti-social behaviour and crime or misusing drugs and alcohol.

Making a reality of the offer for all young people

4.16 We set out in Chapter 4 the basic entitlement of activities and opportunities to which all young people should have access. Ensuring every young person is able to access their entitlement will require the collective efforts of the full range of local partners, in particular in disadvantaged areas where young people are less likely to get involved and communities are more likely to have concerns about lack of provision.

What the offer means in a local area

Every young person will:

- be aware of what they are entitled to and what is available in their local area;
- know how to complain if they feel their entitlement is not being met;
- be enjoying a wide range of positive activities that they have helped to design, including:
 - five hours a week of sporting opportunities, such as PE, personal fitness, competitive sports as an individual or a team and coaching;
 - five hours a week of cultural opportunities, such as making music, attending musical events, creating art, dance and theatre; and
 - a wide range of interesting and challenging leisure-time activities, such as serving in cadet forces.
- have access to high quality places to go, which are open at times they want and need them, but particularly on Friday and Saturday nights;
- have the opportunity to give something back to their communities by taking part in volunteering and community action activities; and
- whenever necessary, have access to support that will help them to overcome problems in their lives and develop their skills for learning and life.

Parents will:

- know what their child should be entitled to and how to find out about what opportunities are available locally;
- know how to complain if they feel their entitlement is not being met;
- be able to support their child to access local opportunities and know how to seek additional support if needed; and
- be confident that local opportunities are high quality, safe and will contribute positively to their child's overall development.

Communities will:

- be aware of what is on offer for local young people;
- see young people getting involved in constructive leisure-time activities and contributing positively to their community, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights; and
- know how to raise concerns about lack of provision or places for young people to go and be kept informed about what is being done in response.

4.17 In particular we need to go further on making more provision available on Friday and Saturday nights. We have already increased youth activities on Friday and Saturday nights in high crime areas by over 50 per cent in the last year but we want to go further not just in these areas, but across the country. To enable local authorities to meet this additional challenge, **we have already committed to providing additional resources next year. We believe that this will be sufficient to see at least a doubling of provision on Friday and Saturday nights across the country by Spring 2011** if local agencies effectively target their resources. We expect local authorities and the voluntary sector to work together to achieve this. We will continue to work closely with the Department for Culture Media and Sport to **make sure that more sports provision is available on Friday and Saturday nights and is a core part of this improved offer.**

4.18 Making a reality of this offer will require each local authority and their partners to make difficult decisions about how to focus the wide range of resources on improving access for those least likely, or most unwilling, to get involved. In particular, **we expect to see local partners working together to prioritise investment and resources to meet the needs of young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and in areas where communities experience high levels of anti-social behaviour and youth crime, with a particular focus on young people at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour and crime.** In these areas we expect local authorities to involve the police, including neighbourhood policing teams, in deciding when and where youth activities are best provided.

Making a reality of the offer in deprived areas

In deprived areas, we will expect to see **local services giving greater focus to:**

- ensuring there is a good range of positive activities and places for young people go on **Friday and Saturday nights;**
- actively supporting marginalised young people to **get involved in the design and delivery of local positive activities** and places to go, including giving them control over local budgets;
- the use of **outreach youth work to target and engage** more young people at risk of engaging in anti-social behaviour and crime;
- **commissioning services from local voluntary and community sector organisations** who are successful at engaging marginalised young people;
- **identifying local facilities, including those owned or managed by different agencies,** which could be brought into young people's use; and
- ensuring there are clear **arrangements for responding to communities' concerns** about activities and facilities for young people.

4.19 We will also challenge local areas on their performance of delivering the offer. **During 2010 we will publish at local authority level, a range of data which shows how much individual areas are spending on positive activities, when and to what extent positive activities are available across the week, and how many young people are getting involved.** This will support Government Offices when they monitor the performance of local authorities and help local authorities themselves to compare their performance against each other and to secure improvements. Communities will also be able to use this data to see the impact of investment in local services for young people and to hold local authorities to account. We will also make data available to local police forces so they can see the level of provision being made available in anti social behaviour (ASB) hotspots, particularly on Fridays and Saturdays.

4.20 In areas of high deprivation and anti-social behaviour the **Youth Taskforce will provide additional support and challenge to local authorities** to improve their performance in providing positive activities.

4.21 Communities will have an important role in driving up standards and ensuring that the local offer to young people is met. Local authorities should make sure that young people, their parents and the wider community are involved in planning what activities and services are provided, and in assessing how well those meet their needs, for example through a local authority's scrutiny committee. The views of the local community about quality of their local services and of the place they live inform an important part of a local authorities Comprehensive Areas Assessment, a key part of the new local government performance framework. In addition to the steps that we outline in this document to empower young people, every Children's Trust must consult with local communities when drawing up their Children and Young People's Plan and when they monitor what impact it has had.

4.22 We expect local authorities to make people from deprived communities a priority when they do this. If the community is not satisfied with what is on offer in their area they can petition their local authority, which is under a duty to respond.

How communities can use the law to improve provision

- If a community is not satisfied with what is on offer in their area it is right that they are able to raise their concerns and express their dissatisfaction.
- Recent legislation¹⁷ empowers communities to petition their local authority and places a duty on the authority to respond.
- At the minimum, councils will have to discuss the petition and send a written response.
- If communities are able to obtain the number of signatures specified in their council's petition scheme they will be guaranteed a full council debate about their concerns.
- If the petition organiser is not happy with the response they will have a new right to ask the council's overview and scrutiny committee to review whether the response was adequate.

4.23 We will take a number of further actions to support local areas to ensure all young people are able to access, enjoy and benefit from positive activities.

Better and earlier information

4.24 Local authorities have a legal duty to provide information on positive activities to young people. To support them to fulfil this duty and, subject to Parliamentary approval of legislation, to support schools to provide information on the Pupil and Parent Guarantee, **from September 2011 we will produce information for all young people at the start of Year 7 which sets out their basic entitlement, how they can access it and what they can do if they feel their entitlement is not being met.** This information will also signpost young people to local sources of information on activities in their area.

4.25 We know that it remains a challenge for local authorities to publicise comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date information in a format that is accessible for young people. The Information and Signposting Project (ISP) in 20 local authority areas has shown how it is possible to use new technologies to vastly improve the provision of information. **We will look to extend this type of support to all areas in 2010-11 so that all local authorities are equipped to provide real-time information on opportunities in their local area. We will also explore the potential for the creation of a national portal for young people to access information about activities across the country.** As a first stage, we will **conduct a feasibility study** to determine how we can best support all local authorities to take advantage of the kind of innovative technology that the ISP showed could be used (including social networking sites, other web based solutions and mobile telephones) to improve the quality of information they provide on positive activities.

17 Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.



Transformation in places to go for young people

4.26 We will continue to invest in a number of ways to deliver *Aiming high's* ambition that there is a new or improved place for young people to go in every constituency by 2018. We have already stated that additional funding to meet the commitment is expected from the Dormant Accounts Scheme and expect to set out plans later this year about how that will be used.

4.27 **myplace** demonstrates how youth capital investment can stimulate greater ambition and transformation in the activities available to young people, and increase access. Over the next two years we expect that tens of thousands more young people will benefit from this investment, many of them from the most disadvantaged areas.

4.28 While this investment in youth facilities is unprecedented, alone it will not be sufficient to ensure that all young people have access to a safe place where they can socialise and get involved in positive activities. Children's Trust partners have a crucial role to play in working together to realise this vision by making better use of all existing assets and available funding.

4.29 We have already set an expectation that Children's Trust partners, including schools and colleges and the voluntary and community sector, develop integrated strategic plans for creating more and better facilities for young people – and we are already seeing evidence of the benefits of this approach through *myplace*. To enable joined up strategic planning of school and non-school facilities for positive activities, **from April 2010 we will ask Partnership for Schools (Pfs) to ensure that local plans for improving facilities for positive activities are integrated with the plans for capital investment in schools and the wider learning estate.** We will expect there to be a single integrated Strategy for Change in every local authority area.

4.30 **We will also continue to work with local authorities to improve access through our national campaign to increase the number of youth centres and other facilities available for young people to use on Friday and Saturday nights.** The Quality Standards also set out new and demanding expectations about when provision is available and our firm expectation that key partners, including the police in particular, will be involved in decisions about where resources are invested within communities.

Greater focus on disadvantaged and at risk groups

4.31 Our aspiration is that all young people at risk of poor outcomes should have access to personalised support and activities that can build their social and emotional skills, and enhance their resilience and their employability. Government investment should be focused on removing barriers for those who cannot currently access opportunities. Our current investment strategy has had real impact on reaching disadvantaged groups alongside increasing opportunities for all through extended schools, youth services and the delivery of the sports and the cultural offers.

4.32 Opportunities will increase further in the future with the expansion of the cultural offer, the introduction of the Pupil and Parent Guarantee and the expansion of volunteering opportunities through youth community action.

4.33 However, it is still the case that the most vulnerable and disadvantaged young people are not always being supported to access positive activities. Two key entitlements now form a framework for schools and local youth support services to address this challenge.

4.34 Firstly, through the Pupil and Parent Guarantee every secondary school pupil will receive personal tutoring from a named member of staff that knows them well, has an overview of their progress and ensures any learning needs or issues are quickly addressed. Secondly, every school should be involved with Targeted Youth Support services to ensure that vulnerable young people are identified and have their needs assessed earlier.

4.35 Clearly, the effectiveness of these future arrangements is highly dependent on progress and impact in delivering targeted youth support and embedding it within the education system. Achieving this will mean stronger collaboration between schools, learning providers and local authority services to meet the learning and developmental needs of young people at risk.

4.36 In responding to these needs, **we will expect local authorities increasingly to use Learning and Support Agreements to engage young people at risk.**

In *Raising the Participation Age: supporting local areas to deliver*¹⁸ we set out how important it will be for local authorities to draw on a wide range of services to support young people who are not participating in learning or at risk of dropping out. Learning and Support Agreements, a personally negotiated agreement between a young person and a lead professional, will identify the specific steps and support needed for the young person to re-engage. Agreements will set out:

- the young person's learning goals and a personal plan that will bring together a range of positive activities and learning opportunities; and
- the responsibilities that the young person must sign up to alongside a series of incentives to build and sustain a young person's commitment to succeed, which can also be removed as a sanction where necessary.

4.37 Evidence from the Entry to Learning and Activity Agreement pilots shows that this is highly effective in securing and sustaining the engagement of young people in an agreed programme of activities. So we expect that Learning and Support Agreements will be progressively rolled out as the duty to participate comes into force in 2013 and anticipate that it will benefit many thousands of 16-18 year olds who may otherwise have their futures jeopardised.

18 Department for Children, School and Families CSF, 2009 – <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/eorderingdownload/01134-2009.pdf>

How the Learning and Support Agreement might work in practice

Tarron is 17 and lives with his mother and younger brother in central London in a very deprived community. He has a good relationship with his family who struggle financially. He found school work difficult and didn't make many friends or get on very well with some of his teachers. He nevertheless worked hard and got 3 A-Cs at GCSE. Tarron wanted to study an apprenticeship, but his grades did not meet the entry criteria.

Tarron enrolled on a Foundation Learning course at his local college to work towards the qualifications he needed to start an apprenticeship. Unfortunately Tarron did not feel that he was making progress. None of Tarron's friends from school were on the course, he didn't make new friends and he did not get on well with the course tutor. He became frustrated and wanted to leave his course.

Tarron's college realised that something was wrong so arranged for him to meet a Connexions Adviser. Tarron explained how he felt about his course and what he wanted to do. Tarron and the Connexions adviser agreed to draw up a Learning and Support Agreement to set out what he needed to do to help himself, what support the Connexions adviser would provide him and what would happen if Tarron met his objectives.

To help Tarron to develop the social skills to make new friends, they agreed that he should join the football team attached to the local youth centre and that one of the youth workers would mentor Tarron to help him work out how he could improve the relationship with his course tutor.

They also talked about how he could work towards his English and maths qualifications. They agreed that he should concentrate on his Foundation Learning course for now but they identified a course that Tarron could start the following term. The Connexions adviser agreed to help Tarron apply for the course and to help him gain extra experience through some work experience with a local company that also offered a small number of apprenticeships.

Through this process the Connexions adviser explained that Tarron was entitled to financial support when in learning and that if he kept to his side of the agreement Tarron would be able to go to an event with members of the local Premier League football team.

Tarron and the Connexions adviser meet regularly to review the agreement.

4.38 To support young people at risk to achieve positive outcomes we also need to reach and engage them early on. That is why we have set out in the Pupil and Parent Guarantee that every school should be working with local services to provide targeted support for vulnerable young people, with personal tutors acting as a gateway to a broad range of support services.

4.39 The Pupil and Parent Guarantee will mean that 11-16 year olds at risk not only benefit from having someone to mentor them and track their development and progress, but also that they will have access to a range of positive activities and learning opportunities to build their confidence, enhance their self-management and resilience, and strengthen their engagement in learning.

4.40 We also expect that increasingly the approach taken through Learning Support Agreements will form a core part of our targeted support offer for younger teenagers at Key Stages 3 and 4 together with the early identification and effective assessment of emerging needs through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

4.41 Now that nearly all local authorities have put in place strategies for reconfiguring their targeted services, the challenge is to embed those changes while developing and exemplifying the very best practice in supporting vulnerable young people. **To support local authorities, we will issue revised guidance later this year which will:**

- set clear expectations about the roles of both mainstream and targeted services – including the role of schools, colleges and 16 to 19 learning providers;
- provide further examples of how we expect to see targeted services being delivered effectively in local areas; and
- set out how vulnerable young people should be supported to participate in positive activities.

4.42 **We will also:**

- **appoint champions**, with experience of implementing TYS, to offer practitioner focused support to Children's Trusts, on overcoming barriers to implementation;
- **publish updated self-assessment toolkits** and share the findings from pathfinders to embed the role of Lead Professionals and develop their budget-holding role; and
- **provide support for local authorities and their partners** through the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) to share learning about effective delivery of TYS and the impact of early intervention and multi-agency support on attendance, exclusion and attainment of teenagers.

A greater role for outreach

4.43 For the most disaffected and disengaged young people, outreach is essential. Many local authorities are increasingly moving towards street-based working, where youth workers, working closely with the police, seek to engage identified young people in their own communities and encourage them into activities.

4.44 But we believe that more areas should be adopting these approaches. To support this, we will **share best practice from the Youth Crime Action Plan areas and the experience of effective voluntary and community sector organisations**. We will do this through a programme of Youth Taskforce road shows and through the Youth Crime Action Plan national offer which provides support and guidance to practitioners from all local authorities.



The role of street-based teams

Street-based teams in Hull bring together a variety of partners including police officers, anti-social behaviour officers, youth workers, parenting practitioners, and drug and alcohol outreach workers. The teams are deployed to areas where crime and anti-social behaviour give concern, talking to young people to divert them from trouble and make them aware of what is available to them locally and finding out what they would like to do. Many like sports and as a result, the street team has secured support from three local professional sports clubs (Hull City, Hull KR and Hull FC) to deliver activities.

Between July and December 2009 the teams were deployed 44 times. Over 558 young people were signposted to positive activities and calls to the police and local authority in relation to youth crime and anti-social behaviour fell by 10 per cent compared with the same period a year earlier.

Capacity and quality – ensuring young people benefit from the highest quality services

4.45 There are still a number of barriers to achieving high quality services for young people in every area:

- There remains a lack of a clarity and therefore expectation of what good provision actually looks like.
- There are variable levels of partnership working between local authorities, schools and colleges and wider services, such as the police and voluntary and community sector organisations.
- The pace of reform of the young people's workforce needs to increase to ensure teenagers benefit support from well trained staff.

Greater focus on quality

4.46 We have already set out how we intend to improve the quality of positive activities through the new Quality Standards, which are being published alongside this document. These are based on what experience and evidence shows works in delivering high quality youth work and positive activities. For the first time, this will be a shared framework for commissioners and providers regardless of sector.

The key characteristics of a high quality positive activity:

- Reflect the needs and interests of young people, who should be involved in the design, planning, delivery and evaluation of the positive activities.
- Available when and where young people want to go including on Friday and Saturday nights.
- Have a developmental and learning element and encourage young people to raise their aspirations leading to positive outcomes.
- Are supported by a trusted adult or older young person.
- Enable young people to establish mutually respectful relationships with adults and peers.
- Provision is safe and secure.
- Well publicised young people know when and where activities are taking place.
- Provide equality of opportunity, celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes.
- Provision is planned, commissioned, evaluated and developed collaboratively.

4.47 To encourage the use of the Quality Standards, later in the year **we will also:**

- **amend statutory guidance for local authorities** to set out our expectation that they should have regard to the Standards; and
- **provide additional non statutory guidance for local authorities** to exemplify what a good offer of positive activities looks like, including the links with more formal learning.

Improved commissioning

4.48 We also believe that local authorities have a massive opportunity to commission an offer to young people that recognises the importance of positive activities alongside learning provision. The transfer to local authorities of responsibility for commissioning and funding education and training provision for 16 to 19 year-olds means that for the first time the Children's Trust is responsible for planning and commissioning services for all young people.

4.49 To support local authorities to facilitate this the **Commissioning Support Programme will establish a group of representatives from local authorities, providers of positive activities, schools, colleges and training providers to identify good practice and develop guidance on how local authorities can bring together their commissioning of education and training provision, positive activities and support for young people.** The group will provide advice to the Department and the Young People's Learning Agency on how to embed these approaches in the revised National Commissioning Framework for 2011-12.

4.50 To date, the evidence is that local authorities have not yet made the most of the opportunity to draw in community and third sector providers to deliver good, integrated services. Third sector organisations have an important part to play in engaging some of the most disaffected young people, and in raising the quality of the overall service offer and its attractiveness to young people in localities. Over time, we would expect to see more and more Government funded provision delivered by high quality voluntary and community organisations.

4.51 The Government will also challenge local authorities to take up support to improve their commissioning practices, particularly where data shows that they are failing to improve outcomes for young people. Where additional help is required, local authorities will be expected to access the package of support available from the Commissioning Support Programme.

4.52 The Youth Sector Development Fund (YSDF) has demonstrated the need for voluntary and community sector organisations to be supported to work alongside local authorities if they are to deliver the local offer to young people. We need to see local authorities taking a more active role in supporting these organisations so they can better demonstrate their effectiveness in working with young people and their potential contribution as long-term partners. The YSDF Managing Body has proved successful in supporting voluntary and community sectors to do this in a number of areas. **The Managing Body will therefore work with the Commissioning Support Programme to develop good practice guidance.**

Greater support for the workforce

4.53 We have made good progress on our young people's workforce reform programme, but we need to increase the pace.

4.54 To further raise workforce standards, **we are publishing alongside this document new Standards for a Youth Professional Status and we will shortly publish a new Skills Development Framework (SDF).** The SDF will set out the skills required by everyone who works with young people and the Standards for Youth Professional Status will set a high standard of advanced and excellent practice that we expect young people to receive.

4.55 **Next year we will pilot the Youth Professional Status** in a number of local authority areas. The pilot will test the concept including its application and assessment, and the full extent to which identifying excellent practitioners improves the quality of services locally. An evaluation of the pilot will assess the impact of the Youth Professional Status and inform future developments and decisions on roll-out.

4.56 **We will also ask CWDC to lead work with key Sector Skills Councils to:**

- ensure new and existing national occupational standards and qualifications meet the skills needs of all parts of the young people's workforce;
- develop further the Skills Development Framework to include specific specialist skills so that people have a clear framework against which they can plan their own development and careers; and
- explore the development of a framework for an integrated youth support degree, to reflect the importance of working in partnership to support the most disadvantaged young people and to enable individuals to acquire specialist professional skills.

4.57 At local level, Children's Trusts have a central role in ensuring that every area has a young people's workforce which is capable of delivering the priorities set out in their Children and Young People's Plan. Children's Trusts are already required to produce a strategy for developing and integrating the children and young people's workforce in their area. **We will therefore ask Government offices to work with directors of Children's Services and Strategic Workforce leads to review this aspect of Children's Trusts performance and to provide the necessary support and challenge.** This will be complemented by work to improve significantly the management information and baseline data available to workforce planners and to refresh the State of the Young People's Workforce Report in 2010 and 2011.

Conclusion

4.58 Ensuring every young person in England is participating in positive activities can only be achieved through the joint efforts of a wide range of local services, supported by Central Government continuing to make young people a priority. Our collective commitment to this vision will be tested during this next phase of implementing *Aiming high*.

4.59 We believe that the best response is for local authorities to fulfil their key leadership role in bringing together these partners through Children's Trusts to meet this challenge and exploit the opportunities set out in this document.



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