

Readiness for Children and Young People's Trusts

A Self Assessment Framework for Voluntary Youth Organisations

Introduction

The formation of Children and Young People's Trusts offers an important opportunity to remedy past defects and critical gaps in educational and social welfare services for young people.

The Government has clearly stated that they value the voluntary and community sector's potential to contribute towards positive outcomes for young people. In particular the *Change for Children*¹ programme recognises the importance of the voluntary sector's ability to innovate and develop new provision, reach the most marginalised and involve local communities.

The development of Children and Young People's Trusts offer a great opportunity to voluntary youth organisations to directly influence provision in local areas, to develop and expand existing successful programmes, and to forge stronger and more productive links with other local organisations. Proposals in the Government's Green Paper *Youth Matters* reinforce the local authority based Children and Young People's Trusts structure as the focus for delivering youth policy and offer opportunities for the voluntary youth sector to contribute towards providing positive activities for young people on behalf of the Children and Young People's Trust.

Why is it so important to engage with the Children and Young People's Trust?

- Children and Young People's Trusts will put together an overall plan for services for young people in their area. You have a chance to contribute to this, to ensure that it reflects the best interests of the young people you work for.
- Ways of front line working are going to change. Services for children and young people will be working much more closely together. There may be great benefits in closer partnership arrangements eg shared training costs, shared use of buildings.
- Funding arrangements are going to change. If you currently receive funding from the local authority, or benefit from local authority funded services eg CVYS, you need to know what the priorities for the Trust are going to be.

However there are challenges facing voluntary youth organisations in engaging with this agenda. These include the difficulty in taking stock of the masses of

¹ *Change for Children* is the name given to the Government project to introduce the Children Act 04

information around new developments, implications for staffing and resources, the need for re-evaluation of services and current provision and the changing funding climate. Some organisations, particularly small, 100% volunteer led organisations, may decide that they would rather remain independent from the Trust. If this is the case it will be important to retain knowledge of developments in this area in case circumstances should change for the organisation in the future.

The first step is for organisations to evaluate how ready they are for the introduction of Children and Young People's Trusts. If the answer is not ready, then organisations need to work through what action is needed, including getting support from others. The National Youth Agency has prepared the framework to help with this process.

Aims of the Framework

The aim of this framework is to provide voluntary youth organisations with a tool to help assess your own readiness for engaging with Children and Young People's Trusts. It is likely to be of most benefit to voluntary organisations that have at least some paid members of staff, rather than those run exclusively by volunteers, as they have more capacity to engage with this agenda.

The next section contains more information on what the aspects of the Trust are and what they are likely to mean for your organisation. Following this is a grid which contains some quality statements about each area. You are asked to consider where your organisation stands in relation to each. There is then space for you to plan your actions.

This framework is based on one developed for the statutory youth sector, published in February 05. For information on the results of this exercise, see www.nya.org.uk/

About Children and Young People's Trusts

The introduction of Children and Young People's Trusts will have a profound effect on the voluntary youth sector, both in terms of front line delivery and at a strategic level. Children and Young People's Trusts are a new way of working that puts improved outcomes for all children and young people at the heart of how services are delivered. They provide the basis for harnessing the contribution of all agencies working with children and young people, families and their communities in the planning, commissioning and delivery of services.

The Government expects that most local authorities will have established arrangements by 2006, and all by 2008. The diagram below sets out the key elements of a Children and Young People's Trust.



'How a Children's Trust works', *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*, DFES, Dec 2004.

Local authorities will lead in developing Children and Young People's Trusts, reflecting their local leadership role. The shape of change will vary from area to area, since different approaches will be needed to meet local needs. Indeed in some areas very little of this process is currently in place whereas in others the Trust is well advanced. However, local authorities are expected by Government to engage a range of voluntary and community sector partners, reflective of the diversity of the local sectors, in the different building blocks that make up the Trust.

The relationship between the voluntary and statutory sectors is based in the context of the Local and National *Compact*², which sets out the principles and commitments of working together.

Key processes

1. Outcomes for Children and Young People

In a Children and Young People's Trust, all agencies will be working together under a shared and common vision for children and young people. This vision will be driven by five outcomes for children and young people, laid out in *Every Child Matters*³:

- Being healthy

² *Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England* (www.thecompact.org.uk)

³ *Every Child Matters* was the Government's Green Paper which led to the Children Act 04 (www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Economic wellbeing

The voluntary youth sector delivers on these outcomes in a very direct way and it is this which makes it essential that they are involved in the development and direction of Children and Young People's Trusts. Organisations must be able to show **how** their work contributes towards these outcomes, and use this as a leverage tool for greater access and recognition.

2. Integrated front line services

The aim of the Children and Young People's Trust is to move towards service delivery by multi-disciplinary and multi-agency teams that bring together the relevant people in places easily accessible to children, young people and their families.

Children's Centres, based in youth clubs, voluntary sector organisations, schools and nurseries and schools, and Extended Schools will bring together a range of agencies providing services for children and young people under one roof. Children and Young People's Trusts will be expected to involve the voluntary sector in doing this and there are obvious benefits – for the sector and for young people – in the voluntary sector being part of Children's Centres. For example, pooling resources may lead to lower training costs, buildings costs and other fixed costs. Where support is difficult to find, eg adequate youth work training, closer partnerships may enable better access to contacts.

In order to facilitate better joint working, the Government have put together a Common Core of Skills and Knowledge⁴ for the Children and Young People's Trust's workforce. Voluntary sector organisations will need to become familiar with the core and decide how far to incorporate it into their organisation's training and development strategies. The advantage of doing so will be that staff will be naturally at the same 'level' as colleagues from other agencies, will speak the same language, and communication will be easier. Also available from the Every Child Matters website is a 'toolkit' for multi-agency working, which lays out strategies and processes for ensuring staff work well together in a multi-agency way⁵. This gives an idea of what training might be needed for staff to be adequately skilled in this area, and you should consider it in relation to your own organisation's needs.

3. Integrated processes

Children and Young People's Trusts have adopted a range of processes to ensure better communication between agencies. These include the establishment of information databases across the authority for recording and

⁴ *Prospectus for the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge*, DfES 2005, www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

⁵ *Multi-agency working toolkit*, DfES July 2005, www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

sharing information on young people, and the adoption of a Common Assessment Framework⁶. (NB some areas have not introduced a CAF or other integrated processes as yet).

Voluntary organisations – who firmly protect their independence and their ability to offer confidentiality to clients – may choose not to be involved in these processes where they exist. However it is still important for the sector to understand their development and how they will be used as they may affect referrals from or to other agencies.

4. Integrated strategy

Children and Young People's Trusts will have responsibility for planning and commissioning services for children, young people and families. Partner agencies will jointly consider how best to focus resources on improving outcomes for young people in a local area. A multi-agency delivery approach will be required to meet some of their needs, and the Trust will undertake joint commissioning, with pooled budgets and resources.

The voluntary sector will be affected by this, as existing funding processes change and the Trust moves towards a commissioning process. The Government is aware of concerns that the commissioning process will discriminate against small voluntary sector organisations who do not have expertise in this, and has committed extra funds (£1m nationally in 2006–07 and £2 million in 2007–08) for facilitating voluntary and community sectors' participation at strategic level and its engagement with commissioning.

However the Government also expects that the voluntary sector will think about how they can contribute to the planning and commissioning process. The document *Working with the voluntary and community sectors to deliver change for children and young people*⁷ states that the sector will need to consider how they can contribute to local analysis of performance against outcomes and to the identification of unmet needs that may affect an area's ability to achieve outcomes. They will want to ensure they can demonstrate the extent to which the services they provide contribute to the Every Child Matters outcomes and to work together, both with each other and with public and private sector partners where appropriate, to deal creatively with the competitive environment of the children and young people's services market.

Voluntary organisations will also need to consider the proposals contained in *Youth Matters* for putting purchasing power directly in the hands of young people. Through opportunity cards and an opportunity fund in each area, young people will choose what provision they want and who should provide it. However in order to take advantage of this, organisations must become 'accredited providers'. It is

⁶ *Common Assessment Framework*, DfES 2005, www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

⁷ *Working with the voluntary and community sector to deliver change for children and young people*, DfES 2004, www.everychildmatters.org.uk

not clear yet how this will impact on smaller organisations. The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services states that, “Networks and partnerships of organisations working at a local level may be an important means to support these organisations and foster a level playing field”⁸.

5. Integrated governance

Statutory guidance⁹ produced in Jan 2005 stresses the importance of robust inter-agency governance arrangements to drive the process of change forward. The guidance makes it clear that a key element of these arrangements to fully engage with all key partners, including the voluntary youth sector.

It is acknowledged that the voluntary youth sector is so diverse that true representation of all the agencies involved in an area will be hard to achieve. Guidance states that where participating organisations are understood to be representing a wider body of interested parties, eg Kirklees VAN (see below), it will be important that representatives both report to those they are representing and are able to be instructed and informed by them. Where existing infrastructure to accommodate representation does not exist, the local authority will need to consider how best representation can be achieved and what support they can offer to facilitate representation.

Priority actions for voluntary youth organisations

In a time of change and stretched resources, it can be difficult to know which area of development to act on first. The following is offered as a suggested priority action list.

- As a management team, consider the five outcomes and how your work contributes to them
- Find out what common processes, such as information sharing protocols and the use of the Common Assessment Framework, are in place across the Children and Young People’s Trust and what your organisational stance on these will be
- Become familiar with *Youth Matters* and how the proposals may affect you
- Find out what the commissioning priorities for your Trust are likely to be, and decide how far your current or future work will meet them
- Look at whether your organisation is ‘commissioning ready’ by re-examining the quality assurance procedures you have in place, including financial procedures
- Consider how well placed you are to contribute towards multi-agency teams, and identify what training your staff may need to make the best contribution

⁸ NCVYS Policy Briefing *Youth Matters, Green Paper on young people*, July 2005, www.ncvys.org.uk

⁹ *Statutory guidance on interagency co-operation to improve the wellbeing of children*, DfES, Jan 2005

Case Studies: How other organisations are managing the transition

- **Kirklees Children's Voluntary Action Network Forum**

The voluntary sector in Kirklees helps thousands of local children each year, but rarely has a strong voice in the strategic planning of children's services and lacks the funds to celebrate its success. However on 23rd June 2005, voluntary & community groups from Kirklees came together to influence the development of children's services across the district. They met at an event marking the launch of the Children's Voluntary Action Network Forum (*Children's VAN*), which is managed by VAK's Voluntary Youth Organisations Network (*VYON*).

The Children's VAN supports voluntary organisations, who want to come together in a structured way, to ensure that they have a voice in strategic planning in light of the Government's Change for Children agenda. The network links into the wider Kirklees VAN, which supports greater voluntary sector involvement in strategic planning. This new agenda places better outcomes for children firmly at the centre of all children's services' policies and delivery and also acknowledges the role of the voluntary sector as a key provider and participant in planning.

A diverse group of people attended the event, representing such groups as the scouts, local community centres, drugs advice projects & services supporting the emotional health of obese children. Jill Long, scheme manager of charity Home-Start, said *"The Children's VAN is a long needed opportunity and, until now, is something that has been missing in Kirklees. It is also a really good idea to give people from the voluntary sector who work with children the opportunity to get together & talk about their work."* Richard Sorton, programme manager at Children's Fund Kirklees, which is managed by children's charity NCH & funded by the DfES said: *"The voluntary sector has rights, but with rights come responsibilities and we have so much to contribute to children's services."*

As part of the event, participants were asked to give details of their needs and the most important issues concerning the Change for Children agenda. This will be fed into the Children's VAN to support the development of the forum.

For more information, contact Tom Taylor at Voluntary Action Kirklees on 01484 518457 or by email at tom.taylor@voluntaryactionkirklees.co.uk

How to use the self assessment framework

The following framework is offered for you to work through each of the steps of the Children and Young People's Trusts' process for your organisation, identifying your strengths and areas for action. We suggest you use it as the basis for a meeting of your management team or a number of similar organisations can work through the exercise together, sharing their experiences.

It could also be used to assess the readiness of an area's voluntary sector, and then identify what support the sector needs to get ready. You may find it helpful to refer back to the priority actions on page 6.

For each aspect of the Trust's development, there are some quality statements associated with it which you are asked to consider and decide whether you meet. There is then space for you to identify where your strengths are in this area, providing an opportunity to consolidate and build on successes. Finally you are asked to consider your actions in each area.

For more guidance on the process of self assessment, and its links to other quality management tools, see the *Self-Assessment by National Voluntary Youth Organisations* written by the DfES and NCVYS in 2005¹⁰.

The NYA would be interested in the results of your self assessment exercise, and we would be very grateful if, once you have completed it, you would email a copy to sarah.hargreaves@nya.org.uk or post a copy to the NYA. The information will be kept confidential, but will be used to inform future work in this area.

You may also wish to share the results of the framework with your Regional Youth Work Unit or the Government Office, or your local CVYS or VYON. They should also be your first point of contact if you need assistance in taking forward some of the action points identified here.

¹⁰ *Self-Assessment by National Voluntary Youth Organisations*, Self-Assessment Framework, Self-Assessment Guidance and Schedule for National Voluntary Youth Organisations, written by NCVYS and DfES and published by the DfES, 2005. ISBN: 1-84478-534-3. www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications or email dfes@prolog.uk.com Ref: 1653-2005DBW-EN

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Name

Job Title

Organisation

Key process	Quality Statement	Fully met?	Areas of strength	Areas for development
<p>1. Outcomes for Children and Young People The Every Child Matters Five Outcomes for children and young people are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being Healthy • Staying Safe • Enjoy and Achieve • Making a Positive Contribution • Achieve Economic Well-being 	<p><i>The group/organisation has discussed the what it means for them to be working towards the five ECM outcomes</i></p>			

	<i>The organisation can show how well its work contributes towards meeting one or more of these outcomes.</i>			
2. Integrated front line services Working with other children and young people's services such as statutory, voluntary agencies	<i>The group/organisation works closely with other organisations – both statutory and voluntary - and has excellent relationships</i>			
	<i>Volunteers/Staff are confident about working with other organisations</i>			
	<i>The group/organisation has considered what training staff need in order to work with other organisations</i>			

	<i>The group /organisation has thought about how it will learn from the 'Common Core of Skills and Knowledge' and where this will fit in with its own organisation.</i>			
3. Integrated Processes Shared processes and systems for working with other services	<i>The group/organisation has a system in place to record information on young people with their consent</i>			
	<i>The group/organisation has thought about how it shares information about young people and how it will do this with other agencies when necessary.</i>			
	<i>Volunteers/Paid Staff are familiar with the Common Assessment Framework and what it means for them.</i>			

<p>4. Integrated Strategy Working together with other services to improve services for children and young people</p>	<p><i>The organisation knows how to influence whoever represents it on the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership or Children's Trust board</i></p>			
	<p><i>The group/organisation is aware of the funding and commissioning priorities of the Trust (if they have been stipulated)</i></p>			
	<p><i>The group / organisation has considered what areas of work it could be delivering for the Children's Trust, or would be best placed to deliver</i></p>			

	<i>The group / organisation has considered how it is going to take part in the commissioning process and has thought about how it will be staffed and resourced in order to do this</i>			
	<i>The group/ organisation has examined its internal quality assurance procedures, (eg financial procedures, safeguarding children) in order to ensure it is ready for commissioning</i>			
5. Integrated governance working with larger umbrella organisations	<i>The group/organisation works with an umbrella body (such as CVYS, VYON), which can influence local strategies on their behalf</i>			

Capacity	<i>The group / organisation has enough capacity such as volunteers/staff, funding, resources etc. to engage with the 'Change for Children' agenda</i>			
Funding	<i>The organisation has or is considering applying for funding which will mean working with other organisations or agencies</i>			
Help needed	<i>The organisation has received help/needs help in the future, from the following:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Government Office</i> • <i>Regional Adviser</i> • <i>National Youth Agency</i> • <i>Council for Voluntary Youth Organisations</i> • <i>Voluntary Youth Organisations Network</i> 			

Notes	<i>Is there anything else you would like to record on this form?</i>	
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Once you have completed this form, please email or post a copy to:

1. Your local VCS network co-ordinator (Name).....

.2. sarah.hargreaves@nya.org.uk or post to Sarah Hargreaves, The National Youth Agency, Eastgate House, 19-23 Humberstone Road, Leicester LE5 3GJ.

By sharing your response your local network or the NYA will have the opportunity to collate responses and then flag up issues of common concerns, sector needs and gaps in provision to central government and Children and Young people Trusts.

Acknowledgements

- *Self Assessment for Voluntary Youth Organisations: Guidance and Schedule*, NCVYS and DfES, Sept 2003
- Voluntary Youth Organisations Network (VYON) part of the Youth Work Unit for Yorkshire and the Humber who undertook some piloting of the document and tool.
- Detty Tyler, East Riding (council for) Voluntary Youth Organisations

This document was written for The NYA by Tessa Hibbert. If you have any further comments about the framework please contact Tessa Hibbert tessa@trhibbert.demon.co.uk or sarah.hargreaves@nya.org.uk.