

**YOUTH
WORK UNIT**

**Yorkshire &
The Humber**

Business Plan 2008–11

***Promoting Quality Youth Work
and
Integrated Youth support***

Executive Summary.

The Board's strategic planning as expressed in this Business Plan aims to secure the long-term future of the YWU. The changing shape of the young peoples services field because of the introduction of Integrated Youth Support has naturally impacted on the unit. Internal and external action is proposed to consolidate and expand the operation and to ensure a continuing relationship with Local Authorities and the voluntary youth sector. Additional promotional activities and relationship building are seen as key to ensuring new contracts with a range of services focused on young people. Investment in partnership working and in funding bids is a crucial element in securing a firm operational base. Attention to human resource and capacity issues are also seen as vital to ensuring quality and efficient delivery of work undertaken.

Introduction

This is the Youth Work Unit's (YWU) second Business Plan and sets out the strategic direction for the organisation over the next three years, as well as detailing specific action to secure and enhance the YWU and its work.

Historical Background

The YWU was established in 1998 as an unincorporated association by the 15 Yorkshire and Humber (Y&H) Local Authority (LA) Youth Services to be the strategic youth work development agency for the region and the representative voice of both statutory and voluntary youth work. The region has some c500,000 young people aged 13–19. These are the primary focus of youth work delivery and it is to improved outcomes for this target group that the YWU's support work is aimed.

In 2002, the Unit became a company limited by guarantee. In May 2003 it established itself as a Charity. This process has provided clear legal status and accountability. Annual Reports highlight key achievements and benefits of the YWU's work to the region.

Current Policy Context

The Unit's work responds to recent government legislation, enhanced by guidance and development work from Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), by The National Youth Agency (NYA) and the quality assurance work of Ofsted. Currently the key drivers are:

- Integrated and Targeted Youth Support
- Youth Matters (YM) & Every Child Matters (ECM)
- Clause 6 of the Education & Inspections Act
- Establishment of Children and Young People' Services and Trust arrangements
- Aiming High for Young People: Ten-Year Strategy
- Joint Area review Inspection framework and published inspection reports
- Resourcing Excellent Youth Service targets
- Annual Performance Assessment and Best Value Performance Indicators

Every Child Matters, launched in 2004, introduced a greater focus on integration within all children and young people's services. This was followed in 2005 with Youth Matters introducing Integrated Youth Support (IYS) for older young people. In January 2007, the Education and Inspections Act placed on LAs the duty to secure provision of **positive activities** for young people, take account of young people's views and publicise the offer.

Within youth work the totality of these legislative changes has led to a re-focusing on the 5 ECM outcomes, as well as re-structuring within LAs to facilitate the delivery of Integrated Youth Support (IYS). At its hearts is a universal Youth Offer of Positive Activities coupled with Targeted Youth Support to vulnerable young people. The emphasis on LAs securing and commissioning rather than necessarily delivering has heightened the focus on partnerships within the voluntary and community sector in particular, as well as private providers.

Current Operational Context

From its inception, the YWU has received funding from the 15 Y&H LA Youth Services for a range of support services. In addition, a number of annual Service Level Agreements (SLA) have been delivered with a range of long-term partners, for example, the NYA,

Connect Youth International (CYI), and more recent partners such as Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Government Office - Y&H (GOYH).

For 3 years extensive work was carried out for GOYH/DCSF in supporting the Transforming Youth Work agenda. This work, which led to the employment of additional administrative and development staff, ceased in 2006.

A long-term agreement with CYI to support the region's International Committee's grant assessment role, also ended in 2007, with the advent of a new European Youth in Action programme.

This funding reduction has been further exacerbated by uncertainty in the LA sector – indeed Hull City Council was almost forced to withdraw from the unit due to its own budgetary restrictions. In the event, however, affiliation was reinstated. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that with LA re-structuring to deliver Integrated Youth Support (IYS), Youth Services as discrete areas with dedicated budgets may be under threat. IYS is creating new structures and services and leading to budgets being amalgamated and subsumed within Local Area Agreements. While youth service managers have supported the YWU's work – understanding the benefits to their work, to youth work and to young people themselves – this may not be the case when others have budgetary control.

Taken together these changes and budget reductions could have proved catastrophic and would have inevitably led to staff redundancies. Fortunately, the YWU was able to draw on its Development Fund, established from earlier income generation work, to allow the Unit to undertake work judged important, but for which no funders could be found. In short, this Fund has supplemented the unit's core budget and secured its operation.

Forward Plan and Action

The period 2006–08 has been viewed as an interim period, during which the YWU has undertaken significant re-alignment, financial and benefit analysis, and future planning. It has been clearly recognised that, as with other parts of the youth work field, the YWU needs to change, refocus the work, address different stakeholders, explore new financial options, seek out new partners, and address new areas of work and new support needs.

As part of this change process a revised aim was agreed in 2006:

To be the focus of high quality youth work in the Yorkshire and Humber (Y&H) region supporting on-going development of services within the voluntary, independent and statutory providers.

The eleven strategic objectives were consolidated into six (see Annex 1) and the YWU's work since June 2006 has focussed on:

- Bringing a regional strategic perspective to current developments
- Supporting innovation
- Promoting young people's voice and influence
- Supporting professional practice and quality developments
- Being the voice of the youth work sector
- Promoting partnership working to enhance outcomes for young people

These objectives underpin the annual work programme and the YWU's on-going work, while retaining a clear focus on youth work support and development but within the new context of integrated services and multi-disciplinary working.

Visioning Day

To facilitate forward-planning, a visioning event was held in May 2007 with a range of invited participants including current and possible future stakeholders. The event focused on identifying features and strengths to be developed as well as action planning to maximise opportunities and minimise potential future threats from the aforementioned rapidly changing youth work landscape.

Features and Strengths were seen as:

- **independence** - managed by a board of 9 'representatives' of the voluntary, LA and broader young people services field
- **responsive and flexible** to local and regional needs and issues, but also national initiatives with annual work programme prioritised and agreed by stakeholders
- **regional support and involvement** from across Y&H, with a reputation and credibility in the area of youth work and young people oriented services, established links with regional and national bodies
- **integrating voluntary sector support** with VYON network integrated part of YWU - well placed to support the greater role of the third sector in all aspects of young people's services
- **strong links with the other 8 regional youth work units** and working with them can provide national coverage with local application
- **strategic** and policy role but also an operational focus with an emphasis on evidence-based practice, managing a number of practice and improvement networks eg trainers, quality assurance

- **skilled staff** with knowledge of the region and the expertise to be catalytic to new developments
- **attracted additional resources and funding** into the region (e.g. international grants, Young Roots) and are well placed to generate more.
- **regional 'hub' or contact point** for youth work information, expertise and practice

Action Points identified were:

1. Expand the Board/Unit Management Group

Changing the composition of the Board is seen as vital to ensuring the YWU has appropriate strategic guidance and management. At the Annual General Meeting held in February 2007, the Memorandum and Articles were amended unanimously to broaden the membership of the Board. This change facilitates a composition of 4 directors from the YWU's strategic groupings (LA and voluntary sector) and 5 directors from the broader young people's services field.

Following on from this change, an invitation has been extended successfully to both a LA Lead Member with responsibility for Children and Young People and an Senior Director of Children's and Young People's Services. They will join the Board from September 2007. Further invitations have been sent to local MPs. Vacancies have also been advertised with Leeds Voluntary Action, for someone with legal or financial expertise which would greatly help the YWU with future income generation strategies and governance issues.

The Board also invites observers from partner or stakeholder bodies to enhance the overview of the group and we are pleased that both GO and HLF have agreed to join as observers. Possible other considerations to further enhance the Board's understanding would be the Police Service, Youth Offending, Fire and Rescue Service, Arts Council etc.

Currently we have no mechanism for involving young people in the governance of the unit, indeed directors have to be over 18 years of age. Nonetheless, we will seek through our regional co-ordination of voice and influence work to explore how young people can be influential.

The following people were Directors/Trustees during 2007–08:

- Strategic YWU groups:
Heads of Service (HOS) Chris Whiley
Carol Stone
- Voluntary Youth Organisations:
Network (VYON) Phil Pearce
Ken Montgomery
- Wider field:
Geraint Owen – Sheffield Hallam University
Roger Simmons – Sheffield Futures (*with a disability and international focus to his work*)

2. Raise the Unit's Profile

a) Patron

It is recognised that the YWU's profile in the region needs to be heightened to help secure its future operation and enhance its effectiveness in advocating for young people. Other charitable organisations often have patrons who help raise awareness of the organisation and its aims and ambitions.

It was therefore agreed to invite the Archbishop of York, a respected and high profile figure in the region as well as nationally, to become the YWU's patron. He also has a keen interest in and commitment to young people and we hoped that he might feel able to endorse the unit's aims and support and promote our work. Unfortunately, due to his extensive commitments he has declined our invitation and we will need to explore an alternative appropriate patron.

b) Undertake Marketing and Promotion

It is vital that the YWU undertakes targeted marketing, providing clarity about what it offer to LAs and others, and builds relationships with potential new partners and stakeholders.

To this end, a new promotional leaflet is currently being prepared and will be sent out in September/October 2007 to all Directors of Children's Services, officers with responsibility for Integrated Youth Support, Lead Members with responsibility for young people, and organisations which deliver services to young people.

The YWU website will also be re-developed in the autumn 2007. This will reflect the emphasis on positioning clearly the services and benefits that the YWU offers as well as providing an improved method for users to access the wealth of information the YWU holds.

The Director is actively seeking, with the support of the Improvement and Development Agency (IDEA) and Local Government Association in Y&H, to address directly Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members. Unfortunately, this has not, as yet, proved possible. Additionally, the Director is working to establish a relationship with the Training and Development Agency (TDA) which has the lead role in supporting the development of IYS in LAs.

3. Gain PQASSO Quality Assurance accreditation

The YWU will pursue accreditation under the PQASSO scheme having researched the most appropriate quality mechanism for an organisation of its size and type. This will be achieved by the end of the 2007–08 financial year and therefore be in place to assist in refining and strengthening our internal practices and procedures. It will also help to attract further commissioned work by assuring quality.

4. Clarify and Strengthen the Financial Position

a) LA Annual Affiliation Fee

As referred to earlier in the plan, the changing youth work landscape and subsequent impact on potential budgeting process, has necessitated detailed work to clarify and make transparent the services and staffing available to the LA as part of the Annual Affiliation Fee. LAs currently pay 20p per head of 13–19 youth population, upgraded for inflation annually. This payment is allocated to the core functions as follows:

Advocacy & strategic support – LA	6p
Advocacy & strategic support – VYON	6p
Workforce development	3p
Quality Assurance	3p
Voice & Influence	1p
<u>International</u>	<u>1p</u>
Total	20p

b) Additional services and work areas

In addition to the core LA work, it has been possible to identify further work areas and services where YWU staff could seek commissions and tenders or make grant and funding applications. These include:

- strategic planning
- quality standards
- involvement work
- training
- research
- commissioning -support and guidance
- evaluation
- staff supervision
- needs analysis
- reviews
- consultancy

A basic charge out rate of £300–£350 per day has been agreed, underpinned by a detailed analysis of the core infrastructure and operational costs.

c) Funding Bids

There has also been a greater focus on making funding applications, creating new partnerships and contracts, and on income generation in line with the revised objectives.

The Unit was successful in winning funding bids to Change Up for voluntary sector support, capacity building and development, but was unsuccessful in its bid to further that work. Additionally, the Unit has new contracts with Participation Works (PW), UK Youth Parliament (UKYP), the Learning Network and the Reading Agency for the promotion, support and co-ordination of young people's participation.

This work to find new funding partners will continue, as will the impetus to generate income.

In 2006 an unsuccessful bid was made to the Charities Aid Foundation for consultancy help the Unit with business and financial planning. Nonetheless, a Board Director with financial expertise is being sort via organisations such as Business Link and contact has been made with similar organisations to learn from their experiences.

d) Trading Position

The Board has considered the trading and VAT position of the YWU, particularly in the light of additional income-generation work. Advice has been taken from the Unit's accountant, Stuart Lodge, to ensure that we are aware of legal requirements and operate in a manner the is the most advantageous to our financial position.

Financial and business planning is seen as vital to securing the unit's future, the Board and the Director are actively implementing changes to better secure the operation.

5. Human Resources

The main casualty of the reduction in funding (as highlighted earlier) was the loss of the full-time administrative officer. With the current budget position it was decided not to replace the role and that existing staff would undertake administrative work. In practice this means that Development officers spend a significant amount of their time undertaking administrative tasks eg minute-taking, meeting organisation and preparation etc. This has seriously hampered the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation and in particular its development work in seeking new partnerships and contracts. This is further exacerbated in the case of any staff sickness, again there is no contingency arrangement and the pressure falls on staff, particularly the Director, to deliver a colleague's work in addition to their own.

It is vital to the operation to find sufficient funds to appoint a half-time, preferably full-time, administrative officer who would relieve the pressure on staff, and build the YWU's capacity organisationally and administratively to better meet its aims and objectives. Funding bids and new contract and income-generation work will be costed to include administrative support and as soon as it becomes financially viable, an appointment will be made. Further, contingency arrangements for sickness need to be explored and established. Without such arrangements the YWU risks being seen as inefficient and unable to meet its obligations.

Additional support to the third or voluntary sector would usefully expand the support the YWU could give to both umbrella, regional and local voluntary youth sector bodies in preparing them for the impact of IYS and commissioning. Voice and Influence work also is a growing area and one in which youth work has a huge contribution to make, once again further regional capacity could enhance the support we are able to provide.

As additional funds become available it will be important to look at the core staffing and ensure that the YWU has an effective team to deliver, this may need to include associates engaged to undertake specific short-term tasks.

6. Explore and Establish New Partnerships and Working Relationships

i) Regional Youth Work Units

We have been working closely with the other 8 regional youth work units across England to establish Terms of Reference to operate as a network. We believe that such a network would establish a national presence for regional youth work units and facilitate bidding and partnership working. Currently we are often overlooked in national funding and commissioning rounds, despite the delivery often involving units at a later stage. We believe this network approach could facilitate negotiating, bidding and commissioning which would be much more advantageous to regional units and to youth work in the regions. Further, we will clarify working relationships with national bodies such as the NYA, National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) and Association of Principal Youth and Community Officers (APYCO) and establish partnership working on a more equal footing. Once agreed, we will pursue partnership working and joint funding bids with all or some of the other regional youth work units.

ii) Partnerships

The YWU is keen to establish new partnerships and win new contracts. During 2007–08 we have been successful in gaining new contracts with Participation Works, UK Youth Parliament and The Reading Agency. In addition, we have been proactive in contacting Improvement and Development Agency (IDEA), TDA, Play England, Local Government Y+H and others, introducing them to our work and exploring areas of overlap and mutual benefit. We will continue to look for opportunities for new partnership work.

7. Establish Associate Consultants' Group

As the YWU makes itself available for more income-generation and contract work – and to an increased range of partners – it is possible that we will be commissioned beyond our current expertise or capacity. The Board has agreed that we look to establish a small group of associate consultants who will work for the YWU on a self-employed, sub-contract basis to undertake discrete pieces of work overseen by YWU staff. We have experience of overseeing a few 'one-off' consultancy contracts, but need to make the arrangement less ad-hoc if it is to support the YWU's work on a more long-term basis when quality and reputation etc. would need to be considered alongside contractual relations and obligations. The details of such a scheme will be researched with NYA, which has a similar associate arm, and with our financial experts. The Board will receive detailed reports and having considered the implications will seek to establish in order to have procedures in place before they are required.

8. Monitor charity-related changes

i) Charitable purpose and Public Benefit

The YWU is a charity with an educational purpose. Following introduction of 2006 Charities Act, it may need to demonstrate what 'public benefit' comes from its purpose. The Charity Commission has published guidance on 'public benefit' and we will need to study this to ensure that we could demonstrate what benefits we bring and to whom. By early 2008 Board Trustees will need to be clear about the YWU's charitable function regarding public benefit.

ii) Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

This is a new organisational structure brought in by the Charities Act and created specifically to meet the needs of charities. Currently, the YWU is both a charity and a company. The new CIO status effectively combines the two and would slim down administrative requirements as only one body would need to receive returns, accounts etc. The CIO status will not, however, be suitable for all types of charity and the YWU will need to take professional advice about whether or not it would be helpful to convert from our current charitable company status to that of CIO, looking in particular at the costs and the benefits of any change.

These changes are currently out for consultation and are expected to come into force in early 2008.

Work Priorities 2008–11

1. Local Authorities

In line with Clause 6 of the Education and Inspections Act, LAs have the key responsibility for **securing** access for young people to positive activities working with voluntary, independent and LA providers. The YWU's work will remain focused on supporting those LAs who affiliate to the YWU, in their strategic role in planning and securing, but also in managing and delivering youth work within integrated youth support. A core affiliation offer has been developed as described earlier, with additional services available at additional charges.

The Unit currently co-ordinates a Heads of Service (HoS) group made up of those leading youth services. With IYS development there may be a need to change the membership or to establish other groups.

The Unit will:

- address all LAs regarding their IYS role and seek their affiliation.
- explore support needs of strategic LA personnel such Assistant Directors, Lead Members and IYS managers, as well as operational youth work managers and, potentially, commissioners.
- establish appropriate agreed support networks.
- continue to collect and analyse information, and maintain an overview of services.
- identify development and support needs and respond appropriately to facilitate improvement.
- respond to government consultations and work closely with NYA and APYCO.
- liaise with GO and DCFS, and with regional and national strategic bodies .

2. Voluntary Youth Sector

Voluntary or third sector organisations are seen by government as key to the delivery of targeted and integrated youth support. Voluntary youth organisations have been an integral part of the Unit's work from the beginning and this will continue. We will seek funding to support the VYON Development Officer's role and its extension from part-time to full-time. VYON will work with local umbrella bodies as well as regional voluntary youth organisations to ensure they play a full and active part in all aspects of the role out of IYS. Further, VYON will work with national and regional bodies to build sector infrastructure and capacity.

The Unit, through VYON, will:

- assert the profile, voice and influence of the voluntary youth sector (VYS) within IYS
- provide infrastructure support and capacity building within the sector
- help secure local infrastructure support from C&YP Trusts and commissioning protocols

- work closely with the broader children's sector, and with National Council for Voluntary Child Care Organisations (NCVCCO) and the VCS Engage project in particular, as well as nationally with National Council for Voluntary Youth Service (NCVYS)
- further develop relationships and work with the Regional Forum for voluntary organisations in Y&H, the Office of Third Sector and the Department of Communities and Local Government.
- undertake development work locally and regionally around training and workforce development at all levels, in VYS, as well as with Lifelong Learning UK and the Children's Workforce Development Council.
- pilot work on quality standards to equip VYS for commissioning.
- seek funding to secure and extend VYON's support work.

3. Young People's Voice and Influence

The voice and views of young people have increasingly been recognised as a pre-requisite of good youth provision and responsive services. Our regional work will overlay local work raising the profile, promoting tried-and-tested models and advocating for young people with regional bodies. Co-ordination of UKYP and PW will clearly be a focus bringing shared learning and practice with events and training. Further, we will work with organisations wishing to involve young people more fully in their services, brokering relationships, facilitating training and developing innovative practice. It is hoped that the Regional Development Agency, Yorkshire Forward, can be persuaded of the benefits of this work to the region and therefore support the work. We would hope to review our staffing in this area should work and contracts expand.

The Unit will:

- maintain an overview of V&I work in the region, identifying and collecting the range and scope of good practice models.
- support the continuing development of Youth Opportunities Fund and Youth Capital Fund work.
- seek to enhance local V&I work with work at a regional level.
- deliver the PW SLA increasing the involvement from VYS.
- deliver the UKYP SLA and co-ordinate and grow UKYP in region.
- advocate for and with young people and seek to enhance their influence .
- seek funding support to enhance regional V&I..
- work with regional and national bodies to enhance VI work
- explore young people's involvement with the YWU's work.

4. Quality Assurance

The growing emphasis on quality assurance in the light of commissioning, Joint Area Reviews (JAR) and Annual Performance Assessments (APA), as well as the focus on improving outcomes for young people, will be critical in the new patterns of delivery.

The Unit will:

- give a strong lead with regard to quality standards, maintaining a regional overview, facilitating and undertaking development work, advising HOS and other relevant professionals
- monitor broad national quality developments e.g. Youth Service Quality Mark (YSQM) and remain up-to-date with quality issues in the voluntary youth sector.
- review the regional QA moderation scheme to ensure it continues to add value to other quality measures.
- maintain an overview of QA and related Management Information systems, undertaking work to strengthen this focus.

5. Professional and Workforce Development

Workforce development will be vital to ensuring professional training and support for youth work at all levels and in all sectors. The revision of the National Occupational Standards and the resulting qualifications this will be important, as will be exploring the training requirements for volunteers and voluntary sector colleagues. The relationship with the NYA, Lifelong Learning UK and Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) will be key to professional developments.

The Unit will:

- give a strong lead with regard to workforce developments, developing position statements, advising HOS and others, undertaking development work, maintaining a regional overview.
- stay appraised of national developments running/attending national seminars etc. and liaising with NYA training development staff plus LLUK and CWDC.
- organise training programmes and deliver training as appropriate to complement and supplement that organised locally.

6. International

The Unit's role in supporting international youth work has diminished following the decision by CYI, the national agency for the European Youth in Action (YiA) programme, to centre its grant-giving function in London rather than with regional committees. A decision was taken with members of the International Committee and with the LA and voluntary sector to continue with a reduced schedule of meetings – 3 rather than 5 – and to seek to

broaden out the committee's role in promoting the benefits of international youth work. In 2007–08, the YWU will receive £3,000 from CYI to offer some regional support to people interested in accessing YiA grants and advising on the new arrangements. New Terms of Reference have been drafted for this area of work and the focus has expanded to all international work. The group intends to remain a focus for the promotion of international work believing it a strong channel to secure excellent outcomes for young people across the ECM focus areas. Grant and funding applications to further this promotion and to support the work will be made; as well as regular reviews to ensure that the work is financially viable and not a drain on resources.

The Unit will:

- co-ordinate 3 IC meetings annually.
- refer people to CYI regarding YiA applications.
- maintain an understanding of grants etc. available and offer advice.
- seek additional funding to support international work both within Europe and beyond; and, in particular, promote the beneficial outcomes of international work for young people.

7. Contract and Income-Generation Work

The YWU's staff will offer a range of services: needs analysis; planning support; commissioning specifications; curriculum development; training; reviews and evaluations; feasibility studies; advice; consultations; guidance and consultancy with LA, VYS and other organisations. The Unit will also negotiate SLAs and contracts to undertake work which fits within the strategic aims.

The Unit will:

- advocate for and raise the profile of youth work regionally and beyond.
- seek to establish new partnerships and strengthen youth work's role within IYS and other services to young people e.g. health.
- deliver contracts as specified, seeking to enhance and develop continuing work e.g. HLF, NYA, CYI.
- develop a range of services, costed and marketed appropriately, to professionals in the wider young people's services field to assist with IYS and to secure YWU's future.
- explore and undertake appropriate QA work for the YWU to assist with credibility and the winning of contracts.
- establish a group of Associate Consultants to assist with the delivery of contracted work.
- produce a new leaflet and refresh the website to better promote how the YWU can assist other young people-focused work, professionals and organisations.
- provide a range of workshops and training events to meet identified need.