



**A Guide to Working with
your Local Authority to
Improve the Provision of
Activities and Services for
Young People**

The new statutory guidance and what it means to you

If you're aged between 13 and 19 years old and live in England then there is guidance for Local Authorities that will affect you: *The Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Services and Activities to Improve Young People's Well-being*

Many parts of England have 2 tiers of local government, or local authority: county councils and district, borough or city councils. In some parts of the country, there's just 1 tier of local government providing all the local services. There are 3 main types: unitary authorities in shire areas; London boroughs and; metropolitan boroughs. The responsibilities that these have vary with County Councils having the widest ranging set of responsibilities. Full details of these can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/understand-how-your-council-works/types-of-council>

The guidance advises Local Authorities, whichever form they take, of their duty to help make sure that as far as is reasonably practical there are enough quality services and activities to improve the well-being of young people in their area. The aim of this duty is to enable young people to realise their full potential.

The role of the Local Authority is to try and 'ensure the provision', which doesn't always mean that they have to provide it themselves. It may be that certain services are already provided by charities or other organisations or that it may prove more successful for Local Authorities to help these organisations provide them. If, however, there are services not being provided, your Local Authority and specifically the Lead Councillor for Children's Services and Ward Councillors are the best people to go to first to discuss them.

The overall aims of the Government's guidance

The aim is to ensure that your Local Authority provides equal access for all young people to positive, preventative and early help which they need to improve their well-being. The responsibilities of Local Authorities now include:

- Connecting young people with their communities and enabling them to contribute through such activities as volunteering and having an impact on decisions that affect their lives
- Providing young people with a safe environment to take part in a wide range of activities such as sport, arts and music
- Supporting the personal and social development of young people to help build the skills and capabilities they need during their transition to adulthood
- Improve the physical and mental health as well as the emotional well-being of young people
- Raise the aspirations of young people whilst tackling issues such as teenage pregnancy and substance misuse

Alongside this both the United Nations Convention and Positive for Youth state that young people have the right to be involved with any decisions made that influences the services and activities provided for them. These services and activities must also meet the needs of the full diversity of all local young people.

This means that you can discuss with your Local Authority the provision of:

- A safe environment to take part in activities such as sport and music
- Education and assistance with issues such as drug use and sex
- Help for young people who are struggling to achieve in education or training
- Access to volunteering schemes
- Mental, Physical and Emotional Health services aimed specifically at young people

How these aims will be reached

Although the Government will not make the decision for Local Authorities on what services and activities they must provide for young people they do specify how these decisions must be reached. In order to ensure that suitable provisions are made for the specific needs of the local young people Local Authorities have been advised that they should:

- Understand the needs of all local young people and especially those who are the most disadvantaged and vulnerable
- Enable parents and communities to meet young people's need and help secure funding for local providers
- Plan how personal and social development programmes, such as the National Citizen Service and Youth Workers can meet the needs of young people
- Decide what facilities are needed and ensure that these are made available and accessible
- Help with growing other sectors that can benefit young people such as voluntary and faith organisations
- Ensure that anyone working with young people to help their well-being and development must have the skills to do so

This means that you can discuss with your Local Authority:

- The provision of support for organisations you may be involved in, for example faith or voluntary organisations
- How they involve young people in the consultation and planning of services so they really understand what young people need

How the success of these aims will be measured

Don't forget that it is your right as a young person to be involved in the planning and implementation of all activities and services that are aimed at them. This guidance emphasises that local councils have a duty to involve young people in decisions about what local services are offered as well as telling young people what is available.

They are also required to provide feedback from young people on the quality of these services and how they were involved in the decision making process. Alongside this they should also provide you with a plan of how they will continue to improve these services.

This means that you can discuss with your Local Authority the provision of:

- Information on exactly what services and activities they provide for young people
- Written evidence of what they are doing to improve the well-being of young people
- Written evidence of how they plan to continue to improve the services they provide for young people
- Written evidence of the feedback from young people regarding those services
- Written evidence of how young people have contributed to the decision making process and planning of any services or activities aimed at young people

A summary of what young people should be asking their Local Authority to help provide

Local Authorities must actively find out what the young people in their area need in order to improve their well-being and assist in their transition into adulthood. In order to assist them, young people can and should ask their local authority to help in the provision of any of the following if you feel there is a need in your area:

- A safe environment to take part in activities such as sport and music.
- Help for young people who are struggling to achieve in education or training.
- Education and assistance with issues such as drug use and sex.
- Mental Health services aimed specifically at young people.
- Support for organisations you may be involved in, for example faith or voluntary organisations.
- Volunteering schemes to help young people to connect and contribute to their community.
- Information on exactly what services and activities they provide for young people.
- Documented evidence of what they are doing to improve the well-being of young people.
- Documented evidence of how they plan to continue to improve the services they provide for young people.
- Documented evidence of the feedback from young people regarding those services.
- Documented evidence of how young people have contributed to the decision making process and planning of any services or activities aimed at young people.