

# Positive for Youth

What it means for  
voluntary and community  
organisations

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## *Introduction*

*Positive for Youth* is a new approach to cross-Government policy for young people aged 13-19 in England.

It brings together the work of all relevant government departments into a single vision for how all parts of society – including councils, schools, charities and businesses – can work more closely together to help all young people realise their potential.

This means supporting them and their families so that all young people develop a sense of belonging and the supportive relationships, strong ambitions, and good opportunities they need to succeed.

It has been developed through extensive consultation collaboration with young people and a wide range of other people that work with them, including many voluntary and community organisations (VCSOs).

## *Context*

Young people's experiences outside the classroom at home and in their community are crucial in helping them form and pursue their ambitions.

A wide range of community, faith, and other voluntary organisations play a significant role in the lives of many young people and their families – often independently of public funding.

VCSOs can be particularly adept at reaching young people who are reluctant to engage with statutory agencies.

The financial climate means that many VCSOs are having to work hard and develop innovative approaches to maintain their activities and services for young people.

## *The Positive for Youth vision*

*Positive for Youth* aims to set out a way forward. It sets out the principles of what a good local system of support for young people looks like, focusing on the importance of strong cross-sector partnership. It:

- emphasises the importance of young people's personal and social development to educational and other long term outcomes;
- recognises that parents, carers and families have the primary responsibility and influence to support young people, and encourages services for young people to support them and take them more into account;
- supports the right of young people to have their voice heard in all decisions that affect their lives, including through the work of VCSOs – the Department for Education is funding the British Youth Council to promote

youth voice nationally and locally;

- promotes the value of high quality youth work and other out-of-school services for young people, particularly for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable;
- recognises the expertise of many VCSOs in improving education, health, and other outcomes for young people; and
- encourages local authority commissioners to grow their capacity and their role in delivering public services, including through recognising the importance of local umbrella and infrastructure organisations.

### ***A voice for the VCS***

The Government will continue to work closely with the wide range of VCSOs that contributed to the development of *Positive for Youth*.

To help give VCSOs a voice in Government policy and support their growth and development, the Department for Education has appointed a strategic partner for the voluntary youth sector. Catalyst, a consortium led by the National Council for Voluntary Youth Organisations, has been awarded funding to April 2013.

In addition, a new Youth Action Group is bringing together government Ministers from nine departments with leaders of a number of the largest youth VCSOs to discuss the needs of disadvantaged young people.

### ***More open public services***

The Government is committing to improving the quality of local authority commissioning and making it easier for VCSOs to deliver public services:

- through the Localism Act it has given community groups the right to bid to take over the running of local council services; and
- through revised statutory guidance, the Government will shortly clarify its expectation that local authorities give due regard to the role that VCSOs can play in improving outcomes for local young people – by growing the capacity of communities to work with young people independent of the state, and the role of VCSOs in delivering publicly funded services.

To learn lessons for the future, the Department for Education is providing 18 VCSOs with a share of £31.4 million over the two years 2011-13 to pioneer and evaluate innovative approaches to supporting young people.

In addition, alongside providers in the private and social enterprise sector, voluntary and community sector organisations will also have a key role in delivering new intensive support to engage some of the most vulnerable 16-17 year olds in education or training. This follows the recent announcement of a new payment by results scheme worth £126m in England over the next three years, as part of the Youth Contract.

## ***More enterprising VCSOs***

The Government wants to see VCSOs being innovative and enterprising.

To help VCSOs to measure and demonstrate what difference they make to young people the Government is:

- funding the Centre for the Analysis of Youth Transitions to develop standards for evidence; and
- funding Catalyst to develop an outcomes framework to highlight the significance of personal and social development to wider outcomes for young people and signpost providers to available measurement tools.

To help VCSOs to grow and attract income from a wider range of sources the Government is:

- encouraging local authorities and their staff to look at new forms of delivery of services of young people, including mutuals and joint venture partnerships with voluntary sector charities;
- making it easier for charities to get access to the capital they need to grow by helping them understand and access social investment – including through a specific high level objectives for the Big Society Bank to support the development of community-led social enterprise initiatives to improve opportunities for young people; and
- providing funding of £320,000 over the period to March 2013 to a consortium led by Business in the Community to broker the engagement of more businesses to support VCSOs' work with young people.

The Government is funding the capital costs of 63 Myplace youth centres to be hubs for a wide range of activities and services for young people. It is also developing and piloting National Citizen Service to offer 16 year olds a challenging personal and social development experience and an opportunity for social action in their communities. Both Myplace and National Citizen Service present opportunities for VCSOs to lead or take part in innovative partnership-based approaches to supporting young people.

## ***Monitoring progress***

The Government will work with young people, VCSOs and others to review progress in realising the *Positive for Youth* vision and in improving outcomes for young people.

It will publish an audit of overall progress at the end of 2012.

## ***Further Information***

*Positive for Youth* can be downloaded from the Department for Education's website at [www.education.gov.uk/positiveforyouth](http://www.education.gov.uk/positiveforyouth). An executive summary is also available.

## Case Studies

*Positive for Youth* contains a number of case studies. The following examples may be of particular interest to VCSOs.

### Early intervention to support participation and attainment

Groundwork's Young People Friendly Neighbourhoods (YPFN) project is being funded through the Department for Education's VCS grant programme.

Daniel is 14 years old and lives on an estate in Chorlton. He attends school but suffers from behavioural issues, often gets into trouble, and does not enjoy the formal education environment. He feels isolated and regularly finds himself excluded. Teachers feel he has limited personal development opportunities.

Groundwork in Manchester supports Daniel through a number of interventions as part of the Young People Friendly Neighbourhoods project. On Mondays and Tuesdays he attends the Fire Service's 'Fire Academy' course, and on Wednesdays and Thursdays he attends Groundwork's Horticulture alternative curriculum course. He also receives mentoring support from Groundwork staff both in and out of school. Through dedicated support from a youth worker, all of these interventions are brought together into a cohesive offer of support.

Daniel's attitude towards education has changed over 5 weeks. He now shows signs of being happier and more confident. He sees the value of attending school and looks forward to the school week. The school values the support from a consistent youth worker involved in both his academic and personal life. Daniel says "I enjoy the horticulture and the fire service. I have learnt a lot about team building and working as a team, and about plants, trees and fire drills."

### Transferring leadership to the voluntary and community sector

The Worcester Community Trust, launched on 1 April 2010, brings together three Worcester charities to run youth and community services previously run by Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council. Both councils agreed to support the development of the Trust and now operate a shared services agreement to commission the Trust to deliver youth and community services.

Over the preceding 18 months, the County youth service and City Council's community services had begun to align their staff teams with closer joint working arrangements ensuring that both strategic and operational decisions were coordinated. Joint service delivery began to develop with an integrated approach to service planning and the joint use of buildings within the asset portfolio of each partner. Resources were also increasingly pooled.

Since the launch of the Trust, staff from both services have been seconded into a new team within the organisational structure of the Trust. There is potential for full TUPE transfer arrangements in the future. Bringing together the different skills from the teams has allowed the Trust to expand the services it can offer.

The Trust has enabled the two councils to realise efficiencies through integrating related work within the same localities; disposing of assets and reinvesting capital in more efficient and fit-for purpose shared premises; and delivering through a charitable body able to access other sources of funding and drive down its overhead and back office costs. The Trust is also able to work with a wider range of partners, for example it has developed the STEP UP alternative curriculum project with the local Tudor Grange Academy.

This model may provide a template for further moves across the county to deliver publicly funded services through the voluntary sector.