

The youth of today evaluation – technical report

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This research report was commissioned before the new UK Government took office on 11 May 2010. As a result the content may not reflect current Government policy and may make reference to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) which has now been replaced by the Department for Education (DFE).

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

Content

Content.....	3
Introduction.....	4
1.1 Overview.....	4
1.2 About the Youth of Today evaluation	4
Survey of young people	6
2.1 Summary.....	6
2.2 Questionnaire development process	6
2.3 Administering the survey.....	10
2.4 Sampling and response	11
2.5 Conclusions and key lessons learned	13
Qualitative methodology	15
3.1 Qualitative research with consortium members	15
3.2 Qualitative research with young people	15
Cost-benefit analysis	18
Appendix 1 Quantitative materials	20
Appendix 2 Qualitative materials.....	39

Introduction

1.1 Overview

In February 2009 the Department for Children, Schools and Families (now the Department for Education) announced a consortium to deliver the National Body for Youth Leadership (NBYL), now known as The Youth of Today programme. The seven organisations involved in the consortium were: The National Youth Agency (NYA), Changemakers, The Young Foundation, UK Youth Parliament, British Youth Council, and the Prince's Trust.

The aim of the Youth of Today programme was to develop youth leadership opportunities for approximately 2000 young people aged 13-19, who were seen as underrepresented in leadership roles. Consortium members offered a range of eleven direct and indirect opportunities for young people including shadowing Ministers and local councillors, a youth fellowship programme, apprenticeships and internships, a Youth Leadership Fund (for organisations promoting youth leadership), promoting leadership development in schools, and a youth leadership campaign. Opportunities were also provided for young people to participate in the governance of TYOT.

NatCen was commissioned in September 2009 to evaluate the Youth of Today programme. The evaluation was to comprise quantitative and qualitative components, including a two-wave survey of participants, in-depth interviews with consortium members, focus groups with young people and a cost benefit analysis. The evaluation was to run from October 2009 to March 2011.

In August 2010, however, the Department for Education decided to bring to an end to the evaluation of the Youth of Today programme. This was in response both to the new Minister's priorities (following the General Election in May 2010) and the need for the Department to seek cost savings across all its programmes.

This Technical report has been produced to provide a record of the evaluation and to provide methodological information that might be useful in informing future research projects in similar areas.

1.2 About the Youth of Today evaluation

Key research questions

The evaluation of the Youth of Today programme looked to answer the following questions:

- What is the impact of the Youth of Today programme? Is it boosting leadership skills among disadvantaged young people?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the different projects that make up the Youth of Today programme?
- What are the key challenges and critical success factors that underpin the implementation and delivery of the Youth of Today programme?

- Does the Youth of Today programme offer value for money?

Proposed methodology

The evaluation was to consist of the following elements:

- A two-wave survey of all the young people who took part in Youth of Today direct interventions. Young people were to be surveyed before they took part in an intervention and around six months after they finished it.
- Interviews with consortium members. Project management and delivery staff were consulted on their perspectives of The Youth of Today programme.
- Focus groups with young people who participated in Youth of Today opportunities.
- A cost-benefit analysis to review value for money.

Survey of young people

2.1 Summary

As noted above, a key component of the evaluation was a two-wave survey of the young people who participated in the Youth of Today programme. The intention was for young people to fill in a postal survey both before and after they took part in Youth of Today interventions.

In this section, we provide technical details about the survey, including:

- A review of the questionnaire development process;
- A description of the procedures for administering the study; and
- A summary of the response rates obtained.

2.2 Questionnaire development process

Summary

The questionnaire development process had three key stages, as outlined below:

- Firstly, draft questionnaires were circulated to the Department, consortium members, academic experts and questionnaire design experts at NatCen (who were not part of the project research team). They were scrutinised at an expert panel session on 16th October 2010. Members of the Communities and Local Government also provided comments.
- Secondly, the questionnaire was reviewed by around 15 young people in a pilot exercise.
- And, thirdly, the questionnaire was recirculated to the Department, the consortium members and academic experts for final feedback.

The questionnaire was amended at each stage of the survey development process. The final wave 1 questionnaire was launched on 1st December 2009. Both the wave 1 and wave 2 questionnaires can be found in Appendix 1.

The questionnaire development posed a number of challenges. Some of the issues to be explored such as leadership skills and empowerment can be difficult to define and/or measure. It was therefore important that the development explored how these could be explored in a robust manner, appropriate for a short self-completion questionnaire and enabling comparisons to be made over time. It was also apparent at an early stage that the draft questionnaire was longer than desirable for a self-completion questionnaire (the proposed method).

Expert panel

In advance of the expert panel session, first drafts of the survey questionnaires were circulated to the Department, consortium members and academic experts. The consortium comprised various organisations, including the National Youth Agency,

Changemakers, the Young Foundation, the British Youth Council and the UK Youth Parliament. Two academic experts were subcontracted by NatCen to support the evaluation: Steve McKay from Birmingham University (who was to lead the cost-benefit analysis work) and Barry Percy-Smith from the University of the West of England (who supported the evaluation design and analysis).

Some of the survey questions came from previous studies, while others were developed specifically for this evaluation. In summary, the questionnaires included questions on the following topics:

- The Youth of Today: Questions about how young people found out about the Youth of Today programme, why they applied for the programme, and their experiences of the programme;
- Local area¹: Questions about young people's involvement in their local community, their feelings of influence over local decisions and their interest in and understanding of local issues;
- Attitudes to learning²: Questions about young people's views towards education, training and employment and their aspirations for the future;
- Leadership/ well-being³: Questions about the assertiveness/leadership/decision-making skills of young people, as well as questions about their feelings of self-esteem, well-being, motivation, confidence and communication skills; and
- Background characteristics⁴: Questions about demographic characteristics (gender, age, main activity, ethnicity, religion, disability, household).

Both the wave 1 and wave 2 questionnaires covered similar topics, to enable the research team to gauge any changes in young people's attitudes before and after taking part in the programme. In fact, the only difference in the two questionnaires related to the section on the Youth of Today; while the pre-intervention questionnaire asked young people how they heard about the programme and about what they hoped to gain from it, the post-intervention survey included a series of items about young people's experiences of the programme.

The panel session focused on two key issues:

- Whether we were asking the right questions – i.e. would the questions help us to meet the specified aims and objectives of the evaluation?
- Whether the question wording was appropriate for the target audience – i.e. were the questions worded in ways that will be meaningful to young people?

¹ Young Life and Times Survey 2006; Families and Children Study, 2006; Young People's Social Attitudes 2003 (NatCen); Adapted from Young Life and Times Survey, 2007

² Empowering Youth People Pilots, W1 questionnaire, 2007 (NatCen); Activity and Learning Agreement Questionnaire, 2007 (NatCen); Chell, E., The identification and measurement of innovative characteristics of young people: Development of the Youth Innovation Skills Measurement Tool, for NESTA.; Families and Children Study, 2006; Young People's Social Attitudes 2003 (NatCen)

³ Chell, E., The identification and measurement of innovative characteristics of young people: Development of the Youth Innovation Skills Measurement Tool, for NESTA; Empowering Youth People Pilots, W1 questionnaire, 2007 (NatCen)

⁴ Empowering Youth People Pilots, W1 questionnaire, 2007 (NatCen); Youth of Today monitoring forms;

As the draft questionnaires were relatively long, the panel also debated the priority given to different sections of the survey.

The main issues highlighted at the panel session were as follows:

- Length of the questionnaire: The panel agreed that the draft questionnaires were a bit long;
- Local area questions: This section was seen as being less central to the aims of the evaluation, and it was suggested that several questions should be cut;
- Attitudes to learning: Again, some of the questions in this section – around getting good grades and importance of qualifications – were felt to be less central to the evaluation aims. They were not seen to relate directly to the issue of leadership and empowerment, which was the focus of the programme.
- Leadership questions: NatCen’s academic partners were concerned that some of the draft questions on leadership (which asked young people to agree or disagree with certain statements) measured quite a one-sided/ autocratic notion of leadership. For example:
 - “When working in a group I do my best to persuade others to take up my ideas.”
 - “I’m not easily swayed by other people’s opinions, but do what I think is best.”

A number of possible alternatives were suggested, including:

- “I like to inspire and motivate others”.
- Well-being questions: Again, some of the questions relating to well-being and learning – for example, around feelings of happiness with appearance/ health – were felt to be less central to the evaluation aims, as they did not relate directly to leadership and empowerment.
- Background characteristics: Suggestions were made to simplify this module of the questionnaire, and to add questions on hours of work and benefits to support the cost-benefit analysis.

Following the panel session, the questionnaires were amended in light of the feedback received. The revised questionnaire was then piloted with young people.

Pilot phase

The wave 1 questionnaire was piloted with 15 young people between 21st October and 28th October 2009. The purpose of the Pilot was to test the survey questionnaire with young people, in order to pick up on whether questions were understood in the way in which they were intended and to check that respondents felt able to answer the questions. Other important aims were to test the interview length and any issues with routing and navigation of the questionnaire.

The pilot sample was provided to NatCen by several consortium members, including Changemakers, the British Youth Council and the Young Foundation. Interviewers in three pilot areas (London, Sussex and the West Midlands) set up appointments with young people and interviewed them about the wave 1 questionnaire. Researchers at NatCen also ran a focus group with a Youth of Today ‘Youth Scrutiny Group’ to get further feedback.

The young people who took part in the pilot were aged between 13 and 18. Respondents had a range of different circumstances. Some were attending school, college or university; others were in paid work; and a minority were unemployed or looking after the family or home. Respondents had all taken part in one or more Youth of Today projects, for example, the Fellowship Programme, shadowing opportunities, apprenticeships and internships or the Scrutiny Groups. Some respondents had finished their involvement with the Youth of Today programme; others had ongoing involvement.

The first stage of the pilot interviews (and the focus group) involved the young people filling in the questionnaire themselves. (As the questionnaire was designed to be self-completion, this approach reflected the way in which the survey was to be administered in the mainstage.) However, respondents were invited to ask any questions (e.g. about wording and comprehension issues) as they filled in the questionnaire, and interviewers were asked to make a note of these. The second stage involved a de-brief survey, whereby interviewers asked respondents a number of open-ended questions about their experiences of filling in the questionnaire (for example, whether particular questions were unclear or difficult to answer).

Generally feedback about the length, content and structure of the questionnaire was positive. However, the young people did suggest some revisions to particular questions (e.g. additional response options) which were incorporated. For example, one of the survey questions asked young people about their 'main activity'; following feedback from young people in the pilot (a couple of whom were university students) the option "at university" was added to the list of possible responses.

A key finding from the pilot was that young people did not necessarily know the name of the Youth of Today project they were participating in (although most recognised the name of the overall programme i.e. 'The Youth of Today'). As this was such an important question for the evaluation, a decision was taken to attach a label to the front of the questionnaire to display this information, rather than relying on young people's responses to a question on this issue at the start of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was found to take around 10 minutes to fill in.

Further feedback from experts

Following the pilot, a revised version of the questionnaire was circulated to the Department, consortium members and academic experts. Concerns were raised that the questionnaire was still slightly long, and so a number of questions were cut (including questions about young people's involvement in their local area and their background characteristics). This took the length of the questionnaire from around 10 minutes to around 8 or 9 minutes.

Following this consultation with project partners, the final questionnaire was agreed, professionally designed, and launched on 1st December 2009.

2.3 Administering the survey

It was regarded as critical that the wave 1 pre-intervention questionnaire was distributed to young people by consortium members on NatCen's behalf. This was due to the fact that some Youth of Today interventions, such as the ministerial shadowing project, were very short term; any delays in consortium members inputting and processing Management Information data and then transferring this data to NatCen could result in relatively small windows of opportunity for contacting the young people before they experienced interventions which could have been easily missed. This method would also help to avoid the ethical issues around accessing young people's contact details.

Through their recruitment and referral mechanisms, consortium members had direct contact with many participants before they undertook interventions, making them best placed to distribute the questionnaire. NatCen spoke to all consortium members – both face-to-face and over the phone – to explore ways of complementing their own processes, so as to reduce administrative burden as far as possible.

Based on consultation with consortium members, procedures for administering the wave 1 study were developed. Generally, two different approaches were used:

- For some projects (including the Fellowship Programme, the Championing Public Service initiative, Youth Leadership Teams, and Apprenticeships and Internships) questionnaires were to be distributed in person by consortium member staff to young people, for example, during initial induction sessions. It was hoped that this would have a positive impact on response rates.
- For other projects, such as the ministerial and local councillor shadowing initiatives, where consortium members did not have direct contact with young people, questionnaires were to be sent out by post.

Where young people were aged 15 and under, consortium members were required to seek parental consent before young people were invited to take part in the survey. Where questionnaires were distributed by post, consortium members were instructed to send the questionnaire to "*the parent or guardian of <INSERT NAME OF YOUNG PERSON>*" rather than to the young person directly. In these cases, they were also required to insert an additional cover letter in the mailout for the parent or guardian, to give them some information about the study.

Where questionnaires were distributed in person, consortium members were asked to send out parental consent forms. Originally, the intention had been to adapt consortium members' own consent forms to cover participation in the evaluation. Indeed, NatCen provided advice to consortium members on how they could amend their parental consent forms for this purpose. However, this was not always possible as, by the time the evaluation launched, several consortium members had already designed and printed their own forms, and it was not possible to amend them. In these cases, NatCen provided separate consent forms to consortium members to cover the evaluation. To confirm that they had received consent, where young people were aged

15 and under, consortium members were asked to tick a box on the front of the questionnaire. (Where the young person was aged 16 or over, the box was left blank).

A further issue around data protection and consent related to the process of gathering demographic information about young people. Most consortium members gathered demographic details about young people, such as information about ethnicity and disability status, when they signed up to their projects. There was some debate at the start of the evaluation as to whether NatCen would be able to access this information. The key advantage of this would be a potential reduction in the length of the survey questionnaire (which had a section dedicated to questions on demographic characteristics). Moreover, it would reduce duplication for young people. However, within the constraints of the project, it was felt to be unfeasible for NatCen to access demographic information about young people directly from consortium members. One issue was that the consent procedure would have been fairly complex. (Consortium members' would have been required to ask young peoples' permission to a) pass their demographic details onto NatCen and b) for this information to be linked up with their survey responses.) However, the key barrier was around timing. Firstly, many young people had already signed up to the programme by the time the evaluation was launched and so consent would have needed to be sought retrospectively. And secondly, as described above, the timing of the questionnaire distribution was key; any delays in consortium members gaining consent from young people could result in relatively small windows of opportunity for asking the young people to fill in questionnaires before they experienced interventions being missed.

Young people were asked to provide their contact details on the back of the wave 1 questionnaire (including their name, address and telephone number). This would enable NatCen to administer the wave 2 follow-up study.

2.4 Sampling and response

Initial response assumptions

'The Youth of Today' programme was intended to run between June 2009 and March 2011, aiming to provide leadership opportunities for around 2000 young people. The sample frame for the pre-intervention survey was to include all the young people recruited to the programme after the launch of the evaluation (in December 2009), although young people who began initiatives before this date, but who were still relatively near the start of longer term interventions, were also to be included. The cut-off date for inclusion in the pre-intervention survey was to be around August 2010 although this would depend, to some extent, on project recruitment patterns and the length of interventions.

The sample frame for the post-intervention survey was to include all respondents who complete initiatives before November 2010 (even if they had not taken part in the pre-intervention survey). It may also have been possible to survey young people who were due to complete interventions after November 2010, but who were towards the end of longer term interventions.

With these time constraints, we estimated that the sample sizes for the pre- and post-intervention surveys would be around 1250 and 1600 respectively. We expected minimum response rates of 35 per cent⁵ for the wave 1 survey, giving an achieved sample of around 438. Where respondents participated in the wave 1 survey, we estimated that response rates for wave 2 would be around 60 per cent. For respondents who were not contacted or did not respond to the wave 1 questionnaire, the response rate would be a minimum of 35 per cent, providing an achieved sample of around 670 in wave 2, of which an estimated 263 would have responded to wave 1 questionnaire. A summary of anticipated response rates is provided below:

	Sample size	Estimated response rate	Estimated achieved sample
Wave 1: Pre-intervention	1,250	35%	438
Wave 2: Post-intervention	1,600 , including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 438 Wave 1 respondents • 1162 respondents (who were not contacted or did not respond to wave 1 questionnaires) 	60% 35%	670 , including: 263 407

Achieved response rate in the wave 1 study

A summary of the actual response rates achieved in the wave 1 study is provided in the table below. The evaluation was cancelled during wave 1 fieldwork and it is important to note that the response rate recorded in the table (34.7 per cent) is slightly lower than what would have been achieved if the evaluation had continued. (In addition, the number of questionnaires distributed was lower than anticipated, partly due to projects being halted over the Purdah period.) During fieldwork, NatCen contacted consortium members regularly to remind them to distribute questionnaires and to chase responses from participants. These efforts ceased once the evaluation was cancelled. Moreover, several Youth of Today projects were halted in April 2009 (including the Local Councillor Shadowing Programme and the Ministerial Shadowing Programme). It is probable that a proportion of participants who received pre-intervention questionnaires were never able to complete their activities (and so may not have filled in survey questionnaires).

⁵ As an indication, we achieved a response rate of almost 30 per cent for the postal survey element of the Empowering Young People Pilots evaluation. We expected a slightly higher response rate for 'The Youth of Today' programme evaluation, as interventions are likely to be more 'intensive'.

1. Delivery organisation	2. Project	3. Questionnaires distributed by consortium members	4. Questionnaires packs returned
Changemakers	Youth Leadership Team	10	10
	Youth Scrutiny Group	-	-
	Internships and apprenticeships	8	4
	Fellowship Team	326	101
British Youth Council	Local Councillor Shadowing Programme	93	39
National Youth Agency	Champion Public Services	67	14
UK Youth Parliament	Ministerial Shadowing Programme	59	30
The Young Foundation	Youth Leadership Team	40	11
Total		603	209 (34.7 per cent)

At the time when the project was cancelled, the wave 2 survey had not yet been launched.

2.5 Conclusions and key lessons learned

Although the survey evaluation did not run its course, several useful lessons have been learned during the fieldwork period.

1. The quality of the survey questionnaire was greatly improved by efforts to facilitate feedback from a wide range of partners. These included representatives from the Department for Education, Department for Communities and Local Government, project delivery partners, academic experts and questionnaire design experts – as well as young people themselves. As described above, the process of questionnaire development was iterative, with key stakeholders being given the opportunity to contribute ideas and to feedback comments at several stages during the questionnaire design process.
2. Although some of the questions used in the survey were taken from other studies, several items – specifically those around youth empowerment and leadership – were developed specifically for the Youth of Today evaluation and were found to work well. We would hope that the Youth of Today questionnaires

(attached in Appendix 1) might prove a useful starting point for any future research commissioned in the area of youth leadership.

3. Generally, it was found that the process for administering the survey worked well. After some initial concerns, consortium members were willing to distribute the questionnaire on behalf of NatCen. Researchers from NatCen consulted consortium members at a steering group meeting and in one-to-one sessions to discuss the process and obtain buy-in from key staff members. One lesson for the future would be to conduct this consultation process sooner in the lifetime of the project. This would have been facilitated by earlier commissioning of the evaluation. By the time the evaluation had been commissioned, work on the Youth of Today programme was already underway and several consortium members had developed their own evaluation procedures, parental consent forms and systems for collecting management information about young peoples' demographic characteristics. As a result, achieving consortium buy-in to the Department's evaluation was not always straightforward, as there was an initial feeling that it was duplicating work that had already been carried out.

Qualitative methodology

3.1 Qualitative research with consortium members

In-depth face-to-face qualitative interviews were carried out with staff from each of the seven consortium members. The research design proposed interviewing staff at two points in time; November 2009 and February 2010 so that key lessons from the implementation stage could be captured, and again towards the winter of 2010 to capture reflections on the programme as a whole. The interviews were aimed at the achievement of four broad objectives:

- To gather perspectives on the implementation of the programme and the specific strands of delivery;
- To look in detail at the way different strands are delivered;
- To gather perspectives on the outcomes of the programme; and
- To explore the workings of the consortium.

Only the first phase of interviews were carried out, with a mix of staff involved at both strategic and operational level; in some cases, particularly for smaller organisations, the chief executive or similar was interviewed as the strategic lead. In all cases the person responsible for day-to-day management of their organisation's strand(s) of TYOT was interviewed. Most were carried out one-to-one but in two cases staff preferred to be interviewed together. In total, 12 interviews with a total of 14 staff were carried out between November 2009 and February 2010. In addition, it became apparent early in the fieldwork that the Department of Children, Schools and Families (now the Department for Education) was a key player in the consortium arrangements and a telephone interview was also carried out with a member of the Capacity and Quality team.

The topic guide used in these interviews was developed by NatCen and reviewed by the Department before use, and is included in Appendix 2. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

3.2 Qualitative research with young people

The original research design included a programme of qualitative work with young people who had participated directly in the opportunities arising from TYOT, and also those who had indirectly experienced aspects of TYOT (for example, through awareness of the youth leadership campaign). Three of the planned eight groups were held in July/August 2010. Two groups were comprised of young people who had taken part in direct opportunities afforded by TYOT; ministerial shadowing, and local councillor shadowing. A third group was held with beneficiaries of the Youth Leadership Fund, one of the indirect opportunities afforded by TYOT.

The programme of qualitative work with young people was planned to explore two key themes; young people's perceptions of the opportunities they have been involved with and perceived impacts on them, and involvement in implementation and delivery of TYOT. We categorised these broadly as 'impact' and 'youth led' aspects. All three focus groups focused exclusively in the 'impact' of TYOT as no participants had taken part in the youth-led elements of the programme (planned for later groups).

Research questions explored under the 'impact' theme included:

- Finding out about opportunities and pathways into participation;
- Perceived impact on those outcomes identified by consortium members:
 - understanding of how both local and national government operates
 - interest in local and national government
 - Raised aspirations; both in terms of employment and capacity to engage in local and national decision-making
 - Access to accredited learning, including youth work apprenticeships
 - Leadership skills – i.e. whether young people feel they can 'demonstrate' leadership as a result of the programme, and have plans to put this into practice
 - Confidence
 - Team working
 - Re-engagement in education
 - Decision-making
 - Advocacy skills
 - Campaigning skills
- The quality of the leadership opportunity and how much a participant gained direct leadership exposure;
- Whether the participant thinks that, as a result of the programme, the positive impression of young people has been raised; and
- Exploration of the impact on perceptions of young people's local area.

Sampling and recruitment

Purposive sampling (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003), which aims to capture as wide a range of views and experiences as possible rather than to be statistically representative, was used in order to generate the sample for the focus groups. Key criteria were chosen that were likely to be associated with differing views and experiences. For this study the key sampling criterion was the type of opportunity the young people took part in, followed by secondary criteria of gender, age, and ethnicity.

The groups were deliberately composed so that each group contained respondents who had participated in the same TYOT opportunity to generate some shared experience. The groups were also comprised of a mix across ethnicity, age and gender where possible to allow for a range of views and creative discussion. A breakdown of participant demographics is shown in the table below:

		Group 1 (N=6)	Group 2 (N=6)	Group 3 (N=6)
Gender (female only shown)		4	5	3
Ethnicity (BME only shown)		3	2	4
Age (years)	14		2	
	15	1	2	
	16	2	1	1
	17		1	1
	18	2		1
	19	1		
	20			3

Recruitment was carried out with the help of TYOT consortium members who acted as gatekeepers. For the Ministerial and councillor shadowing groups, the organisations running each programme sent a recruitment letter on behalf of NatCen which outlined the purpose of the research to all young people who had participated in both programmes. The letter asked young people to 'opt in' to the research by returning a consent form, screening questionnaire and contact information directly to NatCen. These materials are included in Appendix 2.

Respondents were purposively sampled from those who had returned the consent form to NatCen. Each was contacted by telephone by a NatCen researcher to explain further the purpose of the focus groups, and go through practical and transport arrangements. Parental consent and emergency contact details were required for respondents under 18 years of age.

A different approach was required for the Youth Leadership Fund group, as the consortium organisation did not hold contact details for individual beneficiaries but rather of organisations in receipt of grants. Eight organisations who had received funding in the earliest round of grants (to maximise the opportunity for young people to benefit) were contacted by NatCen. Two agreed to participate and sent young participants to the focus group. Individual participants were selected by the funded organisations, not by NatCen, on the basis of consent and availability to participate.

All three groups were held in NatCen's London offices. All respondents were given £20 high street vouchers in recognition of the time and effort taken to attend the focus group.

Conduct

The focus groups were carried out by a moderator using a topic guide, which can be found at Appendix 2. The purpose of the topic guide was to help focus and shape the discussion, while allowing each group to generate and discuss relevant issues as they arose in an open way. The guides were developed by NatCen and shared with the DfE, academic experts and consortium members for feedback and comment.

The guides were specifically designed to encourage young people's participation and made use of participatory methods. These included

- A 'card-sort' game requiring participants to place cards with skills/attitudes named on them in order of 'most' to 'least' changed;
- Break-out paired or mini-group unmoderated discussions, feeding back to the whole group; and
- Question cards selected by participants.

These methods were employed to make the discussion both lively and accessible to young people. While the tools were useful to engage young people, the data captured and used for analysis was primarily generated during the follow-up discussion moderated by the researcher using the standard format of open, non-leading questions and probes.

All groups were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Data management and analysis

The data in this study were analysed with the aid of Framework (Ritchie et al., 2003), a systematic approach to qualitative data management that was developed by NatCen and is now widely used in social policy research (Pope et al., 2006).

Framework involves a number of stages. First, the key topics and issues which emerge from the research objectives and the data are identified through familiarisation with the transcripts. The initial analytical framework is then drawn up and a series of thematic charts or matrices are set up, each relating to a different thematic issue. The columns in each matrix represent the key sub-themes or topics whilst the rows represent individual participants. Data from verbatim transcripts of each interview are summarised into the appropriate cell. In this way, the data are ordered in a systematic way that is grounded in participants' own accounts, yet oriented to the research objectives.

This approach was supported by a bespoke software package, Framework, also developed by NatCen. The Framework approach and the Framework software meant that each part of every transcript that was relevant to a particular theme was noted, ordered and was almost instantly accessible.

The final stage of analysis would have involved working through the charted data in detail, drawing out the range of experiences and views, identifying similarities and differences, developing and testing hypotheses, and interrogating the data to seek to explain emergent patterns and findings. The early cessation of the evaluation meant that data was only available from three groups, less than half of our purposive sample frame, and only a light-touch descriptive analysis was possible.

Cost-benefit analysis

The evaluation team also planned to undertake a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) of TYOT in partnership with Birmingham University. CBA is a standard economic technique for programme evaluation. It is based on attaining monetary values of the key benefits

arising from programmes, compared with their costs. It may be distinguished from cost-effectiveness analysis, which does not attempt to 'monetise' the benefits that arise, but instead to provide a cost for a given set of outputs. So a CBA may reveal that there was (say) £3 of social benefit for every £1 invested, whilst a cost-effectiveness analysis might say that it cost £3,500 for every additional job that may be attributed to a programme.

The evaluation was cancelled before the CBA was undertaken. To have conducted a CBA would have required data on the benefits of each programme, and the associated costs. The main data on benefits was intended to be derived from the quantitative data collection undertaken with those taking part. Such benefits may have included remaining longer in school, a higher likelihood of gaining employment, improved confidence and self-esteem. Qualitative interviews with consortium members had begun the process of identifying key anticipated benefits. It was assumed that the programme monitoring data collected by consortium members would have provide information on the costs.

In order to identify the added value of a programme, it is necessary to attribute costs to the genuine effects rather than what might have happened in the absence of the intervention – the issue of deadweight. The evaluation design did not include a comparison group; instead the before-and-after design of the surveys would have allowed for some degree of comparison – using these individuals as their own control. A second approach considered was comparisons with other data on young people, suitably selected to match their characteristics. Information on the destinations (outcomes) of a general survey of young people may act as another comparison group for those participating in the Youth of Today, once adjustments are made for the different kinds of sample. A potential source for such information would have been the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE), a DCSF study that has tracked a group of young people aged 13-14 since 2004.

References

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Appendix 1 Quantitative materials

Survey questionnaire – Wave 1

The Youth of Today

This questionnaire is part of a study about the Youth of Today programme. The study is being carried out by NatCen, an independent research organisation, for the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

We would like to hear from you about your attitudes towards different things in your life. We will send you another questionnaire after you have finished the Youth of Today programme to see whether your attitudes have changed. Please take your time to look over the questions and tell us about you by simply ticking the boxes.

Some instructions on how to fill in the questions are given on the back page.

All the answers that you give in this study will be confidential and will not be shown to anyone that you know, so please be honest with your views. Your answers will be collected together with the views of other young people who have taken part in the Youth of Today programme and will be used to help plan activities for people like you in the future.

This is an optional questionnaire, so you do not have to take part in the study. However, this is an important piece of research and we hope you will enjoy taking part.

Thanks very much for your help.

We promise that your answers are confidential. They will not be shown to *anyone* that you know.

For the Consortium Member

Is the respondent aged 15 years or younger? Yes/ No

If aged 15 years or younger, do you have parental consent? Yes/ No

ABOUT YOU

1. Are you? *Please tick one box only*
 - Male
 - Female

2. How old are you now? *Please write in*

3. Are you currently doing any of the following activities? *Please tick all that apply to you*
 - At school
 - At a college or sixth form college (studying for a qualification)
 - At university
 - In paid work (including weekend/ evening jobs)
 - In work-based training
 - Doing voluntary work
 - Looking for a job, education or training place
 - Taking a break from study or work (include taking a gap year)
 - Looking after your child or children
 - Looking after the home or other family members
 - Not working because of a disability
 - None of these

4. If you are in paid work, are you working... *Please tick one box only.*
 - Yes, full-time (30 or more hours per week)
 - Yes, part-time (less than 30 hours)
 - I'm not in paid work

THE YOUTH OF TODAY

5. How did you find out about the Youth of Today programme? *Please tick all that apply*

- From a friend
- From a family member
- From a teacher or tutor
- From a youth worker
- At an event – e.g. careers fair
- From a local or community organisation
- From a church/ faith organisation
- From an advert
- The Youth of Today website
- From a national youth organisation
- Or other (please write in)

6. What are you hoping to get out of the Youth of Today programme? *Please tick all that apply*

- Improve my CV
- Develop new skills
- Have fun
- Make me more confident
- Meet new people
- Try something different
- Get my voice heard
- Develop as a leader
- Make a positive change in society
- Or other (please write in)

WHERE YOU LIVE

The next few questions are about the area where you live. Please say whether you agree or disagree.

7. "I feel that I am able to have a say in decisions affecting my local area". *Please tick one box only.*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

8. "When people like me get involved, they can change the way things are run in their local area." *Please tick one box only*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

9. Now, suppose a decision was being made in your local area that you thought was really unfair. Would you do any of the following things? *Tick all that apply*

- Contact my head teacher/ other teachers or tutors at my school or college
- Contact a youth worker
- Contact my MP (Member of Parliament)
- Contact my local councillor
- Contact someone else in my local council
- Contact radio, TV or newspaper
- Contact someone else (Please write in)
- None of these

10.what about any of these things? *Tick all that apply*

- Write a letter/ email myself
- Phone someone myself
- Start a petition/ collect signatures
- Sign a petition
- Attend a community/ public meeting

- Go on a protest or demonstration

Or other (Please write in)

- None of these

11. Have you ever done any of the following things to make a difference in your local area? *Tick all that apply*

- Volunteered at a local group, club or organisation
- Raised awareness about an issue by writing a letter or email to someone
- Raised awareness about an issue by phoning someone
- Raised awareness about an issue through my school, college or university
- Raised awareness about an issue on the internet
- Started a petition/ collected signatures
- Signed a petition
- Attended a community/ public meeting
- Went on a protest or demonstration
- Contacted my MP or my local councillor
- Contacted the radio, TV or newspaper
- Contacted someone else (Please write in)
- Or other (Please write in)
- None of these

WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT LEARNING AND THE FUTURE

Please say whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about learning.

12. "I'm not interested in studying towards any qualifications." *Please tick one box only.*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

13. (ONLY IF YOU CURRENTLY GO TO SCHOOL, COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY)

"I feel able to contribute to the way my school, college or university is run".

Please tick one box only.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

14. "I am able to make decisions about my future." *Please tick one box only.*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

15. What would you like to do in the next five years? *Please tick all that apply*

- Enter/continue in full-time education
- Find a job/Continue in employment
- Training (e.g. apprenticeship, youth training)
- Go abroad for at least 6 months
- Take some time of education/employment
- Volunteering
- Don't know
- Or other (please write in)

THE WAY YOU ARE

The next few questions are about how you feel in different situations. Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

16. "I like being the leader of a group." *Please tick one box only.*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

17. "I would join a club/ interest group independently of my friends if it was something I really wanted to do." *Please tick one box only.*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

18. "I like to inspire and motivate others." *Please tick one box only.*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

19. What does leadership mean to you? *Please write in*

20. The next few questions are about how confident you feel about different areas of your life. Please tick the box that comes closest to showing how you feel about the following things... *Tick one box on each column*

	Meeting new people?	Having a go at things that are new to me?	Working with other people in a team?	Putting forward my ideas?
Very confident				
Confident				
Neither confident nor unconfident				
Unconfident				
Very unconfident				

21. How happy or unhappy do you feel about your ability to achieve what you want in life? *Tick one box only*

- Very happy
- Happy
- Neither happy nor unhappy
- Unhappy
- Very unhappy

ABOUT YOU

22. Which of the following best describes your ethnic background? *Please tick one box only*

White	White British	
	White Irish	
	Any other white background (<i>Please write in</i>)	
Mixed background	White and Black Caribbean	
	White and Black African	
	White and Asian	
	Any other mixed background (<i>Please write in</i>)	

Asian or Asian British	Indian	
	Pakistani	
	Bangladeshi	
	Any other Asian background (<i>Please write in</i>)	

Black or Black British	Caribbean	
	African	
	Any other Black background (<i>Please write in</i>)	

Other	Chinese	
	Any other (<i>Please write in</i>)	

23. Do you have any of the following qualifications? *Please tick all that apply*

- NVQs
- Any GCSEs
- At least five GCSEs at grade A*-C
- AS Levels
- A Levels
- Or other qualifications, including vocational qualifications (please write in)
- None of these (yet)

HEALTH

24. Do you have a disability or health problem that you expect to last for more than a year? *Please tick one box only*

- Yes → Go to 25
- No → Go to 26

25. Does this disability or health problem limit your daily activities in any way? *Please tick one box only*

- Yes
- No

ABOUT YOU

26. Would you describe yourself as any of the following? *Please tick all that apply*

- Homeless
- In care or leaving care
- An offender/ an ex-offender
- Lone parent
- Refugee or asylum seeker
- Young carer (with caring responsibilities for adults)
- Excluded/ suspended from school
- In temporary accommodation
- A victim of bullying
- Having learning difficulties or special needs
- None of these
- I prefer not to say

27. (IF YOU ARE AT SCHOOL) Are you currently receiving Free School Meals?

Please tick one box only

- Yes – I always/ usually take them
- Yes – I sometimes take them
- Yes – but I never/ hardly ever take them
- No
- Don't know

28. (IF YOU ARE AGED OVER 16) Are you personally receiving any of the following? *Please tick all that apply*

- Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- Income Support
- Incapacity Benefit
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA)
- Some other benefit (Please write in)
- I prefer not to say
- None of these

CONTACTING YOU

We would like to contact you again in a few months time to ask you a few more questions about your time on the Youth of Today programme. If you would be willing for us to do this please sign your name below.

Your name (please print)

Your signature

We would like to send you a questionnaire to your home address. So that we can do this, please write in your full address below:

Your address (please print)

Your postcode

We may also want to get in touch with you by telephone to ask you some questions. Please provide up to two telephone numbers on which we can contact you. These can be landlines or mobile numbers. (You can leave this blank if you don't want us to contact you in this way.)

Please include the full area dial code – e.g. 01277 123 456

Your telephone number

We promise that your name, address and telephone number are confidential and will only be used so that we can recontact you.

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

Please put it in the envelope provided and send it back to us.
You do not need a stamp.

**WE PROMISE THAT YOUR ANSWERS ARE CONFIDENTIAL.
THEY WILL NOT BE SHOWN TO ANYONE THAT YOU KNOW.**

Questions added to the survey for Wave 2

THE YOUTH OF TODAY

The next questions ask you to think about whether and how things might have changed since you took part in the 'Youth of Today' programme. Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. "Since I took part in the programme, I am more confident about speaking in front of a group of people my own age." *Please tick one box only.*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

2. "Since I took part in the programme, I am more confident about speaking with people in authority." *Please tick one box only.*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

3. "Since I took part in the programme, I am more confident about leading a group in an activity or a discussion." *Please tick one box only.*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

4. "Since I took part in the programme, I would be more willing to help run a service in my local area." *Please tick one box only.*
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Don't know
5. "Since I took part in the programme, I have a greater understanding about how government works." *Please tick one box only.*
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Don't know
6. "Since I took part in the programme, I have more ideas about what I'd like to do in the future." *Please tick one box only.*
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Don't know
7. "The programme helped me to identify my strengths and weaknesses." *Please tick one box only.*
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Don't know

8. "I would recommend the programme to a friend." *Please tick one box only.*
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Don't know
9. "The people I met on the programme made me feel valued." *Please tick one box only*
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Don't know
10. Thinking about your time spent on the programme was, do you feel that the experience was useful ...
- Most of the time
 - Some of the time
 - Or not at all?
11. Thinking about the length of time you were involved in the programme, do you feel that it was...
- Too long
 - About right
 - Or too short?

Pilot – respondent debrief questions

The Youth of Today – Respondent debrief

WHERE YOU LIVE

1. The questionnaire asked you about the area you live in. Looking at **QUESTION 5**, which is about services you have been to or used in your local area – were there any services that you have been to or used which weren't mentioned on the list?

If yes, which ones?

2. **QUESTIONS 6-8** asked you whether you agreed or disagreed with some statements about the services that are available in your local area. Could you look again at each of these statements in turn – for each one, could you tell me whether you found the agree/ disagree question difficult to answer and, if so, why?

Question

Was the agree/ disagree question difficult to answer? TICK BOX

Why difficult?

6) "I feel that I am able to have a say in decisions affecting my local area (15-20 minute walk)?"

7) "I feel that I do have a say in decisions affecting my local area (15-20 minute walk)?"

8) "When people like me get involved, they can change the way things are run in their local area".

WHERE YOU LIVE

- 3. QUESTIONS 9, 10 and 11** asked you about things you would consider doing (and things you have done) to try to make a difference in your local area... are there any activities listed that you are uncertain or unclear about?

Area

Reason why unclear/ uncertain

- 1) Contacting my head teacher or other teachers at my school
- 2) Contacting a youth worker
- 3) Contacting my MP
- 4) Contacting my local councillor
- 5) Contacting radio, TV or newspaper
- 6) Writing a letter of complaint myself
- 7) Asking my parents to write a letter of complaint
- 8) Starting a petition
- 9) Signing a petition
- 10) Attending a public meeting
- 11) Contacting my MP
- 12) Going on a protest or demonstration
- 13) Campaigning online

- 4.** Now, thinking about ways in which you could make a difference in your local area..... are there any ways that you can think of which are not listed under **QUESTIONS 9, 10 or 11?**

If yes, which ones?

WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT LEARNING

- 5. QUESTIONS 12 and 13** asked you whether you agreed or disagreed with some statements about learning. Could you look again at both of these statements – for each one, could you tell me whether you found the agree/ disagree question difficult to answer and, if so, why?

Question

Was the agree/ disagree question difficult to answer? TICK BOX

Why difficult?

- 12) "I'm not interested in doing any learning".
- 13) "I feel able to contribute actively to the way my school or college is run".

- 6. QUESTION 14** asked you what you would most like to do in the future. What did you say here? Did you find this question easy or difficult to answer, and why?

THE WAY YOU ARE

- 7. QUESTIONS 15, 16 and 17** asked you whether you agreed or disagreed with some statements about how you feel in different situations. Could you look again at each of these statements in turn – for each one, could you tell me whether you found the agree/ disagree question difficult to answer and, if so, why?

Question

Was the agree/ disagree question difficult to answer? TICK BOX

Why difficult?

15) "I like being leader of a group".

16) "I would join a club/ interest group independently of my friends if it was something I really wanted to do".

17) "I like to inspire and motivate others".

- 8. QUESTION 18** asked what you leadership means to you? What sort of things did you think of here? Did you find this question difficult to answer and, if so, why?

THE YOUTH OF TODAY

- 9. QUESTION 20** asked you which activities you have been involved in through the Youth of Today programme. Did you have any difficulties in answering this question? If so, please explain why?

- 10. QUESTIONS 21-30** asked you whether you agreed or disagreed with some statements about how you feel things might have changed since you took part in the 'Youth of Today' programme. Could you look again at each of these statements in turn – for each one, could you tell me whether you found the agree/ disagree question difficult to answer and, if so, why?

Question

Was the agree/ disagree question difficult to answer? TICK BOX

Why difficult?

21) "Since I took part in the programme, I am more confident about speaking in front of a group of people my own age."

22) "Since I took part in the programme, I am more confident about speaking with people in authority."

- 23) "Since I took part in the programme, I am more confident about leading a group in an activity or a discussion."
- 24) "Since I took part in the programme, I would be more willing to help run a service in my local area."
- 25) "Since I took part in the programme, I have a greater understanding about how government works."
- 26) "Since I took part in the programme, I have more ideas about what I'd like to do in the future."
- 27) "The programme has helped me to find out what I'm good at."
- 28) "I would recommend the activity to a friend."
- 29) "The people I met on the programme made me feel valued."
- 30) "The activity has changed the way I think about people in power."

11. We are hoping that the questionnaire will be appropriate for all the young people who take part in the Youth of Today programme, who can be aged anywhere between 13 and 19. Do you think that any questions in the survey will be too difficult for younger people to answer (for example, those aged 13 and 14)? If yes, which questions do you think will be difficult and why?

Appendix 2 Qualitative materials

Topic Guide for use with consortium members Nov-Dec 2009

- The primary aim of these interviews is to gather consortium members' perspectives on the implementation of the programme and specific strands of activity.
- The interview will explore in detail how the individual strands are delivered, and their potential impact.
- It will also explore the workings of the consortium.

Two data collection encounters will take place with each consortium organisation (with the follow up interviews taking place in Winter 2010/11)

As this is an exploratory study, we wish to encourage participants to discuss their views and experiences in an open way without excluding issues which may be of importance to individual participants and the study as a whole. Therefore, unlike a survey questionnaire or semi-structured interview, the questioning (and the language and terminology used) will be responsive to respondents' own experiences, attitudes and circumstances.

The following guide does not contain pre-set questions but rather lists the key themes and sub-themes to be explored with each participant. It does not include follow-up questions like 'why', 'when', 'how', etc. as participants' contributions will be fully explored throughout using prompts and probes in order to understand how and why views, behaviours and experiences have arisen. The order in which issues are addressed, and the amount of time spent exploring different themes, will vary between participants according to individual demographics and circumstances.

1. Introduction

- Introduce self & NatCen
- Introduce study:
 - evaluation of YOT
 - 1st round of consortium interviews (returning towards end of 2010)
- Digital recording – check OK, and reassure re confidentiality
- How we'll report findings
- Reminder of interview length – (60 – 90 mins) check OK
- Any questions/concerns?
- Respondent to outline their job title, roles and responsibilities; overall, and in relation to TYOT

2. Context

- Please tell me about the core activities of your organisation.
- Does the organisation have a history of promoting youth leadership?

- Prompts:
- If so, what, and evidence of impact
- Any participation-related work
- What was the main reason for taking part in the YOT consortium?
 - Any other reasons?
 - How was this decision made, and by whom?
 - How did the consortium come together?
 - Why YOT deemed important/relevant to organisation
- What element(s) of the YOT programme is your organisation leading on?
 - Are any of the other consortium members involved in this strand, and how?
- What other elements of the YOT programme is your organisation involved with?
- How does this work compliment (or not) other work you are carrying out?
- Or support the main strategic priorities for your organisation?

3. Detail of the main strand the organisation is involved in

Thinking now about the main strand that you are involved in/responsible for:

- Please tell me in more detail how this strand works.
 - Prompts (will differ by strand but we need to understand):
 - Main activity
 - Length of young person's involvement
 - Targeted at any particular group (e.g. by age)
- How can young people find out about this opportunity?
- How do they tend to find out? (main entrance route to involvement)
- Who can apply
- Are there any barriers to applying
- Support available to help with application
- How many have taken part so far? Is this on target?
- Types of people being attracted – views on why this might be – probe for diversity
- How effective has the programme been in reaching the most disadvantaged young people? (And how do they know)
- Why do you think your organisation is leading on this particular strand?
 - Experience
 - Expertise
 - Capacity/resources
- Describe method of implementation
- How did you decide on your method of implementation?
 - Prompts:
 - Learning from previous experience
 - Research carried out to inform programme design
 - Involvement of young people in programme design?

- Views on the challenges and or constraints of implementation method?
 - DCSF specification
 - Funding available
 - Activities of other consortium members/other strands
- What are the expected outcomes for young people who take part?
 - Prompts:
 - Leadership skills – and prompt for what they understand by ‘leadership’
 - Personal and social development outcomes
 - Involvement in local decision making etc.
 - Aspirations
- To date, is there evidence that these outcomes are being achieved?
 - If so, for whom and why
 - If not, why not
 - What evidence is collected – any internal evaluation?
- Are young people involved in any aspect of programme delivery?
- If so, how were these young people identified?
- Nature of their involvement (steering group, delivery, evaluation etc.)
- Length of involvement. Any follow up after the programme has finished?
- What’s changed as a result of young people’s involvement?

4. Overview of all YOT activity

Now thinking of the other strands of activity in the YOT programme:

- Is your organisation involved in the delivery of any other strand?
 - If so, how, using prompts above
- Does the activity you lead on interact with any of the other strands of YOT?
 - If so, how
 - Was this planned?
 - Is this working well?
- If not, do you think it will in the future? How?
- Is there *any* (other) interaction between strands of activity in the YOT?
 - Prompt for what
 - Was this planned?
 - Is the interaction working well?
 - If appropriate, what combinations of YOT activity produce the best outcomes for young people, and why?
 - Should there be more interaction between strands? If so, is this likely to happen in the future?

Thinking now about the direct strands of the YOT (Fellowship Programme; Local Councillors and Ministerial shadowing; Apprenticeships and internships; and Scrutiny groups)...

- Please tell me in more detail how they work.
- How many have young people have taken part so far? Is this on target?
- Types of people taking part
- How effective have the programmes been in reaching the most disadvantaged young people? (And how do they know)

- What are the expected outcomes for young people who take part?
 - Prompt for differences by strand, and if they are targeted towards particular cohorts of young people, and why.

- To date, is there evidence that these outcomes are being achieved?
 - If so, for whom and why
 - If not, why not

And now the indirect opportunities (Youth leadership fund; Young leaders campaign; Leadership in schools; Stimulate collaboration and improve pathways to progression; International best practice)

- Please tell me in more detail how they work.
- What are these strands trying to achieve?
- Methods or mechanisms for evaluating success
- Is implementation on target?

- Is there a difference between direct and indirect strands of the YOT in terms of
 - Implementation
 - Joint working across the consortium
 - Prioritisation of the work
 - Sustainability

- What do you think are the most effective opportunities out of all strands
 - Why
 - What could be improved

5. Consortium working

Thinking now about the consortium,

- Outline experiences of consortium working so far
 - Governance
 - Nature of relationship – frequency of contact, who leads,
 - Decision making – how this works

- Is there contact between operational staff across the consortium organisations?

- Should there be?
- Is it working?
- Views on the value of consortium working in this context
 - How helpful
 - What benefits already experienced
- What are the challenges of working within these consortium arrangements?
 - If so, what, and how these have been overcome.
 - Future challenges
- Has working within the consortium affected the implementation of the strand of YOT that you lead on?
 - If so, how (supported or impeded, and how)
 - Has working within the consortium affected the implementation of other strands?
- What lessons do you think have been learned about consortium working during the initial phases of YOT?
 - Is there anything you would do differently?
 - If any problems, are these being addressed? How?
- Are young people involved in any aspect of the consortium arrangements?
 - If so, how were these young people identified?
 - Nature of their involvement (governance, steering group, delivery, evaluation etc.)
 - What's changed as a result of young people's involvement?

6. **Costs**

- Can you tell me how much money your organisation was allocated from YOT funding?
- (If they are involved in more than one strand) How is this money allocated between the strands you are involved in delivering?
- Does the money you have been allocated directly fund the programme(s) you deliver, or is it used more generally to increase the capacity of your organisation?
- Has the money you have been allocated been pooled with any other sources of funding?
- What other resources are required for effective implementation, thinking specifically about staff time and skills

7. **Finish and close**

- Overall views on the value of the YOT generally
- Overall views on their organisation's delivery of this

- At some point over the next year, we will be running focus groups with young people who have participated in YOT programmes. What would be the best way of working with you to identify a sample of young people and gain their consent (and that of their parents)?
- Any questions for the researcher?
- Thank, and close

Information about taking part in research about Youth of Today

My name is Eloise. I work for an independent research organisation called NatCen, carrying out a project looking at the impact the Youth of Today programme has on the young people taking part. I am writing to you to see whether you would be interested in participating in a focus group with other young people who have taken part in the Youth of Today programme. The focus group will take place in London in August 2010

What are the aims of the project?

We are interested in talking to you about the Youth of Today programme that you were involved in and finding out your experiences and views about it. We are going to be conducting focus groups with young people who have been involved in any one of the following programmes; Local Councillor shadowing, Minister shadowing, Youth Leadership team member, Youth Scrutiny group member, Fellowship, Apprenticeship, Internship or those who were beneficiaries of the Youth leadership fund. Participating in a focus group would involve you attending an interactive session for around 2 hours, where you would discuss with other young people what you did and what you have learned.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part in this project is completely voluntary, but if it is something that you are interested in please fill in the form attached and return it in the enclosed envelope. If you decide that you would like to take part in this project, and are selected, you will receive £20 voucher as a thank you payment, and we will also cover any travel costs which you may have. If you do agree to take part then you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

Is it confidential?

Each focus group discussion will be recorded if you agree so we at NatCen can listen to then again, though the recording stays with the research team only and is not shared with anyone else. Everything you say will be confidential, that means that we will not tell anyone else outside the research team your name or what you said in the interviews (unless you say something that suggests that you are unsafe or that you are being harmed. In such cases we will tell you who we need to

inform.) The research team will write a report about the project but the information you tell us will be anonymous - that means your name, or anything else that might identify you, will not be used in the report.

What happens next?

If you are interested in taking part please fill out and return the enclosed form by the 23rd July. We will then select participants and if you are selected, we will get in touch with the date, time and the location of the focus group.

What if I have some questions?

The research is funded by the Department for Education. If you have any questions, you can contact me using the details below:

Eloise Poole

Researcher

National Centre for Social Research

Email Eloise.Poole@Natcen.ac.uk or telephone 020 7549 7156

Consent to participate in Youth of Today focus group

This form tells you what will happen to the personal information that you give during the focus group. Please read it and tick the boxes if you understand and agree.

- I have read and understood the information sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation of the purpose of the project, and of what I will be expected to do.
- I understand that all personal data relating to me will be held and processed in the strictest confidence, in accordance with the Data Protection Act. By signing this form I give my consent to the researchers to hold personal data and understand that this data will be used for an evaluation of the Youth of Today programme.
- I understand that what I say during the focus group is confidential. However, I understand that this confidentiality may need to be broken if I disclose that I (or someone else) is at risk of serious harm (child protection issues). If this happens, it will be discussed with me first before anyone else is told.
- I understand that I am free to leave the focus group at any time without needing to justify my decision.
- I understand that any of the information gathered will be used and stored confidentially at NatCen, who will not disclose it to anyone else. I understand that I will not be personally identifiable in any of the research reports.
- I am aware that some things I say may be included in an anonymised form (so I can't be identified) as quotations in the research reports.
- I realise that not every participant of the Youth of Today who gives consent to participate will be selected to take part in the focus groups, and that I may or may not be chosen.

