

Youth Action Group

Ministerial Level Write-Around Process - July 2014

Due to the cancellation of the Ministerial Youth Action Group (YAG) (scheduled to take place on 30th June 2014), YAG co-chairs, The Prince's Trust and Cabinet Office, requested comments and agreement from YAG members on the agenda items below, through a written, out of committee process.

Key points and actions arising from this out of committee process are summarised below.

Agenda item 1: Character skills

In response to previous actions:

- A. Action: Cabinet Office team to deliver work plan as per submitted paper - the Cabinet Office Youth Policy team has:
1. Supported youth sector leaders to establish the [Centre for Youth Impact](#), which will provide national leadership and a focal point for funders, commissioners, academics and providers of programmes that help young people develop character and life skills. It will create an online portal, offering online and offline resources, connecting the sector to existing initiatives to support evidence building and impact measurement;
 2. Collaborated with the Early Intervention Foundation to strengthen the evidence base behind skills for life and work, and highlight what works to help young people develop these skills;
 3. Developed a conceptual framework that encompasses the range of terms used in this field, to provide a common platform for future work (resilience, communication, self-direction and the ability to forge relationships); and
 4. Begun delivery of an impact measurement toolkit, to be rolled out over the coming year, by developing guidance on the use of outcomes frameworks by commissioners and providers of youth services.
- B. Action: YAG charities to contribute insights from their own work to the development of the Secure Colleges programme - the Youth Justice Policy Team (Ministry of Justice) are arranging a workshop for charities to attend.

Additional remarks:

- DfE invited feedback from YAG members on a proposed initiative to link cadets, non-cognitive skills and employers through Cadet Apprenticeships. This could include:
 - Local and national businesses engaging with cadet units and schools to discuss the skills required to transition into the workplace;
 - Training days with local business people to demonstrate the skills of the cadets; and
 - Conducting after action reviews from the perspective of both the employer and the cadet to promote better results for future apprentices.

New actions arising:

- A. DfE to report back to YAG on any future development of proposals outlined above.
Cabinet Office to put interested YAG members in touch with DfE officials.

- B. Cabinet Office will close this agenda item and provide opportunities for substantive progress updates on ongoing work.

Agenda item 2: Careers advice and inspiration for young people

In response to previous actions:

A. Action: Prince's Trust and Cabinet office to connect those developing online careers advice resources to young people

Update: YAG charities have:

1. Engaged with plotr with a view to involving young people in user testing of the online platform;
2. Agreed to contribute to the 'discovery' phase of the new National Careers Service digital offer; and
3. Agreed to meet with the National Careers Service to discuss how best to share information on local VCSE services to which National Careers Service providers might direct young people on their programmes, coordinated by the Prince's Trust.

B. Action: DWP to share their finalised plans for a pilot to extend Jobcentre Plus support to 16 and 17 year olds who are NEET

Update: The pilot has been launched in four 'test bed' local authority areas (Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Lewisham and Sheffield) following consultation with YAG members at the last ministerial meeting; and

C. BIS to respond to charities proposal that vulnerable 16 and 17 year old (particularly care leavers) should be prioritised for dedicated face to face advice – Writing to Martina Milburn, The Prince's Trust, Nick Boles, Minister for Skills and Equalities, has confirmed that existing priority groups for face to face careers advice will not be extended to include 16 and 17 year old care leavers as sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure that every young care leaver who needs face to face advice can access it.

The following additional points were made:

- YAG members agreed that the quality of careers advice provision should be improving (through initiatives such as the improved young people's section of the National Careers Service website and the new guidance for schools), but identified opportunities to improve signposting and referral to existing careers advice resources and shape new initiatives such as Plotr and developments to National Careers Service; and
- YAG members welcomed the fact that National Careers Service continues to develop and diversify online support to make it easier for young people to navigate and find relevant information for them.

Further actions:

- A. DWP will share information on the next local authority pilot areas with YAG members, once they have been identified. DWP to advise on the most effective way to notify work coaches of relevant provision, in these areas, to support the success of the pilot.
- B. Cabinet Office will close this as a substantive agenda item but monitor progress and update as necessary.

Agenda item 3: Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing (new agenda item)

This agenda item had been developed by the official level Youth Action Group but had not been discussed at ministerial level. The following recommendations were made by the official level group:

1. Local services should be incentivised to engage earlier in the prevention of mental health conditions and poor wellbeing;
2. Jobcentre Plus professionals and young jobseekers would benefit from increased awareness of the mental health and wellbeing considerations when transitioning to work, and the support services available;
3. Access and awareness of online support services and signposting could be improved; and
4. The most disadvantaged 16-25 year olds seeking support for mental health and wellbeing conditions should have access to a trusted adult (caseworker).

Additional remarks:

- Education and support at school/college should continue to be aligned for young people with long term physical or mental health conditions, building on the guidance provided for schools on Social, Emotional and Mental Health and the government's aim of achieving equal regard for physical and mental health; and
- "Tier 1" CAMHS services, which are designed to offer support to young people with low-level mental health needs, are the responsibility of agencies outside the NHS, for example local authorities. Due to budgetary pressures these are particularly vulnerable to cuts. Lack of early intervention at this stage can lead to more young people progressing to need more acute CAMHS services within the NHS.

Updates:

Lord Freud presented the above recommendations to the Social Justice Cabinet Committee on 9th July. This was as part of a DWP-led proposal for cross-cutting action on the issue that YAG members helped develop.

In August, Norman Lamb, Minister for Care and Support, announced a new Mental Health Task Force. Future work in this area will be taken forward by this task force with input from the DWP Mental Health and Employment for Young People working group and YAG members.

Next ministerial meeting and future agenda item proposals

The co-chairs met at official level over the summer to discuss the most effective timing, format and agenda for future YAG meetings. They agreed that given the appointment of some new ministers and CEOs, since the group last met, and the relatively short time available before May 2015, the meeting will address key ministerial priorities and how the group can be most effective in supporting these. They will be in touch with members shortly to confirm the format of the next ministerial meeting.