

# **Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Services and Activities to Improve Young People's Well-being**

This is statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education under Section 507B of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.  
It relates to local authorities' duty to secure services and activities for young people aged 13 to 19, and those with learning difficulties to age 24, to improve their well-being, as defined in Subsection 13.

**Department for Education**

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## Rationale and scope of the duty

1. With the right supportive relationships, strong ambitions and good opportunities all young people can realise their potential and be positive and active members of society. Most get these from and through their families and friends, their school or college and their wider community enabling them to do well and to prepare for adult life. All young people benefit from additional opportunities and support, but some young people and their families, particularly the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, need specific additional and early help to address their challenges and realise their potential.
2. It is therefore local authorities' duty to secure, so far as reasonably practicable, equality of access for all young people to the positive, preventative and early help they need to improve their well-being. This includes youth work and other services and activities that:
  - a. Connect young people with their communities, enabling them to belong and contribute to society, including through volunteering, and supporting them to have a voice in decisions which affect their lives;
  - b. offer young people opportunities in safe environments to take part in a wide range of sports, arts, music and other activities, through which they can develop a strong sense of belonging, socialise safely with their peers, enjoy social mixing, experience spending time with older people, and develop relationships with adults they trust;
  - c. support the personal and social development of young people through which they build the capabilities they need for learning, work, and the transition to adulthood – communication, confidence and agency, creativity, managing feelings, planning and problem solving, relationships and leadership, and resilience and determination;
  - d. improve young people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being;
  - e. help those young people at risk of dropping out of learning or not achieving their full potential to engage and attain in education or training; and
  - f. raise young people's aspirations, build their resilience, and inform their decisions – and thereby reducing teenage pregnancy, risky behaviours such as substance misuse, and involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour.

## Responsibilities of local authorities

### *Involving young people*

3. Local authorities must take steps to ascertain the views of young people and to take them into account in making decisions about services and activities for them, in line with Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). They should establish and maintain structured arrangements for doing so. To inform continuous improvement, these arrangements should enable young people to inspect and report at least annually on the quality and accessibility of provision. As appropriate they should also be involved actively in service design, delivery and governance. Young people should receive the support they need to participate, ensuring representation of the full diversity of local young people, and those who may not otherwise have a voice.

### *Securing access to sufficient services and activities*

4. The Government will not prescribe which services and activities for young people local authorities should fund or deliver or to what level. They should take the strategic lead to work with young people; the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector; health and wellbeing boards; schools and colleges; and agencies including health and police to:
  - a. understand the needs of local young people, particularly the needs of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, taking full account of equality and diversity issues;
  - b. enable parents and communities to meet young people's needs wherever possible, and engage businesses and other employers to contribute funding and expertise to help enhance and sustain local provision;

- c. plan how aspirational personal and social development programmes, including National Citizen Service, and youth work and youth workers can contribute to meeting the needs of young people and reduce demand for more specialist services;
  - d. determine the mix of open access, targeted, preventative and specialist provision needed to meet local needs, and how to integrate all services around young people;
  - e. decide what facilities are needed and how to make these available and accessible, wherever possible maximising the utilisation and potential of all local partners' assets including any Myplace centres and other high quality youth facilities;
  - f. determine which services and facilities need public funding and which can be secured through other means so that public funding is targeted primarily on young people at risk of poor outcomes;
  - g. determine which services and facilities can be delivered by third parties so that the local authority delivers directly only where it is clearly best placed to do so;
  - h. plan how to best support and grow the role of voluntary, community, and faith organisations, including through a transparent commissioning process, given the benefits the sector can bring to work with young people, families and communities;
  - i. agree priorities for publically funded services and facilities with local partners and how these can be most effectively and efficiently delivered, including considering with their employees the options for them to set up and transfer into a public service mutual in line with their 'Right to Provide';
  - j. ensure providers have the capacity and skills to deliver effective services to young people, by learning from good practice and developing their workforce;
  - k. publicise effectively to young people and their families the overall local offer of all services and activities available for young people locally;
  - l. put in place actively-managed systems for assuring the quality of local services and driving improvement, including in response to feedback from young people,
  - m. publish at least annually details of the feedback young people have given on the quality of the local offer and of how they have influenced local decisions; and
  - n. publish at least annually, in a form that enables young people and others to hold them to account, their plans for improving young people's well-being and personal and social development, together with relevant funding and performance data.
5. Local authorities are responsible for securing, so far as is reasonably practicable, a local offer that is sufficient to meet local needs and improve young people's well-being and personal and social development – having regard to the general principles of the UNCRC. They should strive to secure the best possible local offer within available resources, reviewing the sufficiency of the offer if it does not result in positive feedback from young people on the adequacy and quality of local provision and positive trends in qualitative and quantitative data that are indicative of local young people's well-being and personal and social development.
6. Local authorities should do all that is reasonably practicable to secure a sufficient local offer for young people, including:
- a. acting on all of the considerations in this and other relevant statutory guidance;
  - b. benchmarking their approach and performance relative to other similar areas to identify how they might improve impact and cost-effectiveness; and
  - c. drawing on available support and challenge to drive continuous improvement in the quality and impact of local services, including from the local authority sector nationally.