

Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium

A STRATEGY FOR YOUTH WORK IN EDINBURGH

1. Introduction:

This draft youth work strategy has been commissioned by the City of Edinburgh Council from the Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium. It has been developed collaboratively by statutory and voluntary sector partners.

It is Edinburgh's first ever youth work strategy. It aims to increase the quality of youth work across the city and provide a framework that enables those involved in the management and delivery of youth work to share objectives and actions that will enhance youth work practice and benefit the lives of young people.

It is a draft for consultation.

2. Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium:

Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium (EYWC) was established in 2006 to act as a forum through which youth work providers and policy makers could better support youth work in Edinburgh.

The Consortium seeks to:

- Promote, encourage, support and develop quality youth work
- Sustain and extend youth work provision
- Share youth work issues, concerns and practice
- Monitor funding streams
- Scrutinise and influence youth work policies

Membership is representative of contributors to youth work in the city and comprises of voluntary organisations including (LAYC, Edinburgh Scouts, Coalition of Youth Work Projects, LGBT Youth Edinburgh, Sikh Sanjog, Duke of Edinburgh Awards), City of Edinburgh Council (including Community Learning and Development - Children & Families Dept and Services to Communities), Edinburgh Youth Council and other agencies such as Edinburgh Leisure.

3. Background:

Consultations with youth workers and young people in Edinburgh about the creation of a National Youth Work Strategy significantly informed this debate. *Moving Forward - a Strategy for Improving Young People's Chances Through Youth Work* was published as the youth work strategy for Scotland in 2007 and subsequently endorsed by the Scottish Government. This sets out a number of key strategic objectives for Scotland's youth work.

In building a complementary Youth Work Strategy for Edinburgh, we were keen to engage those volunteers, sessional, part-time and full time staff who work directly with young people and reflecting their needs, priorities and aspirations for improving youth work in Edinburgh.

Key to this was a major youth work conference held last year which articulated the critical areas that needed to be addressed in order to improve the quality and impact of youth work.

4. What is Youth Work?

We have adopted the definition of youth work as articulated by YouthLink Scotland¹.

The purpose of youth work is to:

- Build self esteem and self confidence
- Develop the ability to manage personal and social relationships
- Create learning and develop new skills
- Encourage positive group atmospheres
- Build the capacity of young people to consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control
- Develop a world view which widens horizons and invites social comment.

Youth work also has three essential and definitive features:-

- Young people choose to participate
- Work must build from where young people are
- Youth work recognises the young person and the youth workers as partners in a learning process

Youth work's focus is on the 11-25 year age group with particular emphasis on 11-18 year olds.

Youth work takes place in a variety of settings including community venues, uniformed groups, schools, youth cafes and on the street, whilst using numerous approaches such as outdoor pursuits, drama, health initiatives, peer education, single issue and gender based work to engage with young people.

Around 18,000 young people aged between 11-21 years in Edinburgh participated in the Viewfinder 3 survey between August and November 2007. When asked about the spare time, cultural and sporting activities that young people would like more opportunity to do, "attend a youth group/youth club" was among the most common with 21% of young people giving this response. This was the same as the result for "go to see music/artists/bands/gigs" and "go

to under 18's clubs and venues". More young people aged 11-16 or in the most deprived areas were likely to want more of these opportunities.

A national audit of youth work provision in Scotland in 2003 estimated that there were 780 'units' of youth work in Edinburgh. These included a wide range of uniformed groups, youth clubs, youth cafe's and youth projects².

Youth work is dependent on skilled and sympathetic adults delivering its provision and programmes and these include volunteers, sessional, part-time and full-time work.

5. The Policy Context:

One of the key policies of the Scottish Government is The Curriculum for Excellence³. Devised to inform schools, it seeks to enable young people to be:-

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Responsible citizens
- Effective contributors

These relate closely to the outcomes associated with quality youth work.

Youth Work also supports other government policies such as 'More Choices, More Chances'⁴ and *Getting It Right for Every Child*⁵.

But youth work should not solely be seen as some kind of targeted or remedial service used exclusively to address young people's perceived failings. Youth work embraces a positive agenda able to bring a raft of approaches that are young person centred and capable of delivering measurable outcomes around a range of life skills - health, employment, relationships, crime, citizenship, volunteering and personal development.

GIRFEC recognises the need for resourced and accessible universal provision for all young people that provides a supportive environment, able to nurture and extend young people's understandings and skills. In doing so it enables additional, specialised and more tailored support to be targeted at those young people who are in more specific need.

Research commissioned by the DfES⁶ concluded :- *"Youth work is well positioned to make a sustained impact through the simultaneous development of relationships that connect young people with their communities so they can strengthen them and the development of their own personal and social skills"*.

This was supported by more recent work by the Fabian Society⁷.

The Scottish Government's Concordat with local authorities and Edinburgh's draft Children and Young People Integrated Plan 2008-11 have also informed the drafting of this strategy.

6. Our Vision for Youth Work:

All young people in Edinburgh have access to quality youth work provision.

This provision is in line with their interests, skills and aspirations in a city where young people are valued, encouraged and inspired to achieve their potential.

7. Our Priorities for Youth Work:

The Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium draft strategy proposes 6 priorities.

Priority 1: A Universal Service for Young People

Young people have access to different, enjoyable, stimulating and regular youth work provision both locally and through city wide projects.

Actions:

- Youth work provision has to reflect the needs and interests of the young people they work with/target and use local and city wide information to inform programmes
- Existing youth work providers should co-operate with others to maximise the level and nature of opportunities available to young people
- Developing new provision to address identifiable gaps will use local/city wide information to plan it in conjunction with other local providers
- Information about good youth work practice is accessible to youth workers on a regular and planned basis
- Youth workers are provided with information in relation to national strategies for young people and how youth work can contribute to these

Priority 2: Supporting Quality Youth Workers

Youth workers be valued, motivated, skilled and appropriately trained

Actions:

- Youth workers have access to regular training programmes, both local and city wide, that meet their needs and that are accessible, affordable and flexible
- Youth workers training needs are assessed regularly and training providers advised of the outcomes
- Training providers seek to co-ordinate training courses that have transferrable skills creating a programme accessible to all youth workers
- Accredited youth worker training be co-ordinated and planned centrally on a regular basis
- The roles and responsibilities for youth workers are clear and support them to understand, evaluate and plan their work
- A youth worker database be established and used for regular communications with youth workers re events, information, training, funding and good practice

Priority 3: Co-operation and Collaboration in Service Provision

Youth Work opportunities and choices available to young people are maximised and providers seek to avoid overlap and duplication where possible

Actions:

- A mapping of youth work provision across the city be carried out regularly and made available to young people, youth work agencies and youth workers
- There should be neighbourhood youth worker forums in all areas to assist in the delivery and development of youth work provision in the area
- Information on youth work programmes should be shared to aid local co-ordination and city wide mapping

Priority 4: Suitable Venues and Equipment

The buildings, places and equipment used to provide youth work opportunities be suitable and of good quality

Actions:

- The local authority, voluntary sector and other agencies provide affordable access to premises suitable for youth work
- Capital funding to maintain and improve premises and purchase youth work equipment be identified
- An audit of buildings used (or potential to be used) be carried out to support the development of youth work provision
- Buildings used for youth work need to support opening times that adequately reflect the needs of young people
- Information on equipment held by youth work agencies and the nature of its availability be held centrally and disseminated regularly

Priority 5: Evaluating and Promoting Quality Youth Work

Quality youth work is encouraged and promoted with its impact on young people evaluated and shared by youth workers

Actions:

- Frameworks for evaluating quality youth work be promoted to demonstrate the impact of youth work
- Youth workers should be trained, supported and allocated time to apply an outcome based evaluation approach to their youth work
- Best practice be identified and disseminated regularly to youth work agencies and youth workers
- City wide seminars that explore youth work topics and practice be a regular feature across the broad youth work sector
- Links between good practice, professional training, policy and research be established with appropriate institutions

Priority 6: Resources and Funding

Those providing quality youth work be supported and funded to sustain and develop their work

Actions:

- Training for youth work agencies be provided to assist them to make funding applications and undertake effective evaluation
- All relevant funders be made aware of the youth work strategy in order to promote the development of youth work across the city
- Information on funding opportunities be co-ordinated and disseminated regularly
- Funders be encouraged to recognise the need for evaluation that is effective and proportionate to the level of investment
- Sustainable funding needs to be linked to proved benefits for young people and clear identifiable outcomes

8. Consultation:

This draft strategy takes account of:

- The youth work priorities expressed by volunteers, sessional, part-time and full-time youth workers who are working directly with young people
- The context in which youth work operates
- Current policy directions

This is now your chance to comment on the draft strategy. A Consultative Response form is available for you to complete.

You can do this online via the EYWC or LAYC websites (www.eywc.org.uk ; www.layc.org.uk) or by downloading a paper copy and sending that to EWYC, c/o LAYC, Dunford House, 7 Boroughloch Lane, Edinburgh EH8 9NL.

The closing date for the consultation is **Friday 29th August 2008**.

1 Statement on the nature and purpose of youth work (YouthLink Scotland 2005)

2 Mapping the Youth Work Sector in Scotland: a quantitative assessment (YouthLink Scotland 2003)

3 A Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Executive 2004)

4 More Choices, More Chances (Scottish Executive 2006, Scottish Government 2007)

5 Getting it Right for Every Child (Scottish Executive)

6 An Evaluation of the Impact of Youth Work in England (DfES 2004)

7 The contribution of non formal learning to young people's life changes (Fabian Society/NYA 2008)