

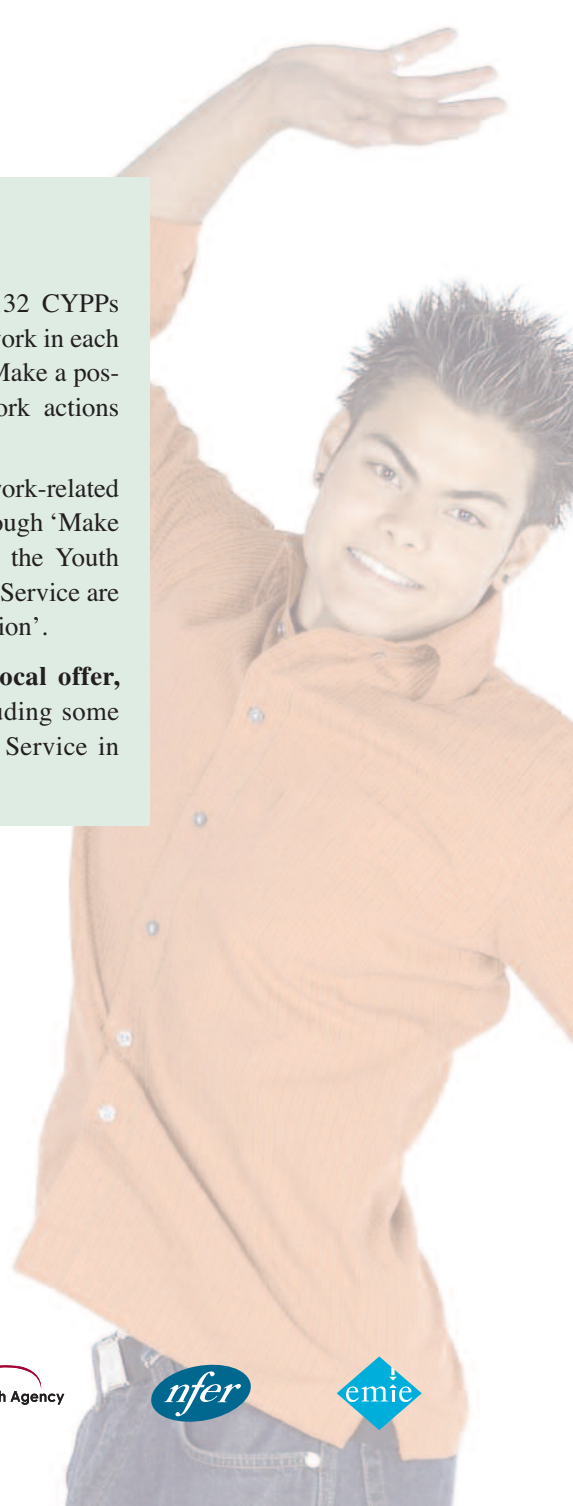
Youth Work Themes in Children and Young People's Plans

This paper is one of a series of 12 that presents the findings from NFER's analysis of Children and Young People's Plans (CYPPs) from 132 Local Authorities.¹ It sets out findings of how the youth work theme features in all the CYPPs received by NFER and includes illustrative examples. Areas covered are:

- References to youth work themes in the CYPPs
- Youth Matters
- Local Offer
- Participation and involvement (including Hear by Right)
- Youth work and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE)
- Youth work-themed actions, key groups, targets and lead agencies.

Summary of findings

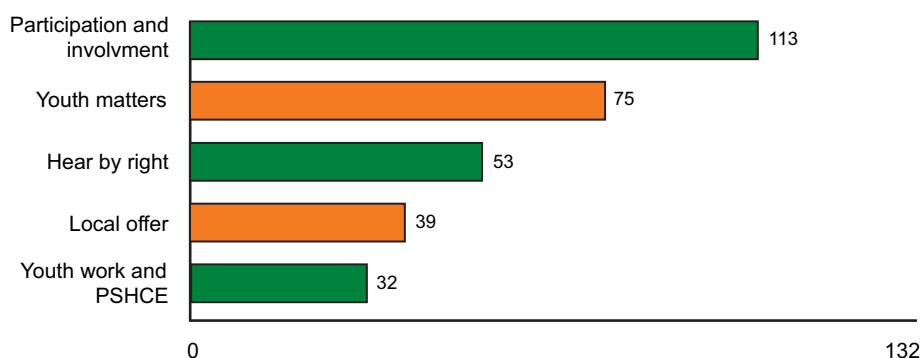
- References to youth work themes are found in **all but three** of the 132 CYPPs analysed. Over three-quarters of the plans detail actions relating to youth work in each of the five ECM outcomes. Most commonly, these actions are related to 'Make a positive contribution'. Just over two-fifths of the plans contain youth work actions targeted at specific groups of children and young people.
- The Youth Service is identified as the **lead agent** responsible for youth work-related actions in two-fifths of the CYPPs and across all five ECM outcomes, although 'Make a positive contribution' has the largest number of actions that specify the Youth Service as lead agent. Similarly, targets that involve youth work/the Youth Service are most frequently set in relation to actions within 'Make a positive contribution'.
- Also included in the CYPPs are references to: **Youth Matters, the local offer, Hear By Right** and **children and young people's participation**, including some explicit references to the direct involvement of youth work/the Youth Service in supporting this.



References to youth work themes in the CYPPs

All but three of the 132 CYPPs analysed make mention of youth work themes, including references to the Youth Matters green paper,² the local offer, young people's participation, including Hear by Right, and youth work/Youth Service's involvement in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). The coverage of each area is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Coverage of youth work-themed references in CYPPs



Youth Matters

Reference is made to the Youth Matters green paper in more than half of the 132 CYPPs analysed. Citations appear in a range of sections within the plans, but the four most common are:

- Introduction/background (typically, references are made with regard to the local authority's commitment to implementing the key policies, or in relation to the overall aims of the plan)
- 'Make a positive contribution' (Youth Matters is cited within this ECM outcome as part of the actions and priorities and, in some cases, in relation to the targets to support its fulfilment)
- The current situation/needs assessment section (in sections of the plans that relate to the current situation, Youth Matters is described as having been recently implemented or involved in developments within the authority, as well as in relation to national policies)
- Consultation section (where specific consultations related to Youth Matters have taken place).

Table 1 Examples from the four sections in CYPPs where Youth Matters is most commonly referenced

Action	Example
Introduction/background	<i>'The plan will support more integrated and effective services to meet the outcomes for children set out in Youth Matters.'</i> (London borough)
'Make a positive contribution'	<i>'Implement the Youth Matters proposals, which will further boost the participation of young people in service development and decision making.'</i> (London borough)
The current situation/needs assessment section	<i>'In our analysis of current provision, and in considering how to respond to the youth Green Paper, Youth Matters, we know we have much to do to meet the needs of young people.'</i> (London borough)
Consultation sections	<i>'Children and Young People have been involved in the development of the plans through Youth Matters consultation.'</i> (Unitary LA)



Overall, few plans refer directly to the proposals of Youth Matters. Where they do, it is with reference to developing the local offer or piloting the opportunity card. However, a number of the actions that plans set out relating to youth work themes address these proposals implicitly. Uniquely, one plan does list 12 priorities specifically aimed at meeting the Youth Matters proposal and, thus, contains the greatest number of references to Youth Matters across all CYPPs analysed.

Local offer

Slightly under a third of the CYPPs analysed make mention of the 'local offer' (or youth offer). Where stated, the local offer is predominantly cited as an action, especially to support 'Make a positive contribution', e.g.: 'To use the youth offer to encourage young people to volunteer and become active in community events' (Unitary LA), and 'Enjoy and achieve', e.g.: 'We will develop a local Youth Offer in line with the spirit of the Youth Matters Green Paper which enables young people to know where they can access information, advice and guidance, as well as activities for them to enjoy.' (London borough)

Participation and involvement

More than four-fifths of the CYPPs contain references to young people's participation and involvement, with 30 of these plans making explicit reference to the direct involvement of youth work/the Youth Service in supporting this. Citations appear most frequently in the following three sections of the plans:

- 'Make a positive contribution' (where references are most commonly framed as actions involving youth work/the Youth Service to achieve this outcome)
- The current situation/needs assessment section (where, typically, mentions include operational youth parliaments, forums or councils, or intentions to enable and encourage young people to participate in their communities and in council decisions)
- Consultation sections (where references are made to youth council or youth forum involvement in the development of the CYPP).

Table 2 Sections where 'participation and involvement' is most commonly cited

Action	Example
'Make a positive contribution'	<i>'Increase the number of children and young people taking part in community activities and the number of children and young people participating in decision making in their communities – led by the Head of Youth Service.'</i> (London borough)
The current situation/needs assessment section	<i>'The Youth Forum has been proactive in encouraging participatory approaches with the creation of six 'youth communities' that support and advise youth work projects delivered across the city.'</i> (Metropolitan LA)
Consultation sections	<i>'The strategy in the plan involved analysis of discussions between the Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, Chief Executive and the Youth Council.'</i> (London borough)

Hear By Right is referred to in two-fifths of the CYPPs. These references are most frequently made within sections on 'Make a positive contribution' as **actions** e.g., 'To build on consultations with children and young people in order to achieve the Hear By Right standards for the active involvement of young people' (County LA), or **targets** e.g., 'Achieve at least established level of Hear By Right standards within the Council's Children's Services by 2008' (London borough).



Elsewhere, in a small number of plans, citations appear in sections relating to ‘where we are now’, where it is generally noted that Hear By Right standards have been identified as appropriate, launched, adopted, agreed or achieved e.g. ‘The Council and other organisations including Connexions are currently working towards the established level of Hear By Right standards’ (County LA), and in specific sections on engaging children and young people in decision making or participation, for example, ‘Hear By Right is used to ensure that consultation and engagement activities are planned and delivered to a high standard’ (County LA).

Youth work and PSHCE

The analysis specifically sought to ascertain the extent to which youth work/the Youth Service is directly identified with aspects of PSHCE in the CYPPs. Overall, youth work/the Youth Service is referenced in some connection to PSHCE in almost one-quarter of the plans. These citations occur most often in the ‘Be healthy’ section of the plans, with actions focusing on the Youth Service and youth settings as a provider of healthy lifestyle, sex and relationships, drugs and alcohol education. For example: ‘Youth Services are responsible for personal, social, moral and health education programmes and refer people to stop smoking services’ (County LA).

In addition, a number of plans link the Youth Service with PSHCE through extending or replicating the ‘Healthy Schools Initiative’ into youth settings. In a further five plans, actions addressing ECM outcome ‘Make a positive contribution’ reference the Youth Service in connection to PSHCE, for example, ‘[The LA] aim to help children and young people to develop emotionally and socially through delivering programmes through the Youth Service’ (Metropolitan LA).

Youth work themed actions in the CYPPs

Overall, more than four-fifths of the CYPPs set out an explicit youth work-related action, collectively accounting for 685 listed youth work themed actions (an average of five actions in each of the plans). Specific actions are outlined in relation to each of the five ECM outcomes in over three-quarters of the plans, although they chiefly support ‘Make a positive contribution’. The following are examples of universal and targeted actions for the five ECM outcomes:

‘Make a positive contribution’

Universal

Provide training to enable children and young people to participate in inspection of services and to determine the quality kite mark status to support the Youth Offer. (County LA)

Targeted

Appointing a young dads lead within youth services to meet with young dads to address their needs. (Unitary LA)

‘Enjoy and achieve’

Universal

Youth Service will lead in Launching of Live [Name of local authority] card, which puts buying power into the hand of young people providing discounts on a range of things to do and places to go. (Unitary LA)



Targeted

Map current best practice and opportunities and agree expectations to enable the development of Extended Schools and Youth Matters offering of a varied menu of out-of-school hours (including weekends) activities, including sport, creative or social activity. Particular attention will be paid to extending enrichment opportunities to children and young people who may be relatively disadvantaged, including those from rural areas and black and ethnic minority groups. (County LA)

‘Be healthy’**Universal**

Regarding better mental and emotional health, develop a new CAHMS youth service for 16–17 year olds by the end of 2007. (Metropolitan LA)

Targeted

Targeted early identification of those believed to be becoming involved in misusing drugs and local strategy for informing them of the dangers and issues (e.g. through detached youth workers). (County LA)

‘Achieve economic wellbeing’**Universal**

The 14–19 Collaborative partnership will ensure that schools, colleges and work-based training providers, Connexions, the authority, LSC and the Youth Service work together to develop the vocational curriculum. (London borough)

Targeted

Strengthen joint agency assessment and preventative measures for young people at risk of homelessness and temporary accommodation – Youth Support Services. (County LA)

‘Stay safe’**Universal**

Provision of diversionary activities (proactive work) and personal safety training and advice with the Family and Youth services and Voluntary and community organisations developing the resources and activities. (County LA)

Targeted

Preventative work on homelessness, including the grant to the YMCA for a mediation service to young people threatened with eviction by family members and a preventive education service targeted at schools, youth services and other youth oriented venues to steer young people away from a path into homelessness. (London borough)



Level of detail of actions

The level of detail of youth work actions related to the ECM outcomes varies across the plans, including the following types:

- actions that are explicitly stated to be the specific responsibility of youth work/the Youth Service (160 actions).

'...there is a recognised need to develop an effective Youth Forum for the borough where young peoples' views can systematically influence the way in which services are developed. This will be a priority over the next three years. The Youth Service will lead on this area and have appointed a full time Participation worker and two part time workers to develop the forum and implement the participation strategy.' (London borough)

- actions that involve the Youth Service and youth work provision, though lead agency responsibility either lies with another service or is not specified (136 actions).

'Ensure that guidance and signposting to services is delivered to young people via youth services, connexions and other community and voluntary sector agencies.' (Metropolitan LA)

- actions in which the Youth Service and youth work provision are the focus of the development or intended change, e.g. to increase the number of youth work delivery points (128 actions).

'The youth service is: undertaking a minor restructuring which will result in a change of staff roles so that they focus on topic areas; developing a management information system to allow for up to date data analysis; developing a curriculum entitlement document for young people and staff who are beginning to use this in their work to improve outcomes; developing stronger links with the Voluntary Youth Sector, particularly those in receipt of Grant Aid.' (Metropolitan LA)

- actions that have a youth work interest, e.g. those related to Youth Matters, the local offer, Hear By Right or participation (69 actions).

'We will also be delivering the changes required by a range of government initiatives emerging from Youth Matters; these include the Local youth offer, the youth opportunities fund, the Youth capital fund and the Respect agenda.' (Unitary LA)



Key groups

Over two-fifths of the CYPPs specifically set out youth work themed actions that are targeted at key groups of children and young people. Where mentioned, the groups that are the focus of these actions include 'vulnerable', 'at risk' or 'hard to reach' groups in a fifth of plans, e.g. '[the Youth Service will] continue to support Youth Parliaments, school councils, youth councils and youth forums with a particular emphasis on involving those from vulnerable groups' (Unitary LA). Other targeted key groups include:

- children with learning difficulties and disabilities (CLDD)
- looked after and accommodated children

- teenage mothers, e.g. ‘focus the work of agencies on teenage pregnancy hot spots and develop a multi-agency contraceptive and sexual health young person’s service with the involvement of health and youth workers.’ (Unitary LA)
- minority ethnic groups
- substance misusers.

Targets

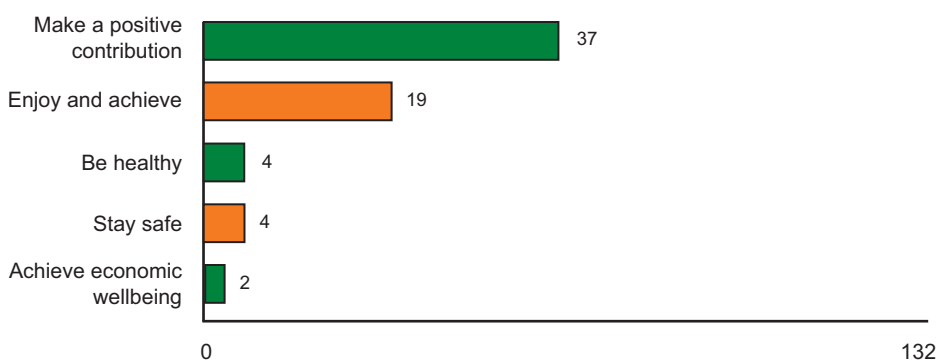
Nearly half of the CYPPs have targets that mention youth work in some form. There is no one main ‘type’ of local authority in which youth work themed targets are most commonly cited.

In detailing targets set in relation to the ECM outcomes, almost two-fifths of the plans specify youth work-related targets. Across these plans, youth work targets are specified in relation to all outcomes. However, they are most prevalent for ‘Make a positive contribution’:

In the two-fifths of plans that set out targets in reference to actions relating to ECM outcomes, some targets are held in common. For example, a minority of plans refer to the following targets under more than one ECM outcome, showing that the CYPPs generalised the application of some targets to the outcome areas:

- ‘Increase the percentage of young people aged 13 to 19 reached by publicly funded youth service’ (in both ‘Enjoy and Achieve’ and ‘Make a positive contribution’)
- ‘Ensure 15 per cent of young people aged 13 to 19 are participating in youth work by 2008’ (in ‘Enjoy and Achieve’, ‘Achieve economic wellbeing’ and ‘Make a positive contribution’)
- ‘Ensure 60 per cent of young people aged 13 to 19 involved in youth work gain recorded outcomes and 30 per cent gain accredited outcomes by 2008’ (in ‘Enjoy and Achieve’, ‘Achieve economic wellbeing’ and ‘Make a positive contribution’).

Figure 2 Youth work related targets for the five ECM outcomes



Lead agencies

The youth service is explicitly mentioned as the lead agent responsible for youth work-related actions in two-fifths of the CYPPs. Most of these plans highlight the youth service as the lead agent responsible for actions specifically related to the five ECM outcomes. This explicit lead agent responsibility is common across all of the five ECM outcomes, although the youth service is mostly cited as leading actions that contribute to ‘Make a Positive Contribution’ (see Table 3).



Table 3 Youth service cited as lead agent across the five ECM outcomes (in order of frequency)

Action	Example
'Make a positive contribution'	<i>'The Youth Service will develop systems to enable young people to identify achievements during their attendance at youth projects, including the gaining of Duke of Edinburgh and other appropriate awards.'</i> (Unitary LA)
'Be healthy'	<i>'Youth Services, supported by the Health Development Service, will train workers to deal with issues relating to sexual health and to take part in local condom distribution schemes.'</i> (London borough)
'Enjoy and achieve'	<i>'The youth service will develop work with District/Borough Councils to develop and implement the Play Strategy, ensuring opportunities are available for all young people.'</i> (London borough)
'Stay safe'	<i>'The Youth service will provide assertiveness training for young people, challenge anti-oppressive actions and provide support for victims.'</i> (Metropolitan LA)
'Achieve economic wellbeing'	<i>'The Youth Service will provide a range of personal development and accredited learning opportunities to increase young people's motivation, achievement levels and employment prospects.'</i> (London borough)

Notes

- 1 When interpreting these findings from analysis of 132 plans, it is necessary to bear in mind that LAs had freedom to draft their CYPPs in order to meet their needs and circumstances best. Therefore, there would be no imperative for every plan to include all the pieces of information and detail discussed in the findings in this paper.
- 2 See: www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/youth/pdf/Next%20Steps.pdf

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