

YOUTH LIBRARIES BOARD

What do young people want from libraries?

A Review of the Existing Evidence Base

1) Introduction

This paper is a synthesis of what recent policy initiatives and research tell us about young people's needs, their views about the services and activities which are currently on offer to them and their reasons for participation and non participation in positive activities.

It then demonstrates how libraries might contribute to meeting those needs, defining what makes the library contribution distinct from other agencies in the context of the new policy and describes how libraries are already transforming their services to meet them more effectively.

It also reviews the views of young people about the current services offered specifically by library services, especially those which present a barrier to the take up of library services by examining the outcomes from a series of consultation activities undertaken by TRA and MLA between 2004 and 2006.

Finally, it provides an overview of just what young people want from libraries and examines the challenges which these expectations present, as we develop the youth offer from libraries.

Wherever relevant, it makes clear linkages to *Youth Matters*, the *Policy review of children and young people*, the reports and draft guidance about positive activities and other government documents which address the needs of young people and it attempts to answer the following questions:

- ❖ What does recent policy and research tell us about young people's needs and how they spend their free time?
- ❖ How might libraries improve their contribution to meeting the needs of young people?
- ❖ How are libraries meeting these needs through current programmes and activities?
- ❖ What are the barriers to overcome so that all libraries can support young people?
- ❖ What do young people want from their library services? How have they responded to the concept of Book Bars?
- ❖ How do young people's needs differ from those of other people?

- ❖ Where do we go from here?

Full details of the relevant consultation/research papers are attached as Appendix One .

2) **What does recent policy and research tell us about young people's needs and how they spend their free time?**

The context for *Youth Matters* is the government's ambition to create a prosperous society in which all children and young people have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and feel part of a local community which is safe, stable and cohesive. The vision was expressed initially in *Every Child Matters*, with its five desired outcomes for children to:

- ❖ Be healthy
- ❖ Stay safe
- ❖ Enjoy and achieve
- ❖ Make a positive contribution
- ❖ Enjoy economic well-being

Every Child Matters was ground breaking, in that for the first time, children and young people took a full part in the consultation which influenced the outcomes expected from the implementation of the policy. *Youth Matters* followed in its footsteps and received over 19,000 responses to its consultation process.

The consultation feedback from *Youth Matters* told the government that young people wanted:

- ❖ To be treated as individuals
- ❖ Services which were flexible and responsive to their needs
- ❖ A diverse range of good quality activities
- ❖ Involvement in how funding is spent on activities
- ❖ Opportunities to volunteer, if their efforts were recognised in some way

The great majority of young people said consistently that there are not enough things for them to do locally and not enough safe, welcoming places to go.

- ❖ 73% of young people thought that having more places for young people to go would stop some teenagers getting into trouble
- ❖ 83% of young people thought that a card that gave discounts and money to spend on activities would encourage them to do more in their spare time
- ❖ 71% of young people said that they would do up to four hours of activities per week in their spare time if they had the opportunity

As a result, the government is now committed to offering integrated support to young people, which focuses on positive activities, information, advice and guidance and is properly targeted. The key criteria for its successful delivery are that it must be shaped by young people themselves, working in conjunction with local authorities, who are expected to work or contract with the most appropriate organisations or agencies.

A clear message about the need to build young people's confidence and self esteem came from a further piece of consultation, as part of the CSR process. During the summer of 2006, the National Youth Agency, on behalf of the Policy review of children and young people held six consultation sessions across England, which involved almost 50 young people. All of them had experience of social exclusion, including homelessness, racial discrimination, offending and the care system or were young parents. They were asked how they would prioritise funds for youth services between activities, access and support. The outcomes were summarised in the report, *Cutting the Cake*.

The young people's priorities, in order, were:

- ❖ Support from a skilled worker
- ❖ Workers who *know what it's like*
- ❖ Targeted programmes
- ❖ Confidence, knowledge and skills
- ❖ Local and accessible projects and facilities
- ❖ Local; well resourced and maintained places to go
- ❖ Deciding how money is spent
- ❖ Lower transport costs and free entrance

Support from a skilled worker was their highest priority because they said that they valued and needed more support from skilled adults to help them find out what was available. They also put a high value on activities and places to go which helped them develop their skills and self confidence. The consultation highlighted the way in which a lack of aspiration and motivation can get in the way of participation. One young participant said:

Most young people don't know what to aspire to. They need to be given the personal skills and confidence to go out and be what they want to be.

Youth Matters does not dwell on how young people actually spend their leisure time, but it is evident from the consultation outcomes that young people and adults alike feel strongly that there are not enough opportunities for young people to participate in appealing, high quality activities.

The PricewaterhouseCoopers report on *The Market for Provision of Positive Activities for young people* estimates that at least 27% of young people take part in no positive activities at all and that the problem increases with age. When activities are targeted at the older age group, there is often little take up.

There is little differentiation between participation rates segmented by gender, rural and non rural locations or ethnicity, except that the levels for Pakistani and Bangladeshi young people are well below other groups.

There is however, clear under-representation from young people, especially young men, from less affluent groups, lesbian, bi-sexual, gay and trans-gender young people, young carers and disabled young people or those with special educational needs.

The draft strategic guidance on positive activities says:

Young people's participation in positive leisure-time activities is highly variable. Too many disadvantaged young people are unable to overcome barriers to participation such as cost and a lack of transport, and too much provision is of poor quality and is unappealing to young people. The resulting lack of engagement constitutes a failure to reap health, learning and personal and social development opportunities.

The importance of supporting young people through all ages of their childhood and in all contexts, not just through formal education, is reinforced in the *Policy review of children and young people*. It describes the complex pathway to adulthood which faces young people today and the research which shows that soft or non cognitive skills are becoming increasingly important to young people's ability to negotiate the transitions in their lives and to make the best choices and decisions. It also points to the difference which participation can make to confidence, relationships, team work, dealing with difficult or negative experiences and open-mindedness.

The TRA/MLA consultations, which involved around 900 young people, did investigate how young people spend their free time and to what extent they participate in arts and cultural related activities, such as libraries and museums and common themes began to emerge:

- ❖ Music, Internet and TV/DVD consumption are primary activities. Most young people seem to spend one third to one half of their free time watching TV. Computer use takes up a further one sixth
- ❖ For the younger age group, below 18, hanging out with friends and texting them takes up most of the rest of their free time, often combined with shopping. Young people are very active consumers.
- ❖ Activities such as cinema, sport, computer gaming and reading books and magazines falls into a third category, with some regularity, but less frequency. For most, cultural activities are far more occasional than other activities.

Barriers to participation in library services reflect those reported in the responses to *Youth Matters* and the Policy review. They included lack of availability and

access, peer pressure and bullying, homework, lack of information, lack of confidence, transport, location and timings.

However, recent evidence from surveys and statistical reports seem to show that the reality of library use by young people is better than the stereotype would suggest. The LISU/MLA Survey of library services to schools and children in the UK 2005-06 has not been able to gather data from a complete sample, but in the 82% of services which responded, there was an increase in issues to children and young people in all sectors in England. There is even better news about the older age group.

Taking Part is a national survey conducted by DCMS, working with MLA and other NDPB partners to maximise the impact of their work and to deliver efficiency savings. The survey, which is based on 28,117 face to face interviews with adults aged 16 or over is the first single survey that collects data on libraries, museums and archives. The size and design of the survey means that robust data are available for sub groups of the population and that it is a designated national statistic. The data show that 48% of all adults had attended a library (19.1 million adults) but one of the main findings about libraries is that young adults aged 16-24 and 25-44 had significantly higher rates of attendance than all other age groups, with 51% for 16-24 year olds and 51.3% for 25-44 year olds.

3) How might libraries improve their contribution to meeting the needs of young people?

All the evidence outlined in this paper points to the enormous potential of libraries to deliver extremely effectively against the wider policy priorities embodied in *Youth Matters*, the *Policy review of children and young people*, the Positive Activities legislation and the volunteering /involvement agenda.

Libraries also have a close fit with the top ten points which emerged from the dialogue between young people and the Treasury/DfES , summarised in the NYA paper, *Cutting the Cake*.

Fulfilling their Potential (FtP) is a ground breaking programme which aims to bring libraries and young people closer together and is helping libraries to transform their work with this age group. It is already building library servicesq contribution to the statutory requirements to provide positive activities and ensures that they focus their work on the desired outcomes of *Every Child Matters* and *Youth Matters*.

Library services across the country which are following best practice as laid down by *Fulfilling their Potential*, are delivering already on most of these outcomes, as summarised in the TRA/ASCEL/SCL response to *Youth Matters*. The strength of what libraries have to offer young people lies in:

- ❖ The existing contribution of public libraries to providing a whole range of services which meet the information, reading and recreational needs of young people. An extensive network of 3,600 libraries across England, in local communities, open outside standard opening hours, somewhere safe to go, with a wide range of resources, including Internet access.
- ❖ The clear vision which the public library community has of its potential to deliver improved outcomes for young people and a national transformation programme (FtP) aimed at achieving that vision. Working alongside young people, libraries are shaping a range of creative and flexible ways in which young people can be involved in all aspects of service development. Libraries can be the civic gateway to young people's involvement in the wider community and democratic life.
- ❖ Library staff who have challenged their own assumptions and prejudices and developed their understanding, confidence and awareness of the needs of young people.
- ❖ The valuable role that books and reading play in supporting young people, particularly those with low literacy levels, in their learning, recreation and in enabling them to explore their own identity
- ❖ The range and scope of existing partnerships which libraries have brokered at national and local levels to enhance their work with young people, most notably with the NYA and local Youth Services. Library buildings are also used in conjunction with partners to provide activities, including Connexions, PAYP activities, Out of School Hours Activities, Homework Clubs and Childcare Information Services.
- ❖ The increasing number of volunteering opportunities being made available to young people through library services and the capacity of libraries to showcase and celebrate the contribution of young people.
- ❖ The added value which libraries can bring to the implementation of *Youth Matters*, particularly through their inherent diversity, from world literature to global connectivity and their outreach and off site work with vulnerable and excluded young people.

Public libraries are perfectly placed to engage young people because they sit at the heart of their communities, they are open to everyone, they are free, they offer the resources and information which young people want and they are uniquely placed to nurture creativity in young people. It is now crucial that the good practice embedded in FtP and practised in many library services is rolled out nationally.

4) How are libraries meeting young people's needs through current programmes and activities?

The feedback from young people who have taken part in a wide variety of library activities, whether organised as part of national projects, such as YouthBOOX or Splash Extra or simply as a result of innovative and imaginative work on the part of their local library service are in stark contrast to those expressed by non users. When young people's preconceived ideas are challenged, they are astonished to find that libraries can offer exciting and stimulating possibilities.

As long ago as 2002, TRA co-coordinated the library contribution in 10 local authorities to Splash Extra, a government initiative, providing diversionary summer activities for young people at risk of offending. Libraries offered a varied and largely successful programme of reading-related multimedia arts activities throughout the summer. These reached 2,500 young people within the designated target groups, the majority of whom have never previously set foot in a library, and for whom the world of words, books and reading was unknown, alien or hostile territory. The response from those young people was universally positive:

The YouthBOOX programme which focused on engaging socially excluded young people was a collaboration involving the Reading Agency, the National Youth Agency and a range of local authorities across England. It aimed to create new routes to reading by bringing together library and youth services to effect a sea change in young people's attitude to reading. For many of the young people involved, it gave them their first positive and creative experience of books and reading.

The style of the YouthBOOX project was such that it contributed a climate of safety and a lack of external judgement which enabled the young people to take risks with books. Many librarians exhibited superb interpersonal skills often with the support and guidance of the youth workers and the hugely important legacy of YouthBOOX is the ongoing partnership with NYA and local Youth Services and the number of library staff who have now received training in *Hear by Right*, the NYA's standards framework for active involvement of young people.

Good practice and local initiatives

Their Reading Futures (TRF) is a Reading Agency programme which provides face to face and online training to help libraries deliver the best reader development services for young people. One section of the website is devoted to evaluation and advocacy and helps libraries to gather and utilize evidence to demonstrate their contribution and achievements. There are numerous case studies which show, when following the FtP development process, just how well libraries can and do serve the 11-19 age group.

In the North West, 21 library services have been piloting *Fulfilling their Potential's* Improvement Framework and involving young people in new designs for library spaces, mystery shopping and buying relevant health information resources.

In Durham, local young people are having a huge impact on their local services through a multi-agency initiative called *Investing in Children*. All aspects of the library service have come under scrutiny and only if young people tell assessors that they have been listened to with respect does it get its IIC certificate. The young people's suggestions are taken very seriously and the evaluation group has been able to show that they had a positive and trusting relationship with staff.

In Leicester they have set up a project in partnership with Children's Services and are now able to offer the opportunity to volunteer in the library service to school age young people who have been convicted for their first offence. Staff say that it gives the young people a sense of being worth something.

Suffolk Libraries have set up young people's advisory panels across the county and they have contributed to image audits, refurbishments, stock selection and designing a *teen zone* website.

Blackburn Libraries, with help from young people, have converted an area in their central library into The Curve, an area for young people with a plasma screen, drinks machines, a TV, listening posts and Playstations. In addition to being a drop in facility, it is also used for focused activity and as a meeting place for a teenage reading group, a graphic novel group and special events.

In Newham, young people can act as Peer Motivators and become advocates, reading promoters, marketing executives and youth workers, all within the library context. Each Friday night, The Gate, one of the Newham's libraries opens specifically for young people, with an average of 80 young people in attendance and the Peer Motivators help to promote and support the activities there.

More than a success, it has been phenomenal. Makes me feel secure and I'm sure others would say the same or far better. I feel the community as a whole feels much more close knit due to this project, especially with regard to the teens.
Peer Motivator

Meeting the needs of vulnerable young people

At the recent *Fulfilling their Potential* conference, Beverley Hughes, the Minister for Children, Young People and Families said:

Libraries often lead the way in the public sector when it comes to tackling disadvantage and challenging inequalities. In particular, they are uniquely positioned to reach out to those young people who typically find our services hard to access – young people in care, young people with disabilities or young people from traveller families, who the typical one size fits all approach to public services will do little to help.

It is the evidence of impact which has emerged from focussed projects, aimed at excluded young people, which demonstrates more clearly than any broad brush research, just what libraries are capable of achieving for and with young people. Over the past five years, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation has funded groundbreaking projects, under the Reading and Libraries Challenge Fund (RLCF), which have used imaginative and innovative approaches to engage the hardest of hard to reach groups.

As a result of support from the three RLCF funding streams, libraries have been able to prove that they can play a crucial role in relation to homeless young people, young people in drug rehabilitation, young mothers, young offenders in YOIs and prisons, unaccompanied young asylum seekers and refugees, traveller children, young care leavers and young people suffering the effects of poverty and at risk of underachieving their potential.

However, this kind of working is not just the result of an external stimulus or additional funding. As the TRF website shows, library services across the country are breaking new ground in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable young people. This is proof that, given the opportunity and, in partnership with other relevant parts of the local authority and external agencies, libraries can transform themselves, upskill their staff and deliver the very best services to young people.

5) What are the barriers to overcome so that all libraries can support young people?

Libraries don't need to be cool. They're for books and other things.
(Young person in Carlisle)

Libraries face a tough challenge in debunking the stereotypical image which young people who are non users have of them.

An MLA/DCMS/Laser Foundation study of around 120 young people, found that there was a problem of image and identity for non users. Potential users felt that libraries were simply *not for them*, i.e. that users of libraries are the sort of people that they do not want to be like. Even some current users had a sense that in the main, libraries were used by people that they did not want to be like.

Some of these stereotypes were reinforced by the consultations undertaken with young people in the 11-19 age group by TRA, but those young people consulted who were regular library users gave positive responses, particularly those who were members of homework clubs. They found staff approachable or helpful and felt able to build a relationship with them.

However, outdated views still prevail amongst some non- library users and users who have had bad experiences. A substantial number of young people do not

know that libraries provide Internet access, CDs and DVDs, magazines and activities. A third group had some awareness of what is on offer, but did not consider it relevant, as they feel that they have all they need at home and the library is not considered able to satisfy their need for a place for socialising.

All of the following views were expressed fairly widely amongst non users:

- ❖ They saw libraries as old fashioned, boring, too formal, serious, intimidating, closed too early and too often, no music, too quiet, not enough computers, not enough resources aimed at young people, *uncool* and out of touch.
- ❖ Reasons for non involvement with libraries included a perception that it is *not for them*, lack of awareness about what a library can offer, an expectation of poor resources, a negative view of likely staff attitudes, (*Librarians are scary*) and restrictive rules.
- ❖ Some young people had a view that libraries mainly cater for old people and that this created a twofold barrier, as they perceived that old people do not like young people and that going to a library would also undermine their credibility with their peers.

When asked what the barriers were to accessing library services and out of school activities, young people repeatedly highlighted cost, location and transport as factors. Peer pressure was mentioned by all groups as a deterrent:

It's probably one of the first things that goes through your mind – will my friend come with me?

Several participants expressed the view that activities were not well publicised, so they did not know what was going on in their area. One young person who had participated in the Splash Extra programmes offered by their local library service summed it up very succinctly:

I think you should tell people more about what you do

6) What do young people want from their library services?

The MLA/TRA consultation events revealed that young people had a clear view of what they would like from their library service:

Buildings

Libraries need to have a specific, dedicated space for young people. They have to be colourful, energetic, fun and friendly, with better décor, more posters and more artwork by young people themselves. There should be special areas for young people to hang out with their friends, with more seating, a coffee bar and public toilets. They also need longer and more relevant opening hours

The quietness of libraries was a recurring issue, especially for non users and reluctant users. They saw the need for quiet study areas, but they would feel more comfortable in an environment where noise was permitted, if not encouraged. This would show acceptance of their lifestyles, including mobile phone usage, music and conversation as an accompaniment to most activities.

This feedback clearly echoes the responses from young people to *Youth Matters* and *Cutting the Cake* about their desire for local, well resourced and maintained places to go,

Technology

For many young people, using the People's Network is the main purpose of visiting the library. However, they complain that there are insufficient computers, they are old and inadequate for the task and are frequently not working. They want to see state of the art technology in libraries and adequate access for everyone.

They also felt that library websites should have a young people's space with reviews and recommendations and a chat room for library users. Joining and reservations/renewals online should be the norm.

Resources

Young people want more appropriate and up to date books and other resources and they need to be better displayed, in the way that bookshops display them. A wide range of recently published books should be available, particularly autobiographies, graphic novels, true crime, fashion design, astrology and topical subjects. There needs to be more equipment such as Playstations, more computers and more time on them, more Internet access, free access to a better range of CDs and DVDs.

Assistance in selecting books would be appreciated, with postcards, stickers and posters, including a wall or board where young people could write their own recommendations. Many young people were keen on promotional events, using author visits, reading challenges with prizes, theme days, quizzes etc.

Activities

They wanted more activities, especially creative writing and reading groups, arts or music activities, special interest groups (e.g. graphic novels, gaming) IT courses, careers advice, homework clubs, and the opportunity to meet and work with authors, but more importantly, for the younger age group particularly, no problems with them just hanging out with their friends.

The excluded young people consulted in the *Cutting the cake* exercise took this further and wanted accessible projects and programmes which link into what's going into the community and act as a vital bridge to wider activities and decision making. This could be a key role for libraries, which have those links in place and are increasingly putting participation schemes in place.

Information

In general, libraries were seen as useful sources of information, well organised and wide ranging. Books had a welcome anonymity. However, they wanted more Internet access and more guidance about what internet information was reliable.

Staff

They want to see staff who are approachable, welcoming, warm, polite, non judgemental, confident and experienced in life. Younger staff would be welcomed, perhaps part time or temporary staff from colleges or universities, or young volunteers, but attitude rather than age was seen as important. They need to be interested in reading and knowledgeable about young adult books. They should be authoritative and trained to understand the needs of young people. This is a crucial issue in *Youth Matters* and *Cutting the Cake*, especially for vulnerable or excluded young people. Librarians already have the professional skills and experience and increasingly, they are receiving the necessary awareness raising and training to focus those skills on young people's needs.

Rules and regulations

There should be easy joining procedures and no fines and charges. They wanted a more laid back approach, with no interference.

Image

They expected better marketing, including use of MSN technology and better information about what libraries can offer. Negative stereotyping has a major impact on people's perceptions.

Generally, they perceived that if they had more ownership of library spaces, it would improve the image of libraries with the wider community of young people.

How do young people view the concept of Book Bars?

The Book Bars concept was developed originally in partnership with Derbyshire Libraries Book Pushers and has been awarded a Big Lottery grant of £575,000 to develop the concept in 20 library services across England.

Book Bars will be the physical embodiment of *Fulfilling Their Potential's* new vision of teenage library services:

- ❖ They are a network of new spaces where young people can experience a fresh approach to books and reading
- ❖ They come in three sizes, but they will deliver to the same standard, in terms of their brand and identity
- ❖ There will be a focus on hard to reach young people.
- ❖ Their work will be partnership based

- ❖ Young people will be in the driving seat, helping to choose the building design, stock and refreshments, organising events and evaluating and improving services.
- ❖ Young people will also be able to volunteer as Book Waiters and work with library staff to ensure that all young people receive a warm welcome
- ❖ They will receive accreditation for their contribution through schemes like the Youth Achievement Award

The consultation around the concept of Book Bars, prior to the submission of the Big Lottery bid, was done through face to face events and an online questionnaire. It is interesting to see how positively the young people responded to a specific concept, when compared to the response to the generic consultation summarised above.

Across the board, the young people were unanimous in their approval of the proposed scheme. They felt that it would address their needs for safe, enjoyable places to go, things to do, educational support, recreational reading and creativity, information, guidance, work experience and community involvement. The groups who currently used libraries were more excited at the prospect of literary activities, but, understandably, young people with literacy problems had restricted experience of reading for pleasure, although, in spite of this, the vast majority of young people had positive things to say about reading and were clear that Book Bars would encourage more young people to read:

It would be good to have people your own age inspiring you to read.

It was generally agreed that Book Bars should be more lively places than a traditional library and that quiet places would need to be provided for those who wanted to read in peace.

The need for information and guidance was one of the things about which the young people were unanimous. Many of them clearly felt lost and unsupported in making the transition to adulthood and sources of careers advice seemed to be little known.

Considerable enthusiasm was shown for participation and young people were interested in volunteering opportunities which were creative, practical, fun and empowering. They suggested that volunteers should have Book Bar t-shirts and were keen to be accredited by a national scheme for their involvement. They saw the potential for Book Bars to improve community relations and many of them expressed a willingness to be involved in the future of the project.

If the press got involved, people could see what we actually do, instead of what they think we're doing

7) How do young people's needs differ from the needs of other audiences?

In many ways, young people want the same thing that all potential and current library users would want, a high quality service which meets their needs. The issues which are specific to the 11-19 age group are very much related to the transition from childhood to adult and the contrast between their own feelings of vulnerability and society's sometimes negative view of them as threatening and delinquent.

Issues which have arisen frequently during the various consultations and, which would need to be addressed are:

- ❖ The perception that libraries are dominated by older people, both in terms of the customer base, in setting their priorities and the staffing profile.
- ❖ Peer pressure is incredibly influential and it ranges on a continuum from the desire not to appear *uncool* with one's friends to a real fear of bullying if you venture into unknown territory, which is dominated by another group.
- ❖ Issues like location and opening hours are significant, not just in terms of convenience, but because many young people have very little money at their disposal and are still, in many cases, subject to other pressures and influences including the cost of transport, personal safety, homework, parental views and religious demands, like attendance at the mosque.
- ❖ The availability of up to date technology and relevant resources relates, with this age group, not just to their personal interests and the efficiency of the service. It is an important symbol of their youth and accepting anything less would label them as out of touch themselves.
- ❖ In the same way, the need for their own area, designated with signifiers which are youth related, rather than overt labelling is very important.
- ❖ All of us play different roles, at different times, but this is very marked in young people as they progress towards maturity. The trendy teenager can reinvent themselves the next day, as a serious student needing peace and quiet, a vulnerable young person needing help and support and occasionally can revert to being a needy child. This unpredictability makes them very complex customers to serve.
- ❖ This complexity, together with our own ability as adults to forget just what it feels like to be a teenager, also mean that staff attitudes and skills are probably challenged by this age group more than any other.

There is frequently a disparity between their outwardly aggressive behaviours and their internal lack of self esteem and confidence.

- ❖ Successfully marketing library services, to overcome stereotypical views and getting young people actually inside libraries is a key priority for library services, alongside the need to ensure that staff, resources and services meet their expectations, when they do so.

8) Where do we go from here?

The outcomes of the consultation and research exercises summarised above point to ten main areas of challenge to libraries. If all of our libraries can transform themselves in these key areas, then they can begin to find their rightful place in the lives of young people and more young people can begin to reap the benefits which libraries have to offer.

The crucial issues which are currently being addressed by *Fulfilling their Potential* and which need to be addressed by all library services are:

- ❖ Genuine participation and involvement of young people in service development
- ❖ Opportunities for young people to volunteer and become involved in their local community
- ❖ A dedicated space or time zone for young people, which is welcoming and accepting of youth culture
- ❖ An attractive physical appearance and accessibility, in terms of location, opening hours and procedures.
- ❖ Relevant and up to date books and resources, available in sufficient quantities.
- ❖ Support with information, study needs, signposting and referral.
- ❖ State of the art technology, with easy access to the Internet, MSN etc.
- ❖ Inspiring creative reading activities
- ❖ Improved staff skills and attitudes, complemented by partnerships with other relevant organisations and agencies
- ❖ Effective publicity and marketing

However, the power to exploit the enormous contribution which libraries can make to the lives of young people lies not just in their own hands. Libraries need to be central to the way in which local authorities tackle the vital business of ensuring better outcomes for all young people.

The next task for the Youth Libraries Board to tackle is the creation of an offer from libraries, which will deliver against the needs which have been described in this paper and which draws on best practice. This offer already exists, to a large extent, within the *Fulfilling their Potential* development programme, but it needs a clearer articulation, which is capable of conveying it more effectively to stakeholders and to national policy makers.

It will be essential that this piece of work is seen as part of the action plan which emerges from *A Blueprint for Excellence*.

A third document will also be developed, which will be a concise advocacy document, to be used by the sector with Directors of Children's Services.

Viv Griffiths
May 2007

APPENDIX ONE

A Blueprint for Excellence: Public Libraries 2008-2011 MLA 2007

A Survey of Library Services to Schools and Children in the UK 2005-2006
LISU/MLA 2007

Book Bar consultation meeting Beswick Library TRA 2006

Book Bars online questionnaire results TRA 2006

Consulting with young people in the North West on Youth Matters TRA 2005

Consulting with young people in the North West and South East on the development of volunteering opportunities TRA 2006

Consulting with young people in the South West on Youth Matters TRA 2005

Consultation outcomes from meeting with Bookpushers TRA 2006

Cutting the Cake: things to do, places to go and someone to talk to. Dialogue between young people and officials from HM Treasury and DfES. NYA 2007

Define research study of 14-35 year olds for the Future Development of Public Libraries MLA/DCMS/Laser Foundation 2006

Framework for the Future DCMS 2003 www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/Publications/archive_2003/framework_future.htm

Fulfilling their Potential: a National Development Programme for Young People's Library Services (report and evidence file) MLA/TRA 2004

Fulfilling their Potential Improvement Framework TRA 2005

Hear by Right NYA 2005 www.nyaorg.uk/hearbyright

Paul Hamlyn Foundation Reading and Libraries Challenge Fund reports
www.phf.org.uk

Policy Review of children and young people . a discussion paper
HM Treasury/DfES 2007

Summary of findings from six Book Bar consultation events TRA 2006

Taking Part: The National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport. 2005-06 DCMS
www.dcms.gov.uk.

The duty to secure positive activities . Somewhere to go, something to do,
someone to talk to www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters/thingstodo

The market for provision of positive activities for young people
PricewaterhouseCoopers/DfES 2006
www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RW75

Their Reading Futures resources and case studies www.theirreadingfutures.org

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