

## **Libraries and young people: briefing note for heads of library services**

This briefing note explains and provides background to the accompanying statement '**What should young people expect library services to offer?**'

The statement describes a libraries offer for young people. It expresses what young people themselves have said they value, need, and expect from their libraries.

The offer statement has been created to show the relevance of libraries work to national policies including Youth Matters and Every Child Matters, and to local authority priorities and targets such as PSA and Local Area Agreements.

**This is therefore a very important opportunity for your library service to link to integrated youth provision in your authority.**

The offer has been developed by the National Youth Libraries Board and is based on extensive consultation and research. It builds on the principles expressed in the 2004 Fulfilling their Potential report and all the subsequent FtP work as well as the HeadSpace Big Lottery programme. The offer represents a national aspiration (although in some places it is already a reality), but one which is fully achievable when addressed in partnership with local authority Children's Services partners, using the Fulfilling their Potential Improvement Framework.

### **Who is the offer statement for?**

It is designed for use with and by directors of children's services, elected members and other senior public and voluntary sector partners working with young people in your local authority.

A new version of the offer, aimed at and designed by young people, will be launched later in 2008.

### **How you can use the offer locally**

- To improve your libraries performance, relevance and profile within the local authority
- To improve the life chances of young people

The offer statement creates an opportunity to strengthen existing partnerships and build new ones. It opens the door for new dialogue, particularly now, when children's directorates and elected members are getting to grips with the

new Aiming High statutory guidance for engaging young people. You can use the offer:

Within your local authority:

- As an opportunity to arrange meetings with individual partners, or a briefing for several Children's Services partners on how your libraries can support young people.
- As an opportunity to build closer links with your director of children's service, or as a first step, with your Integrated Youth Support Service.
- To show what high performing library services can deliver for the local authority.
- As an opportunity to connect up your plans for the National Year of Reading with your authority's services for young people.

Within your library service:

- To map existing provision against the offer and set targets for improvement within the library service, using the FtP Improvement Framework.
- To inform and involve elected members.
- To stimulate discussion with young people who use your libraries, engaging them as advocates to those who don't currently use them.

### **Next steps**

- Brief your senior management team.
- Involve your designated head of children's library services.
- Consider how you might use the offer to support advocacy and service development locally.

The offer is being disseminated to national and regional SCL, ASCEL and key partners in the young people's sector. Your regional MLA Partnership may be able to provide further advice on using the offer.

### **About the National Youth Libraries Board**

Framework for the Future identified a need to invest in a major change programme around public libraries and young people. This investment resulted in the Fulfilling their Potential programme, launched in 2004 and led by The Reading Agency (TRA) and the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL)

Since Fulfilling their Potential was launched there have been major new policy developments around children and young people. Therefore in spring 2006 the National Youth Libraries Board was established to champion the role of libraries in delivering against these key government agendas particularly Every Child Matters, Youth Matters, and the new DCSF 10 Year Youth strategy, Aiming High.

### **Membership of the National Youth Libraries Board**

This Board is chaired by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and is managed by The Reading Agency. Other members are: the Society of Chief Librarians, MLA Yorkshire, the Local Government Association, the

Department for Children, Schools and Families; the Department for Culture, Media and Sport; the National Youth Agency; the Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians; the Head of Community Learning and Development at Norfolk Children's Services. The National Youth Libraries Board has also consulted the UK Youth Parliament in the English regions.

**More information about the work of the National Youth Libraries Board is available at <http://digbig.com/4wfby>**