

Response to Youth Matters



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Which of the following best describes you:

<input type="checkbox"/> Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Carer	<input type="checkbox"/> Young Person (under 13)
<input type="checkbox"/> Young Person (13-16)	<input type="checkbox"/> Young Person (17-19)	<input type="checkbox"/> Young Person (other) Please Specify in the box below
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional working with young people	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer working with young people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify in the box below

This is a joint response from 3 organisations working within the public library sector. The organisations are:

The Reading Agency - a charity which works with public libraries to develop creative ways of bringing books and reading into the daily lives of children, young people and adults.

Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) - a professional association made up of the Chief Librarians of each library authority in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. SCL aims to take a leading role in the development of public libraries by influencing statutory, financial and other decisions.

Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL) – a national membership network of Senior Children's and Education Librarians, who work together to stimulate developments and respond to initiatives relating to children and young people in public libraries and education services.

There is, in fact, a striking fit between what public libraries can offer young people and what Youth Matters is trying to achieve. However, the potential contribution of public libraries is currently underplayed in Youth Matters and in our response we will demonstrate:

- the existing contribution of public libraries to providing a whole range of services, which meet the **information, reading and recreational** needs of young people.
- that the public library community has a clear vision of its potential to deliver **improved outcomes** for children and young people and a national transformation programme called 'Fulfilling their Potential' (see Appendix 1) aimed at achieving that vision.
- our commitment to hearing **the voices of young people** and securing sustainable ways of working with them to ensure that public libraries meet their needs. That commitment is evidenced by the consultation activities we have undertaken with young people as part of formulating our response to this Green Paper (see Appendix 2)
- the strategic linkages between our work on transforming public libraries and the outcomes for young people envisaged in **Every Child Matters**, the Shared Priorities between central and local government and Youth Matters.
- the valuable role **books and reading** play in supporting young people, particularly those with **low literacy levels** (who are often at most risk), in their learning, recreation and in enabling them to explore their own identity..
- the range and scope of existing **partnerships** public libraries have brokered at national and local levels to enhance their work with young people.
- ways in which public libraries can **add value** during the implementation of Youth Matters.

We have contributed responses to those questions, on which we can offer an informed response.

General

1 a) What do you think are the most important issues facing young people now?

We recognise that young people today have an amazing range of opportunities, but often face considerable challenges, as Youth Matters clearly articulates. Typically the most important issues lie within the five outcomes which lie at the heart of the Every Child Matters Change for Children Framework: being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution and achieving economic well being. Many young people leave school with low literacy levels and find themselves ill-equipped for today's job market. Public libraries play a key role in developing an enjoyment in reading and books amongst babies, children, young people and their parents and families. This is key to future success, as evidenced by the OECD *Reading for Change* study in 2002 which found that a love of reading has more impact on a young person's educational success than their family's wealth or class.

One key issue, identified through research conducted by Mori in 2002 and borne out by the young people we spoke to during the Youth Matters consultation process, is the boredom which many young people feel as a result of having so few places to go locally. As the LGA's publication *Creating Safer and Stronger Communities: The Contribution of Cultural Services* highlighted, libraries, together with other cultural organisations, have a key role to play in:

- Providing diversionary activities for young people
- Improving cognitive and social skills
- Reducing impulsiveness and risk-taking behaviour
- Raising self-esteem and self-confidence
- Improving education and employment prospects¹

We would encourage central government to acknowledge, during the implementation of Youth Matters and in the context of Community Plans and Local Area Agreements, what young people gain from being engaged with cultural and creative opportunities. From a library perspective, the value young people derive from having opportunities to read for pleasure (rather than for the curriculum) and to engage with authors, librarians and other young readers should not be underestimated.

1 b) How are these issues different for younger (13-16) compared to older (17-19) teenagers?

Young people are all different – they shape their identities during this important period in their life and want to be seen as individuals. Any solution which imposes a generic view of what a 13 year old or 16 year old might want is unlikely to be successful. We would therefore encourage flexible and personalised solutions to young people’s needs. Public libraries are already well placed to deliver a personalised service to young people, as they can choose from an amazingly diverse range of up-to-date resources, including books, comics and magazines and music and films on CD and DVD for free or for small sums. All the young people we spoke to during the consultation were interested in particular bands, authors and films and often saw these interests as important factors in shaping their identities and sense of belonging with their friends. The public library has a significant role to play, therefore, as an accessible gateway to these kinds of recreational resources.

2 Are there issues faced by particular groups of teenagers that are not addressed in this document? If so, what are they?

Yes No Not Sure

In general terms, we feel that Youth Matters adequately covers the full range of issues facing particular groups of teenagers.

3 Do you know of any projects or initiatives which have been outstandingly successful in tackling the challenges covered in this document? If so, please give details.

Yes No Not Sure

Comments:

Our response contains a number of examples of the ways in which public libraries have delivered improved outcomes for young people across the country.

We have not offered a response on Question 4.

5 What more could be done to divert young people from risk-taking behaviour, like smoking, binge-drinking and volatile substance and illicit drugs misuse?

Young people need a range of spaces and activities, which are local and accessible to them to divert them from risk-taking behaviour, which may arise as a result of feelings of boredom and isolation. The young people we spoke to during the consultation felt frustrated that there were so few places for them to go which were within easy reach of their homes and which didn't cost much. They were conscious of the danger (especially faced by young women) of walking home in the dark and of the often high prices and poor service they receive from bus companies. They also consistently highlighted how they were turned off particular facilities targeted at young people where they had experienced bullying, fighting and gangs.

We feel that public libraries are well placed to provide such places and activities, particularly given the extensive network of 3,600 public library buildings in rural and urban communities across England. Libraries are a neutral space – not home, school, shop or street but freely available to all. Many library services are already working with their local Youth Services and Connexions Services to develop new forms of integrated provision and to market their services more effectively to young people. Some young people we spoke to during the consultation had very positive experiences of libraries but we acknowledge there is more to be done to convince all young people that their local public library is a space for them. One solution many public libraries are now turning to (and which proved a big hit with our consultees) is involving young people in redesigning spaces in libraries.

The availability of internet access through the People's Network also means that young people can gain easy and confidential access to information on a variety of subjects, such as drugs and other health related information, which may aid them in making positive decisions about how they spend their time.

Focus on: Redesigning the young people's area of Alfreton Library, Derbyshire

A major consultation exercise was undertaken with young people in Alfreton and via the Genesis Centre. The focus of the consultation has been the re-design and subsequent refurbishment of the teenage area of the library and to undertake a consultation project around teenage magazines. Re-design plans are now being implemented and new magazines for the library have been chosen by the young people. Further work is being done with the young people to feed into the development of a countywide image concept for teenage areas in the county's libraries.

Increasingly, libraries are opening outside of standard opening hours during the evening and at the weekend, so that young people have somewhere safe to go. In Dorset, for example, Beaminster Library is now open every Wednesday evening in the period between school closing for the day and the youth club opening for the evening, so that young people can access the service. Many young people take the

opportunity to research their homework, play computer games or just to find a quiet corner to read their book. Local community residents have reported positively on the reduction in young people 'hanging around' the streets. Meanwhile, in the London Borough of Newham, the library at The Gate turns every Friday night into a space geared to the needs of young people – in the run up to summer exams this year, Friday nights were promoted as Revision Evenings, with staff on hand to support homework and revision, whilst over the summer holidays, with exams out of the way, Friday evenings in the library were given over to a variety of activities, including dance workshops, DJ-ing and stand up comedy nights.

In addition, many libraries have been involved in the Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) initiative and programmes like Splash and Splash Extra, which have demonstrated their potential to deliver diversionary activities for young people in school holidays and out of school hours.

Focus on: Using Playstations in Warwickshire Libraries

In Warwickshire, library staff in Bedworth collaborated with the Nuneaton and Bedworth Community Partnership Officer to tackle the issue of children and young people hanging around outside a small branch library, reluctant to use it but displaying nuisance behaviour towards staff and other users. Dedicated out-of-hours sessions using Playstations, which had recently been introduced into the library, enabled youth workers to tempt them inside. They were found to have very little understanding of the library as a service and what it could offer them. Some of the young people have begun to use the library and a part-time youth worker is now training as a library assistant. Training for library staff in working with young people has proved effective in developing staff confidence and positive attitudes towards them.

Focus on: Creating comfortable young people's spaces in Solihull

In Solihull there is a covered Courtyard/atrium area with books, information, displays, study tables and bean bags specifically for young people. Groups of young people relax lying on bean bags, reading, doing homework, listening to music in small groups and enjoying being in the library atmosphere. The current layout was recommended by a group of young looked after children. However the attraction of Solihull Central Library is its holistic appeal to young people. Large numbers of secondary school and college students use the whole library building for study. It's a very appealing modern multi-zoned building with a cafe and theatre in the foyer and on entering the library the first thing you see are the New Book Promotions, DVDs and music collections. There are sight-lines straight into the Courtyard area. On the first floor the People's Network computers are a draw but as important are the generous number of individual and group study tables always busy with students. When the young people need a break they can sit on the terrace overlooking the courtyard, chat and eat their lunch. Available on the first floor of the library is the Learning Shop and access to Connexions' Personal Advisers. The use of the building continues into the evening with music and drama

performances in the Theatre.

We have not offered a response on Questions 6, 7 and 8.

Chapter 3

Empowering Young People: Things to do and Places to go

9 a) What do you think of the emphasis in the proposals on empowering young people themselves to shape local services?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

As a key and ubiquitous public service, libraries have a major contribution to make here, which we would like to see harnessed. We strongly welcome the focus in Youth Matters on encouraging young people to shape local services, as there is strong evidence from a range of services, including libraries, that having a sense of ownership drives up young people's take-up of services and sustains ongoing use and involvement. It also demonstrates to other sections within the community that young people can play a positive role. We believe that there are a range of imaginative ways in which young people can be involved in their local communities. The public library provides a key route into that wider involvement.

We would encourage the DfES to link up fully with the Home Office-led Together We Can initiative, which contains a target for DCMS on involving young people in shaping public library services

Working alongside young people, we are shaping a range of creative and flexible ways in which young people can be involved in libraries. These include:

- **Choosing books and music/film resources for the library** – skills developed by the young people may include learning to manage a budget; numeracy (e.g. by working out supplier discount); understanding the interests and needs of other young people and reflecting that in the choices of resources made; teamwork and a sense of responsibility.
- **Being involved in library staff recruitment and staff training** – skills developed may include communication and presentation skills; decision-making and negotiation.
- **Being involved in redesigning library spaces for young people** – skills developed may include design and technology; negotiation; teamwork.
- **Assessing the quality of the library service delivered to young people** – skills developed may include communication; report writing and teamwork

- **Supporting other users, such as younger readers or older IT users, in their use of the library** – skills developed may include communication skills and patience.

Many of the young people we spoke to were particularly keen on being involved in library makeover projects, as they saw the potential to change the stereotype of libraries as quiet, dull places. They also welcomed the opportunity to be involved as volunteers and in the recruitment and training of library staff. We believe strongly that public libraries are the civic gateway to young people's involvement in wider community and democratic life and are working with the National Youth Agency, through the *Fulfilling their Potential* programme, to develop creative routes for young people which might lead them onwards from engagement with public libraries to wider involvement in their local communities. We would welcome discussions on how best we might make links with other developments, such as the Russell Commission.

Focus on: Involving young people at risk in shaping libraries in the South West

Partners for Change is an ambitious new project, based in the South West, which aims to develop new ways of engaging young people at risk in their local library service. Funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and supported by a partnership involving The Reading Agency, South West Museums Libraries and Archives Council (SWMLAC) and the National Youth Agency (NYA) and three local authorities, the project will involve over 150 young people in Dorset, Gloucestershire and Swindon between October 2005 and March 2007. In Dorset, the library service is working to build ongoing relationships with young Travellers at four Traveller sites in the county, whilst in Swindon, staff are working with groups of teenage parents to support their confidence and enthusiasm for working with the library service to deliver 'family friendly' services. In Gloucestershire, local young people from the most deprived parts of the county are being engaged in a 'makeover' of the libraries' music services. At the heart of the project is a commitment by all partners to use the NYA's Hear by Right framework to support the participation of young people.

Focus on: Developing advocacy skills amongst young people through the Bookpushers project in Derbyshire

Derbyshire Libraries Book Pushers are young people who are recruited and trained to act as reading advocates. They promote books and libraries to their peers, their families and to adults. Three groups have been trained so far (from Buxton and Chesterfield). They have achieved national and international recognition, getting involved in media interviews, the production of a LGA DVD, providing advice and comments for publishers, as well as delivering presentations to a range of adult audiences at local, regional, national and international conferences. Evaluation has demonstrated the impact of the project on the young people's learning, achievements, skills and personal development.

Focus on: Young people changing library services in West Sussex

West Sussex Libraries worked in partnership with members of the Youth Cabinet to present the case, to the full Cabinet of the Council, for abolishing overdue charges incurred when children and young people bring their books back to the library late. The young people's advocacy on the negative impact overdue charges can have on children and young people's take up of library services proved instrumental in the County Council agreeing to abolish the charge.

9 b) What options are there for achieving this?

We are working closely with the National Youth Agency to build our capacity to involve young people in the design, delivery and evaluation of public library services and are encouraging library managers across the country to adopt the Hear by Right framework. We recognise though that securing young people's participation, particularly the participation of young people who might be disengaged from public services, requires commitment, resources and support and is only likely to be successful if it has widespread stakeholder support. However, it provides a strong basis on which to transform service provision and can provide a variety of positive learning opportunities for young people, which can enhance their educational and employment prospects.

10 a) What should be done centrally to support the development and delivery of local opportunity cards?

We have discussed Opportunity Cards with the libraries' minister David Lammy and know that he is keen for library membership and library services to be at the heart of the cards. Around 60% of the population has a library card and there are existing examples of where library membership has been linked to reduced rate or free public transport and retail discounts for young people.

The young people we spoke to generally welcomed the concept of the Opportunity Card and were keen to secure improved access and discounts to a range of sporting and cultural services. They were attracted to reduced loan charges for CDs and DVDs from libraries and were also keen on reduced rate or no library fines.

We see the Opportunity Card as providing a means to drive up young people's access to, and awareness of, the full range of public library services. Some young people are not aware that membership of a public library is free and can provide them with a gateway to a range of resources and facilities, many of which are free.

We would welcome the chance to discuss the potential to link library membership to other services envisaged for the Opportunity Cards and would be happy to discuss public library involvement in the forthcoming piloting of Opportunity Cards. We also

see a key role for the library in making young people and their parents and carers aware of the services available to them via the Opportunity Card.

Focus on: b_line card in Derbyshire

Derbyshire County Council has a card known as the b_line card, for young people between the ages of 12 and 19, which is principally a concessionary travel pass incorporating a huge range of discounts for local authority services, leisure activities and retail stores. The b_line service includes a website, a magazine and an SMS alerting service. It has many similarities to the proposed Opportunity Card and the library service uses it widely to promote services of interest to teenagers – for example, by offering discount promotions on DVDs, CDs and computer games.

10 b) How should opportunity cards be developed so that the maximum number of young people can benefit?

The success of the Opportunity Cards undoubtedly rests in local providers, (including cultural, sporting, transport and retail providers), joining up their provision at a local level so that there is a rich and wide-ranging programme of activities on offer. That richness of 'offer' and the underpinning marketing of the Opportunity Cards are likely to be the most significant elements required to ensure widespread take up.

An additional focus should be on encouraging collaboration between service providers so that young people can not only take up individual services but be guided from one provider to another. On a practical level, free public transport linked to library and other activities would be a significant incentive to young people's participation. At a more strategic level, partnerships between arts, cultural and sports services should produce some imaginative and engaging activities, which could also enable young people to progress and to participate in a wider range of activities. Young people at our Plymouth consultation suggested 'taster sessions' as one way in which they could find out whether they were likely to enjoy new activities.

11 a) Which activities do you think have the most benefits for young people?

Young people benefit from participating in a wide range of activities, covering culture, the arts and sport. Activities which have been designed with young people in mind; which are facilitated by people with particular skills in working with young people and which have clear learning outcomes are all likely to be of benefit to young people.

Libraries offer opportunities for critical and creative experiences – which merit greater attention than we see in Youth Matters. The stimulation of reading, meeting and personal interaction, global sharing through communications technologies are all readily accessible in libraries. Such experiences are valued by young people and can bring longer term essential benefits in a knowledge economy.

Equally important for young people are activities which enable them to reflect on, and express in a creative way, the challenges they face. Books, as libraries' key cultural resource, provide alternative perspectives for young people and can be a valuable way for them to learn more about the world around them and the issues which other young people face. Books like Melvin Burgess' *Junk* can provide a stepping off point to discussing important social issues, like the misuse of drugs. Increasingly, public libraries are developing young people's reading groups, which provide a supportive forum for young people to discuss issues raised in books.

The development of the Inspiring Learning for All (www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk) framework by the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) has enabled public libraries, for the first time, to capture the learning outcomes of their work with young people in five key areas:

- Knowledge and understanding
- Skills
- Activity, behaviour and progression
- Enjoyment, inspiration and creativity
- Attitude and values

We would expect to use Inspiring Learning for All to demonstrate the impact of library programmes on young people's learning (in the widest sense) as part of any accreditation process emerging from Youth Matters.

11 b) Do the proposed national standards on activities cover the right areas?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Whilst we welcome the acknowledgement within the proposed national standards of the contribution of arts and culture, we remain concerned that the significant contribution libraries could make in this context may be overlooked when guidance for local authorities and mechanisms for accreditation are drawn up. Public libraries have a major role to play in providing places to go and things to do for young people. Our key strengths are the accessibility and neutrality of libraries as spaces in local

communities. Our transformation work also means that we're increasingly able to deliver high quality and stimulating learning experiences for young people. We have a long history of successful partnership working and are increasingly fostering cross-cultural and cross-agency work. A good example is the work of the Cultural Hubs, where libraries, museums, archives and arts organisations are joining up to deliver creative and engaging learning opportunities for young people. When we talked to young people, they identified a number of positive activities, which public libraries could play host to. These included:

- Meeting authors and illustrators
- Putting together magazines with local information for young people
- Forming a reading group to talk about books you're interested in
- Arts activities, such as photography and music workshops
- Building websites

Focus on: Amplifier project in Suffolk (www.amplifiersuffolk.co.uk)

Libraries in Suffolk have been collaborating with the Amplifier project, which aims to build on young people's interest in rock and pop by providing lively instrumental and music technology tuition, DJ-ing, song writing and rock journalism workshops, advice and guidance on managing and promoting bands and gigs, support for the development of local fanzines and opportunities to create CDs and to play live. Building on the library service's work in recent years to actively welcome young people into libraries, the Library Service and Amplifier have come together so that:

- Acoustic performances and DJ-ing inside libraries and busking outside libraries on Sundays (when all libraries in the county are open) is welcomed.
- Demo CDs are distributed through libraries as free loans
- The Amplifier website is actively promoted via the People's Network in libraries
- Rooms are provided in libraries for song writing and rock journalism workshops
- Amplifier publicity is displayed prominently
- Young people involved in Amplifier work help the library service develop its rock and pop listening, reading and watching lists of CDs, books, magazines and DVDs

11 c) Are they achievable and affordable within existing resources?

Yes

No

Not Sure

In developing a programme of positive activities for young people, we would encourage DfES to explore creative uses of existing assets within the public library sector. With access to library buildings in every local community the potential for partners to make use of library buildings, services and resources including when the buildings are closed to the public is a hugely under-rated and value-for-money resource. Co-locating services in settings such as libraries should make it easier for young people to access services and libraries already work in a wide range of partnerships to provide activities for young people including Connexions advisers, PAYP activities, Out of School Hours Activities, Homework Clubs, Childcare Information Services etc. As next year sees the launch of a new Lottery stream focused on capital improvements for Community Library buildings, we would welcome the opportunity to make young people's needs a priority and to make direct linkages with the Capital Fund for young people. We can see many opportunities for joint working and developing a critical mass of benefits for young people.

Similarly, the availability of 20,000 computers in libraries across the country via the People's Network, gives integrated access alongside many other resources. This represents an existing infrastructure for delivering ICT-based learning and information services to young people in their local communities. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss with DfES ways in which the People's Network could deliver additional online services for young people and in a safe, supportive setting.

Many library authorities already provide web-based resources and services for young people. National coordination or linking of such provision will enormously enhance the potential benefits. The cost of delivering a programme of activities, and the necessary infrastructure to deliver it, is dependent on successful inter-agency working; on building on existing strengths and resources and on a holistic approach to workforce development.

Chapter 4

Young People as Citizens: Making a Contribution

12 Will our proposals, taken together with those of the Russell Commission, lead to increased mutual respect between young people and others in the community?

Yes

No

Not Sure

As part of the *Fulfilling their Potential* programme, public libraries are increasingly developing volunteering opportunities for young people in line with Recommendation 9 of the Russell Commission. We believe that public libraries provide a gateway for young people into wider involvement in their local communities and so see the development of a national programme of volunteering opportunities in libraries as key to developing widespread social capital amongst young people. Equally valuable is the positive visibility, which young people gain through volunteering with the library amongst other sections of the local community.

We recognise the need to shape volunteering opportunities with young people themselves, so they feel committed to the volunteering process. We also feel young people will be more attracted to volunteering if they see it as a direct way of influencing the service itself, particularly the way it delivers services to other young people. Many of the young people we spoke to were interested in volunteering in the library.

Three regions within England have been working with The Reading Agency and Community Service Volunteers (CSV) over the summer period to shape Lottery bids, which would, if successful, enable the delivery of regional volunteering programmes for young people in libraries.

Focus on: Young Volunteers in Essex and Kent Libraries

Essex Libraries has a programme of involving large numbers of young people as volunteers during the annual Summer Reading Challenge. Their role as mentors and role models for younger children is seen as invaluable. Meanwhile, in Kent, young people are forming a rapidly growing percentage of the overall volunteer profile within the library service. The percentage of volunteers working in Kent's libraries aged under 16 and 16-24 has risen from 0% and 8% in 2002 to 2% and 15% in 2004 as a result of participation in the Lending Time project. Young volunteers are involved in a wide range of volunteering activities including support for IT (Web Wizards), Homework Club support for younger children, arts displays and events, surveys and reader developmental activities.

13 What more can we do to recognise and celebrate young people's positive contributions to their communities?

Through exhibition, performance and promotion the public library can be the location to present the positive contribution of young people to their community and to foster good community and inter-generational relations. The young people we spoke to were certainly keen for their efforts to be acknowledged positively. Many felt strongly that older people held negative perceptions of all young people. We would therefore strongly advocate the potential of the public library as an appropriate community venue for showcasing and celebrating the contributions of local young people.

Focus on: 'Their Past, Your Future' project in Stoke-on-Trent

An intergenerational reminiscence project funded by the Big Lottery and aimed at bringing young people together with veterans of World War II to discuss their wartime experiences took place in Stoke-on-Trent. The aim was to provide young people with a new and stimulating learning experience that would enrich their curriculum work. Other outcomes for the young people involved, who were drawn from four local high schools, was a great social experience, which underpinned citizenship work and contributed to local community cohesion. Library and teaching staff stood back and watched relationships and respect blossom. In total almost 200 young people aged 13-15 took part and over 50 older people.

14 Would the opportunity to earn rewards motivate young people to get involved in their communities?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Most of the young people we spoke to during the consultation, regardless of their background or educational attainment, were interested in volunteering in their local community. A small number of them were already involved, either through supporting younger children at a local youth centre; helping get rid of graffiti in their local area or working in a local Oxfam shop.

All felt that volunteering could help you feel better about yourself; could build your sense of ownership in your local community and could be useful in terms of future job and college prospects.

Most of the young people valued the idea of certificates and awards, recognising that they could assist them in finding careers. Being appreciated was important to them; however they were generally less positive about receiving 'payment' in terms of gifts, feeling that this detracted from the point of doing something purely to help others. They showed a generally altruistic streak, believing that the good feeling that volunteering provided was reward enough. Most of the young people were not keen on big award ceremonies unless celebrities were to be involved but they did mention that a trip out would be appropriate reward. They felt strongly that young people could be encouraged to volunteer but they should not be forced:

“When you say you should do this, the rebel in you comes out – so you shouldn’t force young people to volunteer.” (Young person in Plymouth)

15 How can we ensure that young people from the diverse range of communities that make up today’s society are effectively engaged by service providers?

Engaging the whole community in service delivery and planning is a challenge faced by all public services, not least public libraries. In our experience, securing ongoing involvement involves a genuine commitment from staff at all levels; time to build relationships with young people through outreach and partnership work and a commitment to developing staff skills to engage effectively with young people.

Libraries are inherently places of diversity – from world literatures to global connectivity. With partner agencies and through the engagement of young people in library design and development we will increasingly draw a young and diverse user community to libraries. Outreach and off-site work is increasingly capturing the potential for library services to relate to young people’s social and cultural aspirations.

Focus on: The *Welcome To Your Library* Project for refugees and asylum seekers

The Welcome To Your Library pilot project (2003-4) enabled public libraries in the London boroughs of Brent, Camden, Enfield, Merton and Newham to lead the way in improving access and quality of services for refugees and asylum seekers. Funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and co-ordinated through the London Libraries Development Agency, the project’s successes included:

- Mapping of refugee communities and support organisations
- Identifying needs that could be met through public libraries and barriers to library use
- Awareness training on issues facing refugees for over 200 library staff
- Developing local partnerships with refugee community organisations and others
- Structured taster visits and ICT sessions leading to over 300 new users
- Simplifying joining procedures
- Providing ESOL, community language and reading support
- Purchasing new stock with input from refugee communities
- Storytelling, events and workshops bringing together communities and cultures.

Following further funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation in 2005, Welcome to Your Library is now extending its remit and will be working with an additional 5 public library services, including three outside London.

The project has had many successes, including:

- In Newham, a group of unaccompanied minors drawn from the local refugee and asylum seeking community were taken to Borders Bookshop having each been given a £20 book voucher so that they could buy their own books. Two of the young women also had children of their own and were given an additional £10 to buy books for their children. They were then given a tour of the library at The Gate, where they were able to join the library and use the People's Network facilities. Their project worker reported that for many of them, this was the first time they had ever owned books and they were amongst the few personal possessions many of them had with them in their hostel accommodation.
- In Brent, a young refugee involved as a volunteer in training and awareness sessions for library staff about what it feels like to be a refugee has subsequently secured paid employment with the library service.

Focus on: YouthBOOX project engaging socially excluded young people

The YouthBOOX programme, which finished last year, 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 for socially excluded young people by bringing together library and youth services to effect a sea change in young people's attitude to reading. The programme had significant outcomes for the young people involved, as it gave many a positive and creative experience of reading for the first time. No judgements were made about the reading materials themselves, with magazines and graphic novels among the materials made available to the young people involved. Learning from YouthBOOX has proved integral to the subsequent development of *Fulfilling their Potential*.

Focus on: e-street project in Birmingham

Targeting homeless people across the city, e-street provides lifelong learning opportunities to people whose circumstances mean they are not able to access mainstream education services. Working in places where they feel safe and comfortable, e-street offers on-line and tutor-led courses designed to meet individual and group needs, including ICT, music, health and wellbeing and basic literacy/numeracy and is supported by experienced Learner Support Outreach Workers. This model has also been successful in working with other hard-to-reach community groups including Asylum Seeking communities, running ESOL/ICT courses, and with young people not in mainstream education.

Chapter 5

Supporting Choices: Information, Advice and Guidance

16 What kind of help and support is most important for young people?

Public libraries have a very significant role to play in meeting young people's information and study support needs, as well as supporting those young people who have particular needs in terms of basic literacy, numeracy and IT literacy. The provision of free internet access through the People's Network and the availability of study space means that increasingly young people are turning to public libraries to meet their information and learning needs. And whilst some young people may sometimes feel embarrassed about borrowing books on sensitive subjects, the increasing availability of self-service check out facilities in many libraries mean that young people can protect their privacy.

The role of the librarian is critical. They can support young people's information literacy, giving them help to find the information they need and to evaluate the quality and currency of information. Beyond that, librarians can play a crucial role in signposting young people to other sources of help and advice.

Focus on: InformU project in Southend (www.informU.co.uk)

InformU is much more than just an information website. Running for just over a year, through a partnership between Southend Library and the Children's Fund, the site is dedicated to children, young people and families in the Southend area. As well as a 'What's On' listing of local events and activities, InformU provides up to date information about a wide range of over 350 clubs and activities in the Southend area, from tiny sports clubs through to links to the local leisure centres, dance, music and drama clubs and far more. The site also has information on every kind of support that young people, their parents and agencies working with young people might need, including changing schools, bullying, health issues, homework support, parenting issues. The bigger vision for InformU is to give children and young people in Southend a voice. The site is regularly promoted in schools throughout Southend and has recently been quoted as an example of good practice in a survey of similar sites by local authorities.

We have not offered a response on Question 17.

18 What do you think of our proposals to devolve responsibility for information, advice and guidance to children's trusts, schools and colleges?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Any devolvement of IAG services must include provision in community locations. We know that around 10% of young people are not in education, employment or training, so a unilateral focus on schools and colleges may risk missing those most in need of the service.

Many library services have gained the Matrix standard or the Guidance Council Quality Standard and some have local partnerships in place with the Connexions service. In Cambridgeshire, for example, many Connexions services are co-located in libraries, whilst in Birmingham and Solihull, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has funded the central libraries to deliver the 'referral hub' role of the Learndirect Advice Line, providing impartial, comprehensive information and advice.

We would recommend that in their new commissioning roles, Children's Trusts are encouraged to commission library services to provide elements of the information and referral role of IAG services, drawing on the existing best practice of partnerships between libraries and Connexions. Provision in this way would be cost-effective in delivery terms, maximising efficiencies in staffing, resources and premises.

Focus on IAG support in Birmingham's Libraries

Targeting young people not in mainstream education, Birmingham Libraries provide alternative curriculum support, advice and guidance designed to re-engage them in education/training/careers and to meet their information needs. Working on a referral basis, open to any statutory or voluntary organisation, Birmingham works with young people on an interest based, individually tailored programme across the service to provide an inclusive resource. Individual projects include writing and recording musical compositions, designing Japanese pagodas and writing poetry.

Focus on: The Learning Shop, Solihull Central Library

Solihull Learning Shop is a partnership between Connexions and Solihull Library Service. It occupies a large, central area on the first floor of Solihull Central Library and provides a full range of IAG services to young people, as well as Nextstep services for over-19s, from information to advice and full guidance sessions. As a partnership operation it has an integrated staff of Connexions Personal Advisers and appropriately trained library staff, and is able to provide services beyond the range of Connexions or school-bound services, by being staffed cost-effectively throughout library opening hours of up to 8 p.m. and including Saturdays, and to a quality level recognised by the Matrix standard. The "department store" approach makes for easier access: it is not tied to a school or other establishment; there is no special visit to make, and no door to open to go in; with no doors or boundaries, young people can wander through the area, browse the facilities or drop in to make enquiries or seek advice, without any undue formality, embarrassment or stigma. Its long opening hours and location also provide ease of access for young people not in education or in work-based learning or employment.

We have not offered a response to Question 19.

20 a) Do you agree there is a case for quality standards for information, advice and guidance? If so, what should they cover?

Yes No Not Sure

We believe that quality standards for the provision of IAG services are essential in order to ensure that the information provided is of a high quality and up-to-date; that is delivered by well trained staff and provides appropriate routes for referral.

21 Would quality awards for IAG help to ensure high quality and impartiality?

Yes No Not Sure

We have not offered a response to Questions 22 and 23

Chapter 6

All Young People Achieving: Reforming Targeted Support

24 How can we ensure that young people facing particular barriers, for example those who are disabled, are effectively engaged by service providers?

We recognise that many young people face barriers when engaging with service providers. Experience in libraries with looked after children, in particular, suggests that service providers need to spend time building relationships with young people and their parents and carers; buildings need to be considered for their accessibility and all providers need to be conscious of 'over consulting' with particular groups of young people. Many library services have achieved Charter Mark status in recognition of good user relations.

Focus on: Reducing barriers in Kent Libraries

Kent has used MORI to run focus groups with young people to inform the development of a 10 year strategy for Libraries and Archives and, most recently, to inform a review of opening hours reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training.

We have not offered a response to Questions 25, 26 and 27.

Parents

28 b) How, or through whom should information be delivered to parents?

Public libraries have an important role in making a range of information available to parents, including information on what's on in local communities for young people to a range of health related information. Because libraries are a neutral independent space, parents can be assured of getting unbiased, confidential information.

29 How could schools help parents remain involved with their teenagers' learning and future education opportunities?

The opportunities presented by the Extended Schools agenda, particularly the focus on working with other providers such as libraries, should provide a more holistic way of involving parents in their teenagers' learning and may have a significant impact on parents' own learning. Co-located libraries (such as Rossmore Library and Learning Centre in Poole, which is a dual use facility that is shared by the

public and Rossmore Community College) can offer opportunities for family learning and an informal space for recreational use by teenagers and their families.

Other

30 Do you have any other general comments?

Please see Appendix 1 for more information on public libraries our commitment to improving library services for young people through the *Fulfilling their Potential* national transformation programme.

Appendix 2 contains information on the consultation activities with young people we undertook as part of preparing our response to Youth Matters.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply X

Here at the Department for Education and Skills we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

Yes No

Appendix One

Transforming Public Library Services for, and with, Young People

Policy Context for Public Libraries

Public libraries have historically recognised their important role in delivering services to young people. From *Investing in Children: The Future of Library Services for Children and Young People* produced by the then Department of National Heritage in 1995 through to the ground-breaking *Start with the Child* in 2002, public libraries have long been focused on maximising children and young people's access to the full range of public library services. That commitment has been re-articulated and strengthened within the last 18 months through a national transformation programme envisaged for public libraries' provision to 11-19 year olds, known as *Fulfilling their Potential*, which forms part of a wider national transformation of public libraries, led by the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), known as *Framework for the Future*. We are heartened that our early work on Fulfilling their Potential, which predated Every Child Matters and Youth Matters, aligns well with the five outcomes envisaged for children and young people envisaged by the Change for Children agenda.

Fulfilling their Potential

Fulfilling their Potential has been formulated by a stakeholder group, including representation from the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL), the Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL), the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and the National Youth Agency (NYA). It is managed by The Reading Agency and has been focused, during its first year of implementation on:

- building a shared vision within the library community and with young people themselves for library services shaped to meet the needs of young people²
- identifying the workforce development issues associated with a transformation programme of this kind
- shaping and supporting partnerships at national, regional and local levels with other agencies working for and with young people
- developing an improvement model for library managers to enable them to assess their existing provision to young people and to agree priorities for improvement³

Having consulted widely, including with groups of young people in different parts of the country, the initial *Fulfilling their Potential* report identified five key elements for libraries' offer to young people. These include:

- The library as the space in the local community for young people
- Inspiring, relevant reading including creative reading activities
- The chance to get involved and shape the library service
- The library as the place to participate in the wider community and in democracy
- The library as the independent place for information and study support

² *Fulfilling their Potential: A National Development Programme for Young People's Library Services* (June 2004) and the associated *Evidence File* (May 2004) can be downloaded from www.readingagency.org.uk

³ The Improvement Model can be downloaded from www.readingagency.org.uk

We believe these elements can deliver significantly improved outcomes for young people and have mapped these against the Every Child Matters and Shared Priority outcomes in the table below:

Fulfilling their Potential – outcomes for young people

Every Child Matters outcomes	Shared Priorities Outcomes	Fulfilling their Potential outcomes	Related area within Youth Matters (references to Youth Matters shown in brackets)
Be Healthy	Promoting Healthier Communities	Through providing an independent place for information and study support, young people will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy better mental health • Make informed choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping young people make informed choices about their lives (81) • Becoming more aware of what's going on for young people locally (chapter 3) • Easy access to an innovative ICT service (168 189)
Stay Safe	Creating safer and stronger communities	Through getting together with other young people in their community through library-based projects and activities, young people will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel more confident and empowered • Understand each other better • Feel safe in a local community space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Things to do, places to go / positive activities (chapter 3) • Having safe spaces (136)
Enjoy and achieve	Raising standards in schools And Improving quality of life for children and young people	Through having opportunities to be involved in inspiring, relevant reading activities, young people will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy reading widely • Enhance their creativity • Become more engaged in learning • Develop better skills • Perform better at school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Things to do, places to go / positive activities (chapter 3) • Local offers (127)
Make a positive contribution	Creating safer and stronger communities	Through having opportunities to get involved in their library service and gain information via the library on how to be involved in their wider local community, young people will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate more in local decision-making and their local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteering (chapter 4) • Encouraging young people to become involved in their communities and make a positive contribution (chapter 4) • Making services more responsive to what young people want (88 and 143) • Celebrating young people's achievements

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain more self-esteem 	in the community (chapter 4)
Enjoy economic well-being	Promoting the economic vitality of communities	<p>Through having access to information and study support facilities, including free Internet access, at the library, young people will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop better skills, leading to better employment prospects • Become more informed about available choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy access to an innovative ICT service (168 and 189) • Seeking information and advice independently (189)

At the heart of *Fulfilling their Potential* is a strong professional commitment to supporting the full participation of young people themselves in the transformation process.

Appendix 2

Consultation with young people to inform our response to Youth Matters

80 young people from communities in the North West and South West regions met with staff from The Reading Agency during the consultation process to inform this response to Youth Matters. The young people were drawn from the following locations:

- A Homework Club, based at Longsight Library in Manchester. The group was drawn from an ethnically diverse group of young people living in the inner city.
- North Cumbria Technology College, Harraby, Carlisle
- Young people involved in the Eden Community Outdoors Centre in Appleby, Cumbria. Individuals in this group live in one of the most rural parts of the North West, with very limited access to services.
- 40 young people from Plymouth attended 3 separate workshops held at TR2 (Theatre Royal Plymouth's Outreach and Rehearsal space). The young people ranged in age from 10 – 20 and were drawn from all parts of the city. Some had been involved in a Teenage Reading Group at the library, others were involved in the Barbican Theatre in the city and in the arts outreach activities delivered by TR2. The group was a mixed socio-economic group.

Our aim was to talk to young people who had had some positive engagement with their library service alongside those with no or limited experiences. We collaborated with the Museums Libraries and Archives Council North West, the South West Museums Libraries and Archives Council and the Arts Council South West to gather young people's views on the whole range of arts and cultural services. The consultation took the form of a highly interactive workshop with a skilled facilitator. We will be returning to all the young people involved in the consultation to feed back their ideas and to indicate how local providers would like to work with them in future to improve young people's cultural provision in their communities.

Format of the consultation

Introduce concept of Youth Matters. Youth Matters is about how young people spend their time and feel about their local communities at the moment and how the future will look. Government are thinking about what kind of activities should be provided for young people, how they should be paid for and how young people could be encouraged to feel better about where they live and their place in society.

Things to do and places to go.

1. In an average week what proportion of your time do you spend:

- Watching TV
- Using computers for games, chat rooms, msn etc
- Doing homework
- Playing sport
- Doing arts activities
- Hanging out with friends
- Other

(Pie chart)

2. What other things do you do in your spare time?
3. If you're involved in activities in library etc do you also use arts centre, theatres etc. Would you like to be?
4. How important are these things in putting you off being involved in activities at the moment?
Card sort – order from most likely to least likely to put you off
5. Where do you spend your free time?

Stick stickers on map with park, shops, sports centre, library, museum, church, cafe

6. Have you been involved in activities at library, museum or archives? (Arts centres, theatres etc)
7. Would you like to be involved in any of these kind of activities?
Card sort, Probably, possibly, not likely
8. What puts you off being involved in activities in MLA?
9. Should there be more safe and enjoyable places for young people to spend time outside of school?
10. If there were more safe spaces and activities what would be the impact on you and your friends? Do you think less young people would get into trouble?
11. What would libraries, museums and archives have to do to be seen as safe, enjoyable places for young people to hang out?
(Also Arts centres, theatres etc)

Volunteering/ being involved

1. How do you feel about your local community? Do you like where you live? Do you feel safe? Do you feel connected to other people? Like you belong? Feel welcome in most public spaces?

2. What would make you feel more positive about your local community?
3. Do you volunteer/ help out in any way at the moment? Coaching kids, visiting old people etc
4. Was it good? What do you think the benefits of volunteering are? Would volunteering help you feel more involved in your community?
5. How do you feel in libraries and museums? (Arts centres, theatres etc)
6. Which of these things would you like to be involved in at museums, libraries, arts centres etc?
Card sort. Probably, possibly, not likely
7. How would you feel if you were involved in these ways?
8. What else would make you feel more involved in your community?
9. Could being involved in making local history projects, interviewing old people, making exhibitions of photos etc make you feel more like you belong, improve relations?
10. What kind of recognition/ award would encourage you to help out in your community more? Certificate, cds, top-ups, big events, other. Art displayed in gallery/ museum, prize giving etc

Info, advice and guidance

1. If you need information about the following things where are you most likely to get it? Card sort – put each issue with the source of information (can go in more than one place)
2. Is it better to get info from people or written sources? Pros and cons?
3. What role could libraries play in this? Pros and cons of getting info from library?
4. Have you ever been involved in an arts activity that helped you to explore personal issues in your life? Could arts be important?

Opportunity cards

Explain what an opportunity card is.

1. Would a card that gave you discounts and money to spend on activities encourage you to do more activities in your spare time?

2. Would parents top it up?
3. Should young people who commit crimes or behave badly not get their cards topped up?
4. What things should be available on the opportunity card? What arts and cultural things could we do e.g. free library reservations, more IT time, special events, free cds and dvds, free entry to museum and theatre etc
5. Would working towards a recognised qualification e.g. Young People's Arts Award encourage you to do more arts activities?

Thank you and distribute gift vouchers.