

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

PROGRESS REPORT ON TAKING FORWARD "EXTENDING ENTITLEMENT: SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN WALES"

Purpose

1. To provide the Committee with the opportunity to comment on recent developments, and in particular on emerging implementation issues.

Timing

2. The legislation was debated at Plenary on 2nd July 2002 and is due to come into force from September, 2002.

Background

3. As a result of the widespread involvement of practitioners and partner organisations in developing the consultation version of the Direction and Guidance seen by the Committee last December, the final version differs in minor detail only. The final document is attached as Annexe A. The document is currently being printed and will issue later this month.

4. The Youth Policy Team (YPT) has been working proactively over recent months to support local authorities and their partners in implementing the legislation. Officials from the team have taken responsibility for acting as "link officers" for a small number of Young People's Partnerships (YPPs). This has had the dual benefit of providing a designated source of guidance and support within the Assembly Government for the local officers coordinating the work, whilst at the same time, allowing the Team to monitor progress and to identify and work to counteract potential difficulties as they arise. It has also assisted in further nurturing the spirit of cooperation and trust between the Assembly and its local partners which was established with the publication of the original report and has been a feature of subsequent Youth Policy Team initiatives.

5. YPT has also been instrumental in drawing together on a regular basis the organisations which contribute to developing policy and support for young people at an all- Wales level. Organisations involved to date include : the Wales Youth Agency, CWVYS, WACVC, Canllaw-Online, Llais Ifanc, Children in Wales, Careers Wales and ELWa. These discussions have proved helpful in ensuring consistency and coherence of activity at national level, and have already led to improvements in inter-agency communication. Some shared priorities for further

coordinated work at an all-Wales level in order to drive forward the "Extending Entitlement" agenda are also now beginning to emerge.

6. Timescales set by the Assembly Government are ambitious, but there is evidence of much enthusiasm and commitment in implementing the agenda within local authorities, the voluntary sector, and partners in other statutory organisations and agencies. Progress in developing the infrastructure for implementation has depended not only on willingness of the various parties but also on practical factors such as experience of partnership working in the area and speed of recruitment/designation of key staff to drive the initiative.

7. Annexes B and C to this report set out respectively in greater detail progress and issues with local YPPs and emerging local priorities. Inevitably, this can be little more than a snapshot at the time of writing. Work is moving forward rapidly, and we therefore propose to provide the Committee with a further progress report in approximately 6 months time, by which point we expect to have a much clearer view of the picture across Wales. Notwithstanding the progress being made in putting in place the infrastructure for implementation of "Extending Entitlement" it is important to bear in mind that our objective of achieving far-reaching and fundamental change in the way young people are regarded and treated by society as a whole including many of those who provide services and support for them is a long term, strategic project which will take time to reach full fruition.

Financial implications

8. There are no additional financial implications for the Assembly arising out of the legislation. This year's Revenue Support Grant includes an uplift of £1.75 million, (representing a significant increase of 87.5%) for strengthening youth support services. While the general settlement is unhypothecated, the Assembly will be looking to see an improvement in the quality and reach of statutory and voluntary youth work in each local authority area over and above the provision which would otherwise have been made for this. As part of my overall spending plans for education and lifelong learning over the next three years I will consider making provision for a further RSG uplift in order to sustain support for authorities in taking forward "Extending Entitlement". This will be taken into account alongside other priorities when I prepare my bid in the forthcoming budget planning round.

9. In addition, Young People's Partnerships are expected to identify funding available to them from a variety of other sources, and work collaboratively to maximise its use to deliver their agreed, shared, priority objectives.

Compliance

10. The Assembly has a duty under Section 10 of the Education Act 1996 to promote the education of people in Wales. Sections 40 and 85 of the Government of Wales Act facilitate

the exercise of that function. These powers are delegated to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning.

"Plan for Wales 2001" Considerations

11. Implementation of the legislation and the establishment of YPPs has no direct implications for sustainable development. However, they will eventually lead to the improvement of provision and support for all young people across Wales, thus promoting the Assembly's objectives of reducing social disadvantage and improving equality of opportunity for everyone.

-

-

-

Contact Person

Suzanne Chisholm

Youth Policy Team

029 2082 6056

email : suzanne.chisholm@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Annex B

EMERGING LOCAL PRIORITIES FOR SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Guidance requires each Young People's Partnership to identify a minimum of **three** local priorities to address each year.

Most YPPs are currently in the process of agreeing priorities for action for the 18-month period beginning September 2002 with all partners and young people. Until this exercise has been completed, a definitive statement showing the priorities for each YPP is not available. However, the following list has been compiled to give the Committee a flavour of the type of priorities which are likely to emerge across the country.

These initial priorities provide a strong indication of issues which will be significant in delivering Extending Entitlement. There is a high degree of commonality in priorities identified by a number of partnerships which will inform the creation of a national framework, and will be used to assist other Assembly developments in developing policy affecting young people.

- provision of appropriate information services to young people (10)
- transport/ rurality/ access to services (5)
- access to leisure, cultural and social facilities (4)
- access to high-quality, community-based provision (3)
- extending and upgrading provision (3)
- drop-in centres for 14+ year-olds
- provision for 15+ age group
- housing issues (cost/ availability/ avoiding migration out/ supported / shared) (2)
- drug/alcohol services; sexual health (5)
- tackling rural and urban deprivation insofar as they impact on young people's freedom of choice
- better basic skills provision (2)
- establish anger management / conflict resolution provision
- better local post-16 training provision (2)
- new opportunities for developing 14-19 curriculum
- improving education, training and employment opportunities for YPs (2)
- improving citizenship & informal education opportunities
- a broader range of opportunities
- develop a strong and effective YPP (2)
- raising awareness of the YPP role with young people & service planners
- questioning existing attitudes towards young people
- better inter-agency working (2)
- develop protocol for future audits/ monitoring & evaluation of progress
- enhance local personal support services for YPs
- support YPs to live independently
- support YPs to avoid involvement in crime
- better support and services for young travellers
- identifying and addressing needs of disadvantaged young people (3)
- services and support for young parents (2)
- mental health support (3)
- develop multi-agency support, including mentoring, for children in need & careleavers
- improved support for YPs to participate fully in local communities

Annex C

PROGRESS AND ISSUES WITH LOCAL YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTNERSHIPS (YPPs)

Much good work has been done in a relatively short timescale by local authority Chief Executives in setting up the infrastructure to deliver "Extending Entitlement" within the Assembly Government's timeframe. The scale of the task, and the challenges faced should not be underestimated. Although some "problems" have been identified, it is important to recognise that the will and the mechanisms to address them are also present at local level. The very fact that they have been identified can lead us to hope that they will be resolved before too long.

Setting up the Young People's Partnership

The establishment of genuine partnership between a wide variety of agencies will take time to mature. Partnerships are being asked to work in a very different way to deliver high expectations. Progress has been varied, depending on local circumstances :

- the level of commitment of key individuals;
- the existence – and comprehensiveness- of existing partnerships,
- the experience within the area of successful partnership working;
- delays arising from desire within a local authority to move forward simultaneously on other fronts eg Children and Young People's Framework, 0-10 Partnership etc

At the time of writing, 20 of the 22 YPPs have held at least their first meeting, and a number have met several times. The following resume will, we hope, give the Committee a feel for the issues which have arisen in the early months of implementation.

Membership of the YPP

Following emphatic representations by many organisations during the consultation exercise, this was set out prescriptively in Annex 2 of the Guidance. Local authorities and other partners have done much preparatory work in establishing the new partnerships in line with the guidance. However, three key issues have emerged so far:

- over-representation of the local authority leading to an imbalance between the sectors
- in some instances, inappropriate lack of seniority of the representatives from other statutory sector organisations;
- apparent lack of clear understanding on the part of some "additional" nominees as to the representative nature of their role.

These issues have been discussed with the relevant YPP coordinators, and we are hopeful that, as YPPs begin to meet regularly and get into their stride, these "teething problems" will

largely disappear.

Voluntary sector engagement

The voluntary sector has in general been committed to playing a full role in the partnerships. A number of issues have emerged, including:

- how to allocate the 3 "local group" voluntary sector seats on the YPP between the many voluntary organisations working with young people in the area
- how to ensure good 2-way communication and feedback between the 5 voluntary sector representatives on the YPP and their "constituencies"
- capacity of the voluntary sector to resource attendance at YPP meetings, sub-groups etc
- willingness of some other partners to accept voluntary sector members of YPP as "real" partners with a valid – and valuable, though different- contribution to make

These issues are being addressed with the relevant YPP coordinators; where they are common to several, they are also being taken up with the appropriate national coordinating body.

Coordination of the Partnership

The management of co-ordination has been a matter for local determination. A variety of arrangements exists. Some authorities have designated an existing staff member to take on YPP coordination arrangements as well as their existing duties. Others have established a YPP Coordinator post, while a further group have combined responsibilities for Children and Young People's Framework Coordination, and/or young people's participation with responsibilities for YPP coordination.. One or two authorities have yet to designate responsibility or have failed to attract suitable applicants.

Vision / "Dreaming the dream"

We have encouraged YPPs to undertake a visioning exercise, based on the entitlements set out in the guidance, of what they wish to achieve for young people in their area by 2008, and to involve young people in the process. Progress again is variable between YPPs, as is the level of boldness they are demonstrating in moving towards a vision that focuses on young people as "customers" of service providers, and the needs expressed by young people. In more than one area, however, promising and exciting visions are emerging, as partners and young

people question and challenge each others' existing pre-conceptions and improved understanding develops.

Auditing provision, need and resources

Partnerships have been requested to audit existing provision and to work with young people to assess its effectiveness and identify need. Gaps and overlaps should emerge as part of the exercise. Resources – human, capital, and financial also need to be audited so that YPPs can, over time, assess the effectiveness of existing spending patterns. Most YPPs have embarked on this process, in some cases using audit material drawn from existing sources. The quality of the first audits is predictably mixed, and YPPs have come to realise that continuing work will be needed to develop and maintain an up-to-date , comprehensive database. However, partnerships now have more information than ever before on the provision for Young people.. The Assembly's special Grant monies (£60K etc...) could be used for young people to support this aspect of provision as well as more general support for partnerships and the involvement of young people.

Developing a 5-year rolling strategy

The deadline set in the Guidance for submission of the draft strategy to the Assembly Government is 31st July 2002, with a view to the final version being published by the end of October, 2002. The indications are that whilst a number of YPPs will submit a first draft which is incomplete or has not yet been fully consulted on, the majority are on course to publish their first 5-year strategies by the end of October deadline. Reasons given for the delay are generally the desire to "do a proper job", make better use of the initial audit findings, make sure there is ownership by all YPP members, and ensure that a broad range of young people have had the opportunity to have effective input. These are all valid reasons for some delay - but delay has to be balanced with the need to maintain momentum. Officials have explained to local authority Chief Executives and to their YPP partners that whilst we understand their desire to do the best possible job in the time available, 5-year rolling strategies are developing plans which we expect will be refined and honed over time.

Developing the first annual delivery plan

The deadline set for submission of the draft delivery plan was 31st May, 2002. Approx 50% of delivery plans had been received by June 24th. Delivery plans for the 18-month period to end March 2004 come into force with the legislation on 1st September 2002; YPPs which do not have a delivery plan in place by that date will make slower progress than others. Reasons

given by YPPs for non-submission of initial delivery plans are similar to those for 5-year rolling strategies.

Involving a broad range of young people

Most YPPs are making a determined effort to engage with young people in undertaking their activities, generally by building on existing structures such as school councils, youth forums, and focus or user-groups. There is some good practice in working with hard-to-reach groups. Plans to extend the reach and depth of this work are emerging; effective participation requires intensive preparatory work with young people by highly skilled staff, and therefore takes time. The Assembly Government has set as a national priority (on which we require a full report by March 2004) the extent to which young people are meaningfully involved in YPP activity. Many YPPs who have made progress in this work have been surprised by the feedback they have received, and have decided to review existing priorities as a result.