

# Youth matters

## Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 4  
November 2005

Your comments must reach us by that date.

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**education and skills**

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The information you send to us may need to be passed to colleagues within the Department for Education and Skills and/or published in a summary of responses received in response to this consultation. We will assume that you are content for us to do this, and that if you are replying by e-mail, your consent overrides any confidentiality disclaimer that is generated by your organisation's IT system, unless you specifically include a request to the contrary in the main text of your submission to us.

The Department may, in accordance with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, make available on public request, individual consultation responses. This will extend to your comments unless you inform us that you wish them to remain confidential.

**Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.**

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If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:

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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

Please Specify:

Director of Education and lead officer on the Change for Children programme.  
This response is made on behalf of the County Council.

If you work with young people, which best describes the organisation you work in:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Statutory Youth Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Connexions Service
<input type="checkbox"/> School	<input type="checkbox"/> Further or higher education institution	<input type="checkbox"/> Private or voluntary & community sector youth work organisation
<input type="checkbox"/> Private sector information and advice organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other voluntary & community sector organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:

Please Specify

## General

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

Comments:

Young people are society's greatest asset. Today, the journey from adolescence to adulthood is different. More young people remain in education and there are fewer of the more traditional "rights of passage" available. In consequence, more young people remain dependent on their families for longer. Equally, the influence of the media and expectations of a society which tends to value achievement in material terms have created a complex environment in which to grow up.

All young people experience changes during adolescence, ranging from physical to psychological. During this change, they require the support and understanding of those around them, both family and friends, and service providers. This support should reflect the diverse range of needs of young people. These include health needs (emotional, mental and physical) and practical needs such as advice and information in relation to education, careers and independent living.

For the majority of young people, these needs are met. That said, even for these the world is a more complex and demanding place and they often require support and help, sometimes from sources outside their families and friends.

For a "significant minority", the transition into adulthood is further complicated by their social circumstances. Young people at risk of social exclusion experience greater problems and services must be configured to assist this group as a priority. As a general principle, early intervention is an important factor in successful outcomes. For this minority, it is particularly important and we must tackle the risk factors early. These factors include poverty, discrimination and growing up in public care.

In summary, adolescence is a stage of life which brings with it many changes. These changes are compounded by a fast changing world. All young people require some degree of support and guidance, and as a general principle services should focus on prevention, flexibility and working with young people to build resilience. Specifically, services should prioritise the minority of young people who face more complex problems. For these, we must tackle the risk factors at an early stage and provide a flexible, coherent pattern of support which works with young people to produce a successful outcome.

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

Comments:

For the younger group, their issues are more likely to be related to their life stage (puberty). Much of their focus will be related to this and channelled through family, friends and school. This is a generalisation though and there will be some young people at this age who have complex needs and either cannot or choose not to receive support through these channels.

After the age of 16, young people begin to consider their own identity. For this group (again a generalisation) there is an increased need to support and encourage the exploration of this identity and the choices which face us all as we grow up. Increasingly for the post 16 group, acceptance by peer groups, self expression, independence and taking a place within communities (and society) are important.

In providing services, it is important firstly to recognise that age is not intrinsically linked with development and that young people grow at different rates. As a consequence, a mixed economy of provision is important across the age range, with support available both inside and outside of school, families and friends. Generally, services should be developed so that they don't judge or stigmatise. They should respect confidentiality and be provided in a way which is sympathetic to the role of the parent but be aware that as young people grow, they seek independence and their own identity. Above all, services should reflect the needs of young people and be driven by them.

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

X Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

There is too little attention paid to the following areas:

- Housing, homelessness and independent living.
- Emotional and mental health, particularly the strengthening of CAMHS services and a better approach to integrated support at tiers 1 and 2. This would include access to counselling, which we believe to be an effective form of therapy and not widely available currently.
- Supporting young people into work and training, particularly the provision of effective 14-19 alternative curriculum and links with training providers and employers.
- Rights-based advice needs.
- Support to young people from minority ethnic backgrounds (including asylum seekers and refugees).
- Support to disabled young people.

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.

X Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Nottinghamshire has a number of successful approaches, including the following.

- A successful teenage pregnancy strategy.
- A successful programme of enrichment activities for schools provided through our Youth Service. These include use of our three adventure bases for outdoor and adventurous activities, many of which lead to accreditation.
- A successful approach to participation, led by our co-funded (Connexions and the Youth Service) Youth Engagement Team.
- A successful strategy to reduce those young people who are not in employment, education or training, including a large Entry to Employment (e2e) programme led by our Young People's Division.

- A successful healthy schools programme.

Many of our successes are set out in our Annual Performance Assessment.

4 a) How can we encourage young people to take their responsibilities seriously?

Comments:

Our experience is that most young people do take their responsibilities seriously. Our role is to work with young people to make them aware at an early stage what is expected of a citizen. Engaging in this way with the help of family and friends will assist young people in the process of managing their own behaviour and recognising that we all have a responsibility to each other. It is important also to celebrate achievement and recognise the value of citizenship education in both formal and informal settings. A strong, well resourced Youth Service can play a significant role in this regard, working with young people to meet their social education needs, challenge poor behaviour and prejudice, and to take their place in communities. Above all, we should all work to build resilience in young people so that they have the confidence and skills to make the right decision when faced with difficult choices. In this regard, we support the proposals in the Green Paper to strengthen the statutory base of the Youth Service.

4 b) What should the incentives be for good behaviour?

Comments:

We should celebrate achievement at all levels, particularly with those young people who may not be high academic achievers. We should encourage young people to support and recognise achievements amongst their peer groups and balance the pressures of academic expectations with opportunities to have fun.

4 c) What sanctions should be applied for poor and disruptive behaviour?

Comments:

We don't support the introduction of further sanctions. Young people have enough to cope with and there are many mechanisms at informal and formal levels to sanction them. We should encourage a culture of open and constructive challenge amongst peer groups, families and service providers. Unacceptable attitudes and behaviour should be challenged at source in a consistent and supportive way, with an emphasis on pointing out the positive alternatives which are available.

4 d) Do you know of any examples of schemes which have applied these kinds of incentives and sanctions effectively?

Comments:

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?

Comments:

There is no one solution to this. The availability of flexible local provision, ranging from generic advice and guidance through to targeted support, is important. The emphasis should be on voluntary participation and a joined up approach so that services provided outside (or in partnership) with schools are complementary to each other (and the approach taken in schools). In addition, we must work to reduce the risk factors, including poverty and exclusion from school. This requires a consistent approach which is led by local need and preventative in nature. Provision of a wide range of things to do and places to go will also encourage constructive use of leisure time. Again, a strong Youth Service (statutory and voluntary sector) is critical to this. Lastly, better integration and planning of targeted support, particularly out of school programmes is important, so that young people at risk are seen as a priority.

6 What practical benefits and challenges will there be in developing an integrated youth support service?

Comments:

There will be many benefits to developing an integrated youth support service. These are consistent with the general aspirations of the Every Child Matters agenda and include the following.

- Better needs assessment, leading to better targeting of resources.
- Better sharing of information and development of a common language, leading to a more holistic view of the lives of young people and their needs.
- A reduction in duplication of effort and a service driven by a common vision.
- Effective use of economies of scale and the development of a critical mass which will enable better service delivery and the raising of the profile of work with adolescents.
- A breaking down of professional boundaries, increased sharing of skills and expertise leading to better professional practice, particularly in relation to identifying and tackling the risk factors that can have a detrimental effect on lives.
- A more consistent approach to the participation of young people in the planning and delivery of their services.
- A more consistent approach to the recognition of achievement, through integrated performance management systems which lead to the pooling of accredited achievement gained in informal and formal education

settings.

- A more integrated approach to safeguarding of young people.
- All of the above should lead to better outcomes.

There are also many challenges in relation to this agenda. We need to ensure that the climate is appropriate for change, and that change is planned and resourced properly. To bring together a range of different professional disciplines and sectors (voluntary and statutory) to provide the level of coherence which is necessary will take time and sensitivity. From our perspective, we see this as requiring a clear local vision to support national aspirations, with “sign-up” across the board. This will need to be supported with strategies in key areas, notably needs assessment, targeting of resources, sharing of information, performance management, workforce development and commissioning. It is not enough to expect all sectors to work together and further consideration should be given to extending the duty to co-operate to schools, General Practitioners and Youth Offending Services.

On a more practical level, Youth Matters does not define clearly what is meant by an integrated service or what constitutes a local “offer”. Further thought will be necessary if these concepts are to be translated into a consistent pattern of service with standards and a means of measurement. We welcome the pilot phase for Targeted Youth Support Teams (we have been chosen as one of the pilot areas) and will no doubt learn a lot from them. That said we are keen to ensure that definitions and standards are built around a positive model of young people and not a deficit model. Specifically, we would like to see a basic entitlement to services expressed clearly, building on the work begun in the Transforming Youth Work and Resourcing Excellent Youth Services reports. In this regard, we support the notion of improving outcomes for all young people whilst narrowing the gap between those who do well and those who do not. For this to be a reality, however, there needs to be more guidance about what constitutes an integrated service, and recognition that there are many long standing cultural, structural and workforce issues to be tackled along the way. At the same time, we are clear that integration of services should not mean a watering down of professional expertise. We would rather see the bringing together of clearly defined professional groups through effective partnerships.

7 How can the Connexions brand be used to best effect within the reformed system?

Comments:

We have an extremely positive relationship with our Connexions Company and it is considered to be one of the best. In Nottinghamshire, our Connexions Partnership has been very effective in the reduction of NEET. This question depends, therefore, on the role that Connexions will play in the future. A move towards delivery of information, advice and guidance suggests that the brand might be used to support this. That said, we are aware that Connexions Nottinghamshire will make its own response which is likely to offer a more informed view than we can.

8 What more can we do to ensure that reformed services are focused on achieving the improved outcomes we all want to see?

Comments:

Firstly, the shift to focus on outcomes will require further cultural and organisational change. Currently, most services are driven by individual targets which are not always joined up across the sector.

Secondly, outcomes must be relevant to the lives of young people and set with their involvement. As far as possible, they should be cross-cutting so that an holistic view of achievement is developed. This should include linkage with sectors such as health through the National Service Framework.

Thirdly, for outcomes to be measurable, there must be a clear linkage with the Common Assessment Framework and other tools for supporting the management of performance. These will need to be simple and user friendly, particularly if our partners are to base their services around achieving the same outcomes. This simplicity and commonality should extend also to the inspection framework, which should be evidence and practice based as well as reliant on the analysis of performance data.

Lastly, at a local level, there must be flexibility to configure services according to circumstances. There will undoubtedly be some advantage to co-located teams and the pooling of resources but this must be allowed to develop locally, without too much prescription from Government. The same is true of targeted schemes aimed at particular outcomes, which should also be allowed to be delivered according to local circumstances.

### 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?

X Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

We agree entirely with this aspect of the Green Paper and support the effective participation of young people in the planning and delivery of their services.

9 b) What options are there for achieving this?

Comments:

The best way to answer this is to set out the principles from our draft Strategy for the Participation of Young People in Nottinghamshire, which is being developed for our Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.

- Participation should be driven by the needs of young people.
- Young people should have an equal opportunity to participate.
- We should work to support the involvement of groups of children and young people who face the greatest barriers.
- Young people's participation should be based around a properly resourced framework, which includes an effective mechanism for feedback<sup>1</sup>.
- Participation must bring mutual benefits young people and service

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<sup>1</sup> Nottinghamshire County Council supports the Hear by Right standards for effective participation.

providers.

- Participation should lead to positive outcomes, which are communicated to and agreed with young people.
- Young people should work together to support and promote participation.

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

Comments:

Our consultation with young people, professionals and stakeholders tells us that there is very little support for the notion of an opportunity card. More support is forthcoming for a card which offers universal discounts for sporting, leisure and cultural activities, and above all transport. In fact, in Nottinghamshire, transport is the biggest issue facing young people and we suggest that the effort and resource which could be applied to the development of an opportunity card be dedicated to a national discount scheme for public transport.

Under no circumstances could we support the use of sanctions in relation to opportunity cards or other similar schemes. Young people in particular see this as divisive and unfair. As previously stated, we believe there are enough sanctions currently.

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

Comments:

Our view is expressed above – we do not see value in devoting a lot of time and resource to an opportunity card. Government should learn from the Connexions Card experience. We encourage Government to think again on this aspect of the Green Paper.

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

Comments:

Activities which are driven by a combination of young people's wants and needs and that they enjoy. Actually, for many young people this can be as simple as meeting friends in a social environment. It is important, that like adults, not all young people are treated the same and there should be a mixed economy of provision which is accessible to all. For too many, activities are structured around ability and are too costly. We support the delivery of activities through a strong local partnership of all agencies, combining to assess needs and to offer all year round, low cost provision. This includes the development of high quality, safe and comfortable environments for young people to meet their friends and explore their world, with the support of trained professional workers. We support the notion of additional resources to develop capital projects but suggest that the amount quoted in the Green Paper is not significant enough to make a real difference. If we are serious about providing high quality places to go and things to do we must invest in a sustained and sufficient way, through Children's Trusts.

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

X Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

We welcome the intention to introduce standards and would be happy to be involved in further consultation leading to their agreement. Some consideration should be given to defining what is meant by "positive" activity and "local" offer. Once again, the delivery of services to meet standards will require a mixed economy of provision, linked to a statutory entitlement for young people, backed up by a stronger statutory base for the Youth Service.

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

Yes

No

X Not Sure

Comments:

From a local authority perspective, it is difficult to see how we can deliver more within our existing resources, which are likely to be under extreme pressure in the face of competing demands and the need to find efficiency savings. It will require an effective commissioning process and a healthy mixed economy if we are to meet all the demands that the Green Paper places upon us. There is no doubt that additional resources would make this more likely, particularly in the short term. We advocate strongly for existing funding streams such as the Transforming Youth Work Improvement Fund to be continued (and included in core budgets if possible). In addition, care should be taken to ensure that resources are targeted at areas of greatest need, resisting temptation to spread them too thin. To do so could create a leisure and recreation based approach which is less effective in terms of social and personal 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

X Not Sure

Comments:

The proposals will certainly help and we welcome the recommendations of the Russell Commission. To be truly effective, these proposals will need to be managed in partnership with Children's Trusts and will require a partnership approach. There is no doubt that volunteering builds confidence and demonstrates a willingness to put something back into the community. We are keen to ensure that volunteering opportunities are available to all and linked, wherever possible, to accreditation. We are cognisant also of the power of peer mentoring as a form of volunteering and would like to see this as a feature of future developments.

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

Comments:

The key to this is to use appropriate mechanisms to celebrate achievement. For example, in Nottinghamshire we celebrate the achievement of Looked After Young People through a set piece event at Centre Parcs and it is very successful. We also work with the media to try and ensure that achievements are publicised appropriately. It is also important to ensure that accreditations achieved outside of school are recognised and have currency with formal education and employers.

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

X Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Our experience is that young people respond to rewards, provided they are structured properly and proportionate to achievement. We are developing our own local rewards policy to recognise the involvement of young people in participation activities. This is based on work undertaken by our Connexions colleagues and will give us a useful means of rewarding young people appropriately.

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?

Comments:

We all have to do more to achieve this. It requires a concerted effort across the board to assess the needs of all young people and design services to provide effectively for them. In the first instance, service providers have to reach out to young people from different backgrounds so that they are aware of what's on offer, and feel confident in accessing it. At the same time, we have to ensure that services are accessible. There are workforce development issues in this respect also and we must ensure that our workforce reflects the community. In areas such as Nottinghamshire (predominantly white), we must work hard to raise awareness of issues related to good race relations so that young people from minority ethnic communities feel confident in accessing our services. Much can be done with informal education programmes to tackle attitudes. It is important also to create welcoming environments which are culturally sensitive, and to work in partnership with schools and their support services such as the minority ethnic achievement and language support services. At the same time, we have much to do to ensure that disabled young people can access our services. In Nottinghamshire we have a dedicated Disability Support Team in our Youth Service and this has had a significant impact on our ability to include disabled young people in our services.

## Chapter 5

### Supporting Choices: Information, Advice and Guidance

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

Comments:

Young people require help and support in a wide range of areas. Our local research shows that there is a mixture between practical help and advice about education, careers etc. and support in areas such as emotional health, mental health, drug and alcohol abuse etc. The important factor here is to ensure that advice and information is:

- Young person focused.
- Available when young people want it and in range of different formats to suit preference, need and ability.
- In one place so that young people can make one visit.
- Informal.
- Delivered to a high standard and by trained, empathetic staff.
- In accessible premises which are welcoming and warm (and house a

number of interventions).

- Linked to robust referral mechanisms.
- Built around mutual trust between the provider and young person with a strong heritage of user involvement.

We should not underestimate the amount of advice and information that young people receive from their family and friends, particularly through puberty. Part of our role is to build resilience amongst young people so that they are able to advise each other, and to provide families and carers with relevant, accessible and up to date information to assist them.

17 How can we ensure that information, advice and guidance provided to young people is comprehensive, impartial and challenges rather than perpetuates traditional stereotypes?

Comments:

Advice, information and guidance must cover the gambit of young people's needs. In order to this it must include education, employment, training, rights based advice (housing, welfare benefits etc.) and personal and health issues. It should be delivered in appropriate places by trained professionals. It should be accessible to young people and suited to their needs. The development of core standards in this regard is seen as helpful, provided they cover the wide range of needs set out above. At the same time, the mixed economy of provision is important here also. For some young people, accessing information, advice and guidance through school will be appropriate but for others it will not. High street provision is an important aspect of this work, particularly for the post 16 age group. In this respect, a strong partnership between independent and statutory providers can often add value. Specifically, our future partnership with Connexions is important as are our links with the voluntary sector. Independent providers such as Youth Access also have much to offer and we are sure that the Government will receive a good deal of well informed commentary in this area.

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

Comments:

Whilst we agree that the proposals make sense, we are keen to ensure that services are impartial and offered across the wide range of subject areas outlined above. We will be interested to see the development of the proposed standards in this area and are keen to add our views as these develop. We must make sure that there are a range of outlets for the delivery of information, advice and guidance and that schools and colleges are not the only option. Our continuing partnership with Connexions and the voluntary and independent sector is crucial in this regard. Young people must be able to access services on a wide range of issues, on an impartial basis and in a mixed range of settings. Commissioning and inspection processes should be in support of these basic principles. We must ensure that schools and colleges offer high quality and impartial information, advice and guidance and there are some tensions here between the Every Child Matters agenda and the drive to offer schools increased autonomy.

19 a) Do you agree that it is important to have minimum expectations of the information, advice and guidance received by young people?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Yes, provided the comments made in previous questions are taken into account.

19 b) Are the proposed expectations correct for each age group?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Once again, the critical factor is the mixed economy of provision. Needs are not age specific. For some young people, school based services will work, whilst for others they are not appropriate. We must ensure that we provide a consistent pattern across all ages and issues, in appropriate settings and to a high quality.

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

Comments:

Yes, we agree with this proposal. There are standards in existence and these should be used as the basis for further development. Specifically, we are aware of work undertaken by Youth Access, the Legal Services Commission and Connexions. If our previous comments are taken on board and this existing work utilised, appropriate standards should be forthcoming. We would be happy to be consulted further as the standards are developed.

20 b) How can they be made affordable without putting pressure on financial or workforce resources?

Comments:

We are not sure that they can. Development of new standards in any area will have resource implications. Organisations need help to ensure that staff and other resources are in shape to meet new expectations and this will take time and money. That said, if the standards are clear and measurable (and driven by the needs of young people) that would be a good start. At the same time, simple self assessment tools would be helpful to ensure that we're all working to the same expectations. It is important that we recognise the likely involvement of partner agencies in delivering this area of work so standards need to recognise the differing levels of capacity which exist currently.

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

Yes

No

X Not Sure

Comments:

There must be a relationship between the cost of gaining the award and the impact it has on the quality of outcomes. Experience tells us that some awards work in this regard and others don't. We would need to see more detail to make a better informed comment. We are aware that some Connexions Partnerships have supported local awards and that these have had an effect on encouraging consistent quality in schools.

22 Do you think a 'personal health MoT' for 12-13 year olds would be an effective way of helping young people make a successful transition to the teenage years and to secondary education?

X Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

A cautious yes, provided it covers emotional and mental health and is delivered within a personal and social education context. We are concerned that any such initiative is managed properly and by professionals with appropriate training. We're not sure why it needs to be age specific and can see benefits to it being available at all ages.

## Chapter 6

### All Young People Achieving: Reforming Targeted Support

23 Do you think there is a good case for bringing together within children's trusts responsibility for commissioning different services which provide support to young people with additional needs?

X Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Yes – we agree that we could derive better value and outcomes by planning and targeting better. Over the years, the variety and short term nature of specific funding streams has not been helpful and more ability to control things locally would be advantageous. We recognise the need to ensure that an effective commissioning process is developed in this area. We have particular concerns about CAMHS services and see this as an opportunity to improve these, particularly at tiers 1 and 2. We also recognise the need to integrate as many services as possible into the new Targeted Youth Support Teams and look forwards to our involvement in the pilot stages. We recognise also the need to engage effectively with schools as partners and that this will be possible only if they engage fully with the Every Child Matters agenda. In this

regard, we do see some tensions between the latest proposals for the future management of schools and ECM.

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

Comments:

Firstly, we must recognise the need to change our existing practice if we are to improve. We need to market our services better so that all young people receive information about them in a format which is suitable to them. We must reach out more through detached and outreach services and take a critical look at our physical environments so that they are able to accommodate all young people. Our staff groups need to be able to explain to each other what is available and to make referrals around the network of providers. This will require some workforce development and investment, particularly if disabled young people are to access all services and take part in activities. It will also require the development of better information sharing models. We have a successful Disability Support Team in our Youth Service and it has taught us a great deal about how to include disabled young people. Above all, we must change attitudes and resource our services at the levels which are necessary to include all young people. This will require a culture shift and take time. We recommend that all services for disabled young people are configured around the social model of disability, which ensures that young people drive the provision and not the service provider.

25 How can we ensure that the new lead professional role is successful in co-ordinating the delivery of targeted support to young people who need it?

Comments:

The basics must be in place first.

- What is the definition of the role of a Lead Professional and what authority will they have?
- Will Lead Professionals be profession specific? It is our view that they should not and that a range of professions are suited to take this role as and when appropriate – teachers, youth workers, education welfare officers, social workers etc.
- What is the threshold for a young person being allocated a Lead Professional?
- How will information, assessment and referral be handled so that the Lead Professional has access to all the necessary details and is able to

ensure an effective response?

- What is the relationship between the Lead Professional and the Targeted Youth Support Teams?

We believe that there is value in developing the role of the Lead Professional but that there is much work to be done before it is implemented locally. We see this as organic and urge a cautious approach. We do not advocate the development of a single profession for young people and request that the development of the Lead Professional takes into account the value of distinct professional specialisms.

26 What more could be done to help older teenagers make a smooth transition to support from adult services, where they need them?

Comments:

Locally, we have a strategic transitions group which is bringing together local providers at a senior officer level to ensure effective transition. This will enable more effective planning and sharing of information. We will need to take care to ensure that this work continues as we move into the new Children's Trust arrangements. We could look at the possibility of delivering some services across the age range (up to 25, for example) so that the transitions are managed at a more appropriate level (CAMHS services, for example). We already manage a range of work based learning programmes across the age range and our work with disabled young people is up to 25 years of age.

The key to this area is effective communication and a flexible approach to those services where artificial age barriers are not helpful in practical terms.

## Parents

27 At what stage(s) of their children's lives would parents find it most helpful to receive information about how they can support their teenage children?

Comments:

This depends on the individual young person and their parents. In general terms though, year 6 would be a good start point but a more effective approach would be to develop a range of help and support across childhood and adolescence.

28 a) On which issues would parents of teenagers most like support?

Comments:

This will also depend on the young person and their parents. We need to bear in mind that not all young people are able to discuss issues with their parents, particularly as they get older. We must ensure that young people have access to a range of independent information, advice and guidance.

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

Comments:

Parents will have the same need for flexibility and a mixed economy approach – see questions 16 and 17. There should be a separate approach for young people and parents, based on the range of needs which we all have. Ideally, parents should have access to personal support but this is likely to be expensive and not our highest priority.

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

Comments:

This will require a partnership approach to family learning. Local consultation shows us that extended schools and children's centres offer potential for this work to be developed and we will explore this. We are sure that early intervention is key and that we should get parents involved in the education of their children as soon as possible and make efforts to continue this. We see much good work at the primary phase which could inform practice at secondary level. From some schools, this will require a culture change and take time. We support a range of programmes locally, including successful family mediation through our Youth Service.

**Other**

30 Do you have any other general comments?

Comments:

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**

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?

XYes

No

#### Code of Practice on Consultation

All UK national public consultations are required to conform to the following standards:

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

Further information on the Code of Practice can be accessed through the Cabinet Office Website: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/consultation-guidance/content/introduction/index.asp>

**Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.**

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 4 November 2005

Consultation responses can be made:

[www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations)

by email to: [youthmatters.consultation@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:youthmatters.consultation@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)

or in writing to:

Consultation Unit  
Area 1A Castle View House  
East Lane  
Runcorn  
Cheshire  
WA7 2GJ