

The National Youth Agency

Research Programme Series

Enjoying and Achieving: The implications for youth work of Every Child Matters

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Book 1: **Introduction**

Book 2: **Being Healthy**

Book 3: **Staying Safe**

Book 4: **Enjoying and Achieving**

Book 5: **Making a Positive Contribution**

Book 6: **Economic Wellbeing**

Enjoying and Achieving

Key points

- The main emphasis of Every Child Matters (ECM) appears to be on achieving rather than enjoying, but it is important to maintain a balance between the two.
- The increasing use of economic incentives and disincentives to shape young people's behaviour, dominated by the 'respect' agenda runs contrary both to the original intentions of ECM, and to the ethic of youth work. Youth work is based on voluntary engagement rather than coercion, and the idea that young people develop their own aims, rather than have policy aims thrust upon them.
- The family and community contexts in which young people live can significantly affect their ability to enjoy and achieve.
- Interventions targeted at specific age groups or vulnerable groups or disadvantaged urban communities are likely to leave out many who are less visibly needy. Youth work has a wider age remit than ECM and is well placed to identify vulnerable young people who are less visibly at risk.
- Though youth work is concerned with the community context of young people, it seems less concerned with their family context. Thus, though there are many youth work projects which aim to improve community cohesion, there are very few which aim to improve family relationships.
- For a wider population of young people to get the most out of opportunities for enjoying and achieving, their parents also need to be on board. Youth workers may have a future role in this area, perhaps in mediating between young people and their parents.
- Some young people already have many demands on their time, and family obligations, so the idea of 'free time' should be treated with caution. The idea that young people need to become active citizens in their communities can hinder recognition of their contributions in the private sphere of their families. It is not only young carers who contribute in this way.

- The emphasis on values in youth work obscures the practical aspects of the work done and the outcomes achieved. In practice, youth work is often strategically geared to policy concerns as well as responsive to those of young people. The dilemma is to find the balance between the two.
- Partnership working involves recognition of unfamiliar perspectives and different sets of values.
- It will be important to find ways of evaluating youth work practice in ways which reflect its value-base and methods. Many of the achievements of young people cannot be measured in terms of hard statistics. Many of the aims of youth work engagement are longer term.
- Different time perspectives of funders and youth workers can affect the quality of services and make long term provision more difficult.
- Youth work plays a major strategic contribution to Enjoying and Achieving in school and leisure as outlined in Every Child Matters. This is evidenced by the case studies presented.

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1. Background

The 2003 Green Paper *Every Child Matters* (ECM) set out a holistic framework for services for children and young people aged 0-19 in England (HM Treasury, 2003). Its two-pronged agenda is to protect children and young people and to maximise their potential, by developing the means of ensuring that they can be healthy, safe, develop important life skills, make a positive contribution to their communities, and achieve their full potential. The framework provides for integration at all levels, from strategy to processes to delivery.

ECM wellbeing outcomes

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- **Enjoying and achieving**
- Making a positive contribution
- Economic wellbeing

These linked elements of wellbeing each form a focus for identifying need, tailoring provision, and evaluation. The ECM framework thus contains three dimensions: themes, areas for action, and evaluation targets.

This NYA Briefing Paper focuses on the contribution of youth work to the Enjoying and Achieving outcome for young people aged 13 to 19. It forms part of a series of five, corresponding to the five ‘wellbeing’ outcomes identified by children and young people and developed into themes in Every Child Matters. The essence of a holistic approach is that all the five themes are linked. Thus, although only one theme is dealt with here, this Briefing has implications for those on the other themes.

The briefing first considers what is meant by the notion of enjoying and achieving in youth, drawing on recent research. It is concerned with young people over the age of 13 years, though it recognises the importance of early childhood influences. In Section 3 it briefly examines the policy context out of which this theme of Every Child Matters has emerged. In Section 4, the ECM Outcomes Framework is considered. The Youth Service is already engaged in many of the activities envisaged by ECM, and this is illustrated by Case Studies which are interspersed throughout the briefing. Finally, Section 5 considers some of the implications of ECM for youth work, including some of the challenges posed for the future.

2. The theme of enjoying and achieving

What is meant by ‘enjoying and achieving’ in youth?

Getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood

Enjoying and achieving is defined in ECM as ‘getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood’. It is concerned with educational achievement and broad life skills rather than work-related skills (which are dealt with under Theme 5: Economic Wellbeing), and is primarily focused on children and young people from their early years right up to the end of their secondary school education.

- ▶ By ‘**getting the most out of life**’, it seems that ECM is mainly concerned with the acquisition of educational qualifications and

credits. Within this remit, there is a strong focus on participation in education, involving retention of those likely to drop out or reengagement or those who have already done so.

- ▶ ‘**Skills for adulthood**’ appear to be seen in terms of broader skills, associated with the development of social and cultural capital. When this is not acquired through families, there may be a need for external support, such as through personal and social development (PSD) aspects of youth work or personal advisers, or through sports or cultural activities. Once the theme moves beyond its education/qualifications remit, it moves into a territory of soft targets and subjective assessments.

By combining these two, ECM is taking an approach to young people which seeks to combine young people’s present and future needs. This is important if interventions are to be effective in the longer term. Working to a life plan or an aspirational agenda provides a focus to the idea of support.

Processes of disaffection and the need for early intervention

The theme covers all stages of formal school education, recognising that outcomes in adult life are likely to be determined by early childhood experiences, unless there is effective intervention in the processes of social exclusion at all stages in childhood and youth.

Research evidence has shown that disaffection can start in primary school, and be exacerbated by the transition to secondary school. By the age of 14, young people may already be quite alienated from formal institutions, and show this through their behaviour. Anti-social behaviour may be a symptom of this disaffection, and may itself form part of a transition into offending, drug and/or alcohol abuse, bullying, etc. The root of these transition processes may lie in unhappy childhood experiences, including loss and bereavement, domestic abuse, alcohol and/or drug abuse of their parents, or personal experience of physical or sexual abuse (viz among others Johnston et al, 2000). Many of these intervening variables are associated with (if not caused by) poverty. Some patterns of behaviour may replicate patterns over several generations of a family or established patterns in a community. Early intervention is therefore important if individual behaviour is to be changed, but family and community dynamics may present considerable resistance to policy interventions and initiatives.

Policy interventions need to be sensitive to the influences on young people’s thinking and behaviour,

rather than attempt to 'go against the grain' of young people's beliefs (Bynner et al, 2004). A carrot or stick approach to behaviour modification will not work if individuals have a strong obligation or commitment to continue their current behaviour, or if their behaviour is supported by those in their social networks. It is therefore worth focusing for a moment on the ways in which young people's thinking and behaviour are influenced by others. This is where social capital and cultural capital come in (Jones, 2005).

Social capital

Young people are not isolated individuals, but are influenced by the people in their social networks, with whom they have relationships involving obligation and reciprocity. These networks are sources of social capital, which can act as a resource for getting on in life, such as by linking with new networks (eg employers). They also provide a framework for the transmission of beliefs (cultural capital), and financial resources (economic capital) between individuals.

The main source of social capital is the family of origin, so young people with poor family relationships, or who have experienced separation and loss through divorce or bereavement or separation from their families, are particularly disadvantaged in terms of social capital (Coleman, 1988). As young people grow up, they become less dependent on their families. Their social networks widen to include friends, employers, work colleagues, partners and in-laws. These may help them to accumulate new social capital. For example, an employer who encourages and supports good quality education and training can be key to 'successful' adult outcomes among those at risk (eg Webster et al, 2004).

Social capital can be something of a poisoned chalice though, so simply 'acquiring' it, it not necessarily what is needed. This is because social capital can be 'bridging' or 'bonding' (Putnam, 2000).

► **Bridging social capital** enables links to new social networks, such as employers and labour markets. It is a means of capitalising on opportunity, but it depends on factors such as the attachment of family members to the labour market or education institutions. Young people with more educated parents or parents with good jobs can capitalise on this advantage. Those with geographically scattered families have a resource they may be able to draw on to escape local disadvantage and minimise the risks involved in moving away (Jones, 2000; Thomson and Taylor, forthcoming).

► **Bonding social capital** is based on community solidarity, but creates boundaries through which it becomes difficult to pass. It may be a characteristic of poor communities or disadvantaged groups. It is protective, allowing the community/group to tolerate negative labelling by outsiders, but protection comes at a price. Staying on in a disadvantaged community means increasingly restricted access to wider opportunities.

The cultural norms of a close and cohesive community can thus (through bonding capital) be supportive of beliefs and practices which policy makers would like to change. There can be pressure in working class communities not to stand out from the crowd (Sennett, 2004), and young people may need to leave their supporting communities in order to succeed. Drug users, for example, may have to leave a protective environment which reinforces their existing behaviour and seek new networks which will support their new (and reformed) identities (Webster et al, 2004; Johnston et al, 2000; Pavis et al, 2000; Ghate and Hazel, 2004).

Cultural capital

Young adults' beliefs cannot be separated from their social context. Emler and McNamara (1996) comment that too little attention has been given to young people's social relationships during transitions to adulthood. Dolton et al (2002) found that young people's decisions about education and training had little to do with the information available and more to do with the opinions of family and friends.

► **Family cultures** Families act as transmitters of both advantage and disadvantage. A stable family environment with parental commitment to education can help to override the effects of poverty and disadvantage (Schoon and Parsons, 2003; Schoon 2002. Scott and Chaudhary, 2003; Catan, 2004; Scott, 2000). A significant factor in labour market achievement among unqualified young people is the educational level of the mother (Stafford et al, 1999). On the other hand, parents' beliefs can work against policy intentions, especially when parents are expected to provide economic support for learning. Tradition persists in many working class families that young people should get jobs, and progress through work experience rather than qualifications (Jones et al, 2004). Sometimes these views reflect lack of awareness of the realities of the current youth labour market.

► **Peer cultures** play an increasing part in shaping young people's thinking and behaviour, as they begin to become independent of their

parents. Over time, peers may supplement parents as sources of self-esteem (Emler, 2001), and may provide an important source of support for some disadvantaged groups (see, for example, the PACE Case Study, below). Peer cultures can also hold young people back, though. Paul Willis's (1977) explanation of an anti-school culture as a valorisation of masculinity through manual work still holds good for a diminishing group. Anti-school peer cultures persist, despite the lack of manual work for those without qualifications (McDowell, 2001; Johnston et al, 2000; MacDonald and Marsh, 2001, 2004). Some young men are reduced to affirming their male identities through aggression and intolerance (especially of women, gays and ethnic minorities) (Valentine, Skelton and Butler, 2003; Mac an Ghaill, 1999). Furlong and Cartmel (2004) found that being a 'swot' might not be compatible with maintaining an existing peer network. Young people who resisted peer pressure risked being bullied, and some withdrew from school.

Some young people are very much on their own or dependent on formal sources of support to provide alternative sources of cultural capital (Bates and Wilson, 2004). At its best, the education system can help to redress inequalities, while at its worst it simply reproduces or reinforces them (Halsey et al, 1980). Part of the role of mentors or personal advisers in policy initiatives such as Connexions or the New Deal is to attempt to compensate for a lack of support from parents, and it has been shown to be valuable. It is clear though that formal support needs to be sustained beyond the normal cut-off age of 19 years as many young adults would also benefit (Jones, 2005; Bynner et al, 2004).

CASE STUDY: Sexuality and homophobia

PACE (Islington) provides a service for lesbians, bisexuals, gay men and those questioning their sexuality, who are under 25. The primary aim is to provide a safe environment for young people where they can find non-judgmental information and advice, and mutual support with other young lesbian, gay and bisexual people, which helps foster a positive self-identity and self image. It runs four separate groups, two for young men, one for young women, and one for under-18s. PACE works with local schools and with agencies across London on policy and practice in lesbian and gay youth work, and offers training to other professionals on sexuality and homophobia. The groups offer information and support to young people on issues like coming out, parents, bullying, the gay scene, sexual health, identity, homophobia, and relationships. They offer a programme of activities, Internet access, trips,

residential weekends, and a chance to meet others and have fun. An annual summer school offers activities such as film-making, photography, painting, dance, drama, aerobics and drumming classes.

Individual capital and young people as agents

These findings have implications for policy and practice interventions which are targeted at individuals. Unless policy and practice interventions are reinforced by young people's social networks, they may not have the desired (by policy makers and practitioners) outcomes. An extensive review (Emler, 2001) of practice initiatives concerned with raising individual **self-esteem** found little evidence that it could be viewed as a means of enabling disadvantaged young adults to succeed against the odds. Low self-esteem appeared to be a risk factor in teenage pregnancy, eating disorders, suicidal thoughts and behaviour, and (among males) low earnings and extended unemployment. However, it had little or no impact in the main areas in which raising self-esteem is seen as a panacea: criminal behaviour, alcohol and drug abuse, and educational underachievement.

Similarly, a study of children coping with parental substance abuse found '**individual resilience**' dependent on protective factors such as a supportive extended family (Bancroft et al., 2004). By deploying a range of 'protective factors and processes' at individual, family, or wider level, young people can make the most of their individual resources and enhance their competence. But this does not redress the balance: even resilient young people, showing high competences and aspirations despite socio-economic disadvantage and do not succeed to the same extent as young people from more privileged backgrounds (Schoon and Bynner, 2003).

ECM acknowledges that individual characteristics and attributes are not enough. ECM (pp 18-19) identifies protective factors which can help young people overcome disadvantage. While these include individual characteristics such as an outgoing nature, self-motivation, intelligence, they also include characteristics relating to young people's social contexts, such as:

- ▶ strong relationships with parents, family; members and other significant adults;
- ▶ parental interest and involvement in education with clear and high expectations;
- ▶ positive role models;
- ▶ active involvement in family, school and community life; and
- ▶ recognition, praise and being valued.

These factors are all concerned with social and cultural capital.

Despite the extensive evidence that young people's circumstances are affected by deep-seated social inequalities, there is still a tendency to blame them for problems which are beyond their control. This can be exacerbated by the political imperative concerned with giving young people a voice and stressing their civic responsibility. It is important not to confuse the two.

Combining enjoying with achieving

The theme links enjoying with achieving. This is equivalent to the concept of work-life balance for adults, through which work and home are allowed to complement one another rather than compete with one another. In the next section, on the policy context since the publication of ECM, there is some discussion about whether this idea is being overwhelmed by the somewhat contrary ideas underlying the 'respect agenda'.

CASE STUDY: Lydney State Circus

Lydney State Circus provides tuition in a range of circus skills and provides performance opportunities for young people aged 11 to 19. Using the medium of circus we aim to enhance motor skills and coordination, provide performance opportunities, increase confidence and self-esteem, provide opportunities to earn income, and have fun.

Although many young people are already engaged in the kinds of activities and learning opportunities envisaged by ECM, many others are not. Implementation of the ECM agenda therefore involves behaviour modification – with all the problems outlined above. It seems that this could take three forms:

- ▶ **Voluntarism.** By stressing the enjoyment/achievement factor and providing more opportunities, many young people might simply be won over.
- ▶ **Inducement.** There are others who cannot afford to participate, and who would benefit from financial incentives (the carrot), such as envisaged in the Opportunity Card, and already exist for some in the EMA.
- ▶ **Compulsion.** There are, however, others who may still be resistant, and in these cases the policy approach appears increasingly to be to

use penalties (the stick). Problems associated with combining a welfare agenda with an anti-offending agenda are discussed below.

There is, however, another element in the jigsaw. It relates back to the social obligations which are bound up with social relationships, and it concerns 'free time'.

Concept of 'free time'

Time not in school is not necessarily 'free' time. A MORI study (National Statistics, 2000) of how 13 to 16-year-olds spent their time when not in school showed that on average they spent, per week:

- ▶ nearly 6 hours on homework;
- ▶ nearly 4 hours reading;
- ▶ nearly 4 hours playing a musical instrument;
- ▶ 5 hours playing computer games;
- ▶ just over 12 hours watching TV or videos;
- ▶ around 7½ hours on another hobby; and
- ▶ over 5 hours looking after younger children or relatives.

Though young carers are specifically identified in ECM, many young people who are not designated as young carers have some experience of caring responsibilities. Young people also have other domestic responsibilities which may impinge on their free time rather than constitute leisure activity. Over half of young men do DIY and/or gardening (National Statistics, 2000). Young women, on the other hand, are more likely to be involved in housework and childcare (Jones and Wallace, 1992). Many young people in farming families have work responsibilities such as feeding chickens before and after school. Others, especially perhaps in minority ethnic groups, have work responsibilities in family businesses such as shops, restaurants and take-aways. These activities may be paid or unpaid, and seen as tasks or responsibilities rather than hobbies. A great many young people have part-time and/or holiday jobs. All these demands on a young person's time may represent important obligations, and they may impinge on opportunities for leisure.

Young people may be making a crucial contribution to the economic wellbeing of their families through their domestic and other work, but this is generally not taken into account in discussion of 'active citizenship'. This is because active citizenship is seen in a public context, for instance in the form of volunteering or political participation, rather than the private context of family life.

3. The policy context of Every Child Matters

The main thrust of national policies over the last decade has been informed by the need to increase the economic competitiveness of the UK. This involves increasing the qualifications level of the workforce and reducing welfare dependence. As far as youth policies are concerned, these drivers have led to a mix of universal preventive policies emphasising ‘learning’ (education and training) with policies targeted at combating social exclusion. The underlying ideology is arguably concerned with social justice, but one effect has been to make young people more financially dependent on their parents (see Briefing 5). However, youth policies are linked in many ways with the wider current ‘Citizenship’ – and more recently the ‘Respect’ – agendas.

Every Child Matters was written in the context of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which set out ways in which children should receive particular protection because of their dependence on their parents or carers. Part of the emphasis of the UNCRC is on allowing the child to express views and to have these views heard.

Since ECM was published, a number of other policy developments have taken place, including particularly the *Education White Paper* (2005), the *Youth Matters Green Paper* (2005) and the reforms to the Juvenile Justice System, leading to the launch of the Respect agenda in early 2006. These initiatives though based in many ways on ECM and seeking to build on it, also have their own agendas.

The **White Paper on 14-19 Education and Skills** (DfES, 2005a) spelled out current policy aims, to:

- ▶ **increase retention in education** until all young people continue in learning at least until the age of 18; and
- ▶ **improve basic skills** of literacy and numeracy.

To achieve these aims, the White Paper acknowledges the need for ways of increasing enthusiasm for learning as well as reengaging disaffected young people. A range of education initiatives has included curriculum reform and incentives (such as the EMA) to stay in education or training beyond the school-leaving age. There are new work-based vocational routes for 14 to 25s, including Apprenticeships and Young Apprenticeships for 14 to 16-year-olds. The White Paper 2005 also announced a pilot programme for 14 to 16s with serious personal problems, based on the post-16

Entry to Employment programme, which will include intensive personal guidance and support.

There is particular concern – also picked up in ECM – about the failure to achieve educational potential among some minority ethnic groups, and vulnerable groups such as care leavers. The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 aims to improve outcomes for care leavers by putting stronger duties on Local Authorities. There is also concern about anti-social behaviour and poor school attendance, which are likely to lead to poor outcomes in adulthood (see, for example, SEU, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2003). Provision under the national behaviour and attendance strategy ranges from support structures, such as key workers for children at risk, multi-agency Behaviour and Education Support Teams, provision of more learning mentors and learning support units, to more punitive arrangements, such as Fast Track to Prosecution, and ASBOs.

Youth Matters Green Paper

The *Youth Matters Green Paper* (DfES, 2005b) indicates the need for services to be integrated around young people’s (13 to 19s) needs in order to lead to ECM outcomes. It aims to ‘reinvigorate’ youth work by building on the ideas set out in *Transforming Youth Work* (DfES, 2001).

The Green Paper talks of providing a combination of empowerment, encouragement, information and support, but with a stress on young people’s own responsibility. A dynamic orientation to young people’s situations is to be provided by the development and use of life plans, negotiated between young people and their advisers/workers.

CASE STUDY: Individual life plans

STEPS FORWARD Personal Development

Mentoring Programme is a programme of basic and social skills education for young people aged 16 to 25 who are marginalised by poor educational achievement and social development. Each young person has a trained volunteer mentor who offers one-to-one support to young people in following an individual learning programme.

‘Things to do and places to go’

The ECM theme recognises that there are insufficient public spaces for young people. A consistent theme of its consultations was the importance of having communities where there is ‘somewhere safe to go and something to do’.

‘Somewhere safe to go and something to do’.

The DfES estimates that around 25 to 30 per cent of young people do not take part in organised activities and are seen as a problem by their local communities. The Green Paper proposes to target these, to ensure that they engage in 'positive activities' rather than anti-social behaviour during their 'free time'. It proposes setting out *National Standards* for Local Authorities.

Proposed National Standards (DfES, 2005b)

- Access to 2 hours per week of sporting activity
- Access to 2 hours per week of other 'constructive activities' in clubs, youth groups or classes (including pursuing interests and hobbies; activities contributing to personal, social and spiritual development; activities encouraging creativity, innovation and enterprise; study support; informal learning; and residential opportunities)
- Opportunities 'to contribute to their communities' through volunteering
- A wide range of other recreational, cultural, sporting and 'enriching' experiences (not based in school or work)
- A range of safe and enjoyable places in which to spend time (including youth clubs, or alternatives such as mobile facilities or youth shelters)

► Things to do

The intention is to identify 'the full range of exciting and enriching activities in which young people might wish to engage in their free time' (DfES, 2005b, p. 32). Positive activities in youth have been found to have a positive impact on wellbeing in later life (Feinstein et al, 2004, quoted in DfES, 2005b), and reduce the risk of teenagers being drawn into anti-social behaviour and crime (Youth Justice Board, 2005, quoted in DfES, 2005b). In addition to the above listing, there should be residential events, and sports provision for older teenage and those not in school, to be organised by a network of local youth sport development managers. Young people are to be encouraged to have a greater say designing and delivering services through **Opportunity Funds** which allow the monitoring of take-up (DfES, 2005b). The danger, of course, is that the greatest power to shape services will be in the hands of the youngest and least disaffected young people who already make good use of facilities.

CASE STUDIES: Community and inter-generational cohesion

FITZROVIA YOUTH IN ACTION (FYA) is a community-based youth action project. It uses

sports and youth work to engage young people and support them in developing projects which benefit the community and improve relationships between people from different ethnic and age groups through the London Borough of Camden. Its members are ethnically diverse, including a high proportion of Bangladeshi origin, and in a wide age range, from 11 to 25 years. Efforts are being made to increase the involvement of young women through targeted work. Activities include a community football programme (including an anti-racist tournament), a drug peer research project, a young residents' association, and a range of intergenerational and environment activities.

SIGNPOST is a voluntary youth organisation working in partnership with schools to engage 'at risk' young people (mainly white male 14 to 16-year-olds) in alternative personal and social education programmes including volunteering, group work, accredited training and employment opportunities. It focuses on young people in the Manor/Castle area of Sheffield who are not thriving in mainstream education, involving them in a range of activities while building up their confidence and self-esteem. There is a strong focus on involving young people in the regeneration of the local community, which has helped contribute to community and intergenerational cohesion, and on encouraging young people to gain or improve their qualifications and basic skills. Activities include drama, IT and digital art, practical environmental work, local history projects, an allotment project and a cookery club. Most young people stay with the project for two years, and Signpost has strong links with Connexions through a personal advisor based in the youth centre – both factors are key to its long-term success. The project works in partnership with a range of local agencies, is based in a multi-use centre and managed by an umbrella organisation, The Young People's Health Project.

► Places to go

The main aim here is to make better use of existing facilities, such as school buildings and grounds, libraries, village halls, faith facilities, company gyms and staff cafes. This tends to go against the grain of giving young people their 'own space' which is at the heart of much youth work. On the other hand, it gives young people more access to other spaces, including adult ones, and opportunities for intergenerational socialising. There might also be creative solutions to the particular problems of rural areas such as through mobile youth clubs and IT buses. The Youth Matters Consultation results show that some young people simply want

somewhere in their local areas to ‘hang out’ where they would not be perceived as causing trouble (DfES, 2006, p. 10). A study of youth club provision (Feinstein, 2005) found that, for youth clubs to be effective, they need to offer activities as well as space, and it was therefore important that places to go should be combined with things to do.

CASE STUDIES – Young people shaping provision

CABE Space (2004, 2005) makes a strong case for the ongoing involvement of children and young people in the design, development and management of public space. They provide practical guidelines for practitioners including architects and landscape architects, local authority officers, community groups, youth and play workers, regeneration agencies, and young people themselves. They cite the following examples:

Freemantle Youth Forum designed a pavilion in Freemantle Lake Park, Southampton that is a place for everyone who uses the park and a catalyst for further improvements. Much less vandalism has been reported since the pavilion was built and members of the Youth Forum received a Taking a Stand award from the Home Office for their hard work. Youth workers strongly supported and encouraged young people and advocated on their behalf (CABE, 2004, p13).

Mint Street Park, Southwark, London – the initiative asked a group of excluded young people, who had initially vandalised lighting in the park, for their input. They designed the new lighting and the vandalism stopped (CABE, 2004, p6).

CASE STUDY – Rural provision

The **RURAL (NEW START) BUS**, is a project run by the Lincolnshire Youth Service. It aims to reengage young people aged 13 to 17 in learning through providing an attractive, supportive learning environment. It combines both IT-based and youth worker-led learning opportunities. The bus visits schools, leisure centre car park and traveller sites, etc. to work with targeted groups including young people at risk of disengagement, particularly year 10 and 11 pupils. The bus is used in various ways: open access at school lunch breaks, as a supplementary teaching resource, to deliver self-esteem and other small groupwork classes, alternative curriculum delivery at non-school sites, and youth work out of school hours.

Rewards and sanctions

‘We expect young people to take advantage of these opportunities responsibly. Sanctions should be applied where this does not happen’ (Youth Matters, p. 26).

The current policy thrust is based on rewards and sanctions. **Youth Opportunities Cards** are proposed in Youth Matters as a way to enable more young people to engage in positive activities, and will be implemented as part of the wider package of financial support for young people (see Briefing No. 5). They will be used to obtain discounts on activities, and may eventually replace **Connexions Cards**. They could be topped up by young people gaining credits (through engaging in voluntary activities, achieving excellence in attendance or attainment at school or college, or reaching milestones in improving their situation). They could also be topped up by their parents/carers – as a further incentive for good behaviour (though this is more likely to benefit from those from better-off homes and where relationships with parents are good). Only about half of the young people in the consultation thought that their parents would top up their cards. Disadvantaged 13 to 16-year-olds may therefore receive monthly top-ups.

The cards would however be suspended or withdrawn as a means of penalising ‘unacceptable and anti-social behaviour’ (DfES, 2005b, p. 6). Empowerment of young people is thus seen as a reward for good behaviour, rather than a means of getting away from ‘bad’ behaviour. The danger is that those who most need services will be excluded from them. Following consultation, the DfES now acknowledges a need to find the right balance:

We recognise that many misbehaving young people could be helped by participating in positive activities and to take money away at such a stage could marginalise and demotivate them further (Youth Matters – Next Steps, p. 16).

The emphasis on enjoyment seems weak

There is thus a strong emphasis – despite UNCRC – on what is perceived by adults to be good for young people, rather than the wishes of young people themselves. A quarter of young people (particularly those from black and minority ethnic groups, and older teenagers) do not take part in activities like these – and it is important to understand why. Though many say it is because of time and interest, this may stem from many causes.

Those disadvantaged in this respect include young people with disabilities, homeless young people, those living in remote rural areas and those from particular cultural and faith backgrounds (DfES, 2005b, p.31). Indeed the Consultation on *Youth Matters* showed that hard-to-reach young people were less convinced that Opportunity Card proposals would benefit them (DfES, 2006, p.10). There is a fine line between increasing access and imposing a government view. Empowerment and coercion, or welfare and social control, cannot easily go hand-in-hand. The danger is that the policy approach can be interpreted as reinforcing the continued demonisation of young people by the media.

Most young people are not antisocial jobs, criminals, binge drinkers or drug addicts, but images portraying them as such can feed into a climate of distrust and negativity which is both unfair and untrue (Margaret Hodge, Minister for Children and Young People, quoted in *The Guardian*, 20 January 2005).

CASE STUDY: Youth work within a social control agenda

SPASH EXTRA programme (Knowsley) is an excellent example of good practice, according to Ofsted. The community and youth service managed the delivery of this coordinated response to diversionary leisure activities. Under the auspices of a multi-departmental working group, the summer programme succeeded in involving 1,800 young people aged 13 to 17, many of whom were identified by youth workers as being at risk of drifting into crime. A wide variety of activities including arts, sport, outdoor pursuits, environmental projects, ICT and residential experiences were delivered in community centres, leisure centres, libraries, parks and open spaces throughout the borough. Many communities reported a reduction in youth nuisance and vandalism whilst the programme was running and feedback from the young people involved was extremely positive (Ofsted, Knowsley, 2003).

From Active Citizenship to Respect Action Plan

For the last decade there has been an emphasis on citizenship, not as a balanced package of rights and responsibilities, but in terms of active citizenship, with the stress on responsibility. Young people are seen as having a responsibility to participate in political processes, rather than as having the right to do so. They are expected to play a visible and active

part in their communities by volunteering, though their existing social obligations still tend to be ignored (except in the case of those recognised as 'young carers'). Part of the policy emphasis on volunteering is because of the opportunities it provides for work experience, but young people working in family businesses or in part-time employment already have this kind of experience.

In January, the Respect Action Plan (Home Office, 2006) was launched as a flagship policy, and the ECM needs also to be seen within this agenda. *Youth Matters – Next Steps* explicitly refers to the need to be consistent within the Respect Action Plan's agenda to tackle anti-social behaviour (DfES, 2006). The Respect Action Plan is a programme of incentives and disincentives across housing, schooling, the judicial system and parenting – in other words, it does not just focus on young people. It assumes that because most poor people do not engage in anti-social behaviour, then anti-social behaviour is not associated with poverty. This distortion of the statistics leads to a suggestion that low-level offending cannot be dealt with by alleviating poverty and it becomes a justification for a series of punitive measures, including parenting orders, curfews, and community service orders. These measures will need to be monitored to ensure that they do not increase tensions in households where relationships may already be under strain.

4. ECM Outcomes Framework

ECM 'Enjoying and Achieving' Aims

- Ready for school
- **Attend and enjoy school**
- Achieve stretching national educational standards at primary school
- **Achieve personal and social development and enjoy recreation**
- **Achieve stretching national educational standards at secondary school**

The ECM aims, or 'outcomes' are to ensure that children and young people do not drop out of the system in their early teens. The need for early intervention in early years and at primary school age is built into Aims 1 and 3. Here we consider the relationship between aims and the evidence on which the Inspectorate's judgments will be based, in relation to Aims 2, 4 and 5.

Outcomes and Evaluation

ECM involves an outcomes-based approach to services for children and young people. The Outcomes Framework (DfES, 2005c) is intended to support policy development, enable the delivery of targets, and monitor progress of the local children's services in delivering outcomes. Monitoring will be facilitated through a common data set for children's services.

- ▶ For each outcome, there are **priority national targets** for which statistics are available. These are shown in Table 1, and include appropriate educational, cultural and sports provision, with an emphasis on safe and accessible spaces. Much of the emphasis is on formal education provision in schools. Consequently, much of the evidence will come from education-based data (teacher assessments, tests results, GCSE/ GNVQ data, inspection findings, attendance and exclusions data). Non-school education evidence will rely mainly on Ofsted data (eg on excluded pupils, alternative/home tuition). Enhanced inspection of youth services will provide judgments and evidence on these (including the percentage of 13 to 19-year-olds reached, and the ratio of FTE youth workers to young people aged 13 to 19). Evidence on cultural and leisure data seems sparser and less reliable, drawing on library and museum attendance figures and school visits, and take-up of sporting opportunities. There are specific outcome indicators for the two specified vulnerable groups, looked-after young people, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- ▶ There are also more **qualitative factors** on which inspectorates are to base their judgements, and these may be more useful in evaluating soft outcomes associated with youth work provision. Ofsted (2005) recognises that it is hard to measure the extent to which children's voices are heard. In other case, measures of 'distance travelled', rather than outcomes, may be more useful indicators.

The danger is an over-reliance on hard statistics simply because they exist. The table in the Appendix shows how aims (or outcomes) have been translated into judgments and the evidence on which they are to be based.

Support arrangements (Judgment 3.1)

'Parents and carers receive support in helping their children enjoy and achieve' (ECM support arrangements for Theme 3)

ECM support arrangement under Theme 3 indicate that parents or carers should receive support in helping their children enjoy and achieve, and thus support learning. Supporting parents/carers in this role is one of the ECM areas for action. However, just as in the case of young people, the policy combines carrot and stick approaches. Thus, there are universal services providing information and advice 'where needed or wanted'; there is targeted and specialist support to parents of children requiring additional support; and there is compulsory action through Parenting Orders 'as a last resort where parents are condoning a child's anti-social behaviour such as truancy or offending' (p. 39). Proposed provisions include:

- ▶ family learning programme, which involves bringing young people and their parents together in planned activity;
- ▶ family group conferencing would be a means of working in families where there are child protection or youth offending concerns;
- ▶ family mediation services, and
- ▶ stress and relationship counselling.

Family Mediation Services and relationship counselling, for young people and their parents, would help young carers, teenage parents, homeless young people, etc. There are also to be special provisions in relation to disabled children, young carers, and children with parents in prison. In many instances, professionals working with young people would need additional training.

Youth Matters (DfES, 2005b, p.9) anticipates a 'step change in the extent to which professionals who support young people engage with parents'.

Achieve stretching national standards at secondary school (Judgment 3.4)

Much of the emphasis of the theme is on school based provision, and so covers situations where youth work is located in schools, or where the aim is to reintegrate a young person into formal education. Under Judgment 3.4, specialist support for young people (and possibly also their parents) is covered. Under the same judgment, there is mention of work particularly relevant for much youth work provision: to encourage young people and help them have a growing awareness of their own development needs; take increasing responsibility for meeting them; and to have high self-esteem and high aspirations.

Attend and enjoy school (Judgment 3.5)

Alternative and informal education are covered in Judgment 3.5, which is concerned with young people who do not attend school.

CASE STUDIES: School non-attendance and school exclusion

KRUNCH OUT provides a personal development programme for young people who have been excluded from school or are non-attenders. It aims to give the young people an opportunity to help to design their own learning in a community setting and to move them towards education, training or employment.

LADS (Learning and Developing Skills) Project offers an accredited personal development programme to disengaged or disaffected young men aged 13 to 19 in the Prescot and Whiston areas of Knowsley, Merseyside. The project aims to help young people overcome barriers to their participation in education, training or employment by engaging them in activities that develop their confidence, self esteem and motivation and equip them with practical/vocational skills.

Achieve personal and social development and enjoy recreation (Judgment 3.6)

Finally, much of youth work provision, including recreational and sporting activities, provision of safe and accessible places where young people can socialise, and transport to increase accessibility of provision, are covered under Judgment 3.6.

With the exception of play provision for young children, it is clear from the examples of evidence under Judgment 3.6 that enjoyment is closely linked to achievement. Enjoyment of education is linked to school attendance and educational achievement. Enjoyment of recreational (cultural and sporting) activities is linked to these being challenging and rewarding rather than purely enjoyable. Although this section is mainly on recreational activity, it includes voluntary learning opportunities. Clearly enjoyment for its own sake is not enough.

CASE STUDY: Combining enjoying and achieving

CHOICES PROJECT (Cheshire) came about because local parents of young people with special needs complained to the youth service about the lack of social provision. The group aims to ensure equality of opportunity for young people

with learning difficulties, to fulfil their potential as individuals as well as members of groups and communities, and to support them during the transition to adulthood. The youth work focuses on young people's views about what is relevant to them in their development, and informal educational programmes are developed with this in mind. The project, which meets weekly, is open to 13 to 25-year-olds. Provision for those aged 13 to 15 focuses on group activities where young people can develop their social skills, make new friends and gain social confidence. Provision for 16 to 18-year-olds continues to offer group activities, but stresses individual development and the fostering of independent living skills. Young people are given opportunities to gain more confidence by taking on responsibility and making decisions. Provision for over-18s focuses on individual support and development with a view to young people moving on from Choices and progressing into other local opportunities. Activities mix fun with raising expectations. They include cooking, arts and crafts, music, dancing and themed evenings.

Vulnerable young people

Young people who are disadvantaged, including by their locality or ethnicity, are mentioned under Judgment 3.3. The needs of young carers are addressed under Judgment 3.4.

Two groups of vulnerable young people are highlighted, in part because it is seen that their needs extend beyond the ECM cut-off age of 19. Children and young people who are looked after (or care leavers), and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to enjoy and achieve. Looked after young people and care leavers are known to have multiple unmet needs (Stein and Wade, 2000; SEU, 2003). Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have been found to have missed out on much youth provision in the past (DfES, 2005b). Emphasis is placed on needs assessment, on linking need with provision, and on monitoring. In the case of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, their parents should be supported to contribute to needs assessment. Every school is to have a designated teacher for looked after children, and every young person with a learning difficulty and/or disability is to have a key worker responsibility for coordinating support.

'The progress of individual children and young people in educational, personal, social and emotional outcomes is regularly reviewed and communicated between agencies, and targets revised accordingly'. (ECM Outcomes Framework).

CASE STUDIES: Disadvantaged and vulnerable groups**MENTORING FOR CARE LEAVERS.**

An evaluation by Clayden and Stein (2005) of 14 volunteer mentoring projects supported by the Prince's Trust found that mentors helped with advice about accommodation, education, training and work, and young people valued help with relationship problems, confidence-building and emotional wellbeing. Positive outcomes for the young people were more associated with longer-term mentoring. The study concluded that mentoring could be improved by better matching, greater flexibility and fewer time restrictions. Earlier research has found that young people could be more resistant to building relationships with volunteers than with professionals (see Bynner et al, 2004).

YOUTH FORUM (Calderdale) and DIVERSE NOT DIFFERENT (Stockport)

In both areas, youth forums offer young people with learning difficulties or disabilities opportunities to discuss the issues that most affect their lives. Although relatively new, the Calderdale youth forum was described by Ofsted as 'very effective in providing a voice for disabled young people', while the Stockport project, 'Diverse not Different', has become 'a good reference group for the Health Act Partnership'. (Ofsted, 2006)

WILD PROJECT

Countywide project seeking to improve the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of young parents and their children through targeted learning and support opportunities, particularly focusing on the use of Youth Achievement Awards. The work focuses on increasing confidence and self-esteem, reduction of post-natal illness, and improvement in community involvement and positive parenting. It offers one-to-one support and advocacy with disadvantaged young mothers and fathers who have not achieved academically, and their children under 4.

YOUTHCOMM (Worcestershire)

Multimedia project offering a free confidential telephone information, resource and support line, 24/7 internet radio station, live fm broadcasts in the field, interactive website and sophisticated text messaging service for young people aged 11 to 20 in Worcestershire. The service is operated by trained young volunteers aged 16+. The project aims to reduce rural isolation and promote integration of young people in both urban and rural communities, involve young people in managing the project, enable young

volunteers to gain qualifications, and provide opportunities to 'showcase' young people's creative talents.

TOYS PROJECT

The Training Opportunities for Young Parents (TOYS) project in Oldham offers 12 week programmes and ongoing support for young parents. Courses are offered on a range of issues pertinent to the young parents including parenting, budgeting, assertiveness, housing and health. Arts-based work is used in sessions as a medium for young people to explore their fears and aspirations.

5. Conclusions

Youth work already brings a major contribution to the ECM Enjoying and Achieving agenda, as this briefing has shown. It plays a particularly important role in working through non-formal education with young people, enabling them to get closer to their potential in learning and work, to gain life skills, and to provide the kinds of information, guidance and support they may need through the difficult period of transition to adulthood – a transition which extends well beyond the ECM cut-off age of 19 years. It does these things effectively through relationships of trust and respect between youth workers and young people. Essential to effective functioning is long-term support, which allows time for trust to develop and personal life plans to be evaluated and if necessary, revised.

Many aspects of ECM hold great possibilities for youth work. In particular, it might provide scope for longer-term and more secure funding for projects which have been identified by local partners, communities, parents and young people as responding to local needs. Longer-term funding will be beneficial to career development among youth work professionals as it could lead to better training and support structures.

Working in partnerships with other professionals is not new to youth work, but it can be difficult where there is a clash of ethos. Working to external policy agendas rather than to those set by young people does represent a challenge to basic youth work values. Partnership working should, however, encourage professionals to reflect on their own professional values and also perhaps gain from learning about those of others. Partnership working with family workers, for example, may enable youth workers to understand more of the family context of young people, and to gain new skills.

The flexibility illustrated in the ways youth workers

engage with young people is one of the strengths of the profession, and it can be put to use in other ways. We live in a rapidly changing world, and for youth work to be a key player in integrated youth services, it must be responsive to young people's changing needs and able to adapt itself accordingly. Thus, while the value base and ethos of youth work are essential for effective current practice, it is also important that the youth work profession keeps a door open for new possibilities and challenges.

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Appendix 1

Relationship between aims and the evidence on which judgments will be based (Ofsted, 2005)

Aim	Judgement	Evidence
Parents, carers and families support learning	3.1 Parents and carers receive support in helping their children to enjoy and achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Targeted guidance and support is provided to parents and carers, in line with their expressed wishes, in helping children and young people to enjoy play, achieve educationally and make productive and enjoyable use of leisure time
Ready for school	3.2 Early years provision helps promote children's development and well being and helps them meet early learning goals	[See Briefing 2, which includes teenage parents]
Achieve stretching national educational standards at primary school	3.3 Action is taken to ensure that educational provision 5 to 16 is of good quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Schools are encouraged and supported in self-evaluation to ensure continuous improvement, especially in the curriculum and the quality of teaching – Support is given to implementing national strategies for raising attainment, targeted at areas of relative weakness – Schools are monitored, challenged and supported in improving their provision, especially the curriculum and the quality of teaching, and intervention is undertaken, when necessary, to ensure the provision of acceptable standards – Patterns of under-performance by minority ethnic or other groups of pupils, or in particular localities, are identified and action is taken to redress inequalities – Inclusive practice by schools is promoted and monitored.
Achieve stretching national educational standards at secondary school	3.4 Children and young people are enabled and encouraged to attend and enjoy school and to achieve highly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There are sufficient, suitable and accessible school places – School buildings and facilities are in an acceptable condition – Admission arrangements allocate the available school places to reflect need, minimise stress for children and young people and their parents, and give priority to the most vulnerable groups of children and young people – Targeted action is taken to promote good behaviour and attendance, particularly for pupils who are difficult to manage; specialist support is given to them and their parents and carers as necessary (NSF 9) – 5 to 16-year-olds' personal and academic development are monitored; challenging but realistic targets for improvement are set; provision is planned to reflect this – Young people are encouraged and helped to have a growing awareness of their own development needs, to take increasing responsibility for meeting them, and to have high self-esteem and high aspirations – The needs of young carers are addressed.
Attend and enjoy school	3.5 Educational provision is made for children who do not attend school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A full and accurate database is maintained of all young people of statutory school age educated at home and action is taken to ensure that such provision meets their needs – Action is taken to ensure that children and young people who have been permanently excluded from school attend appropriate alternative settings aimed at securing re-integration into mainstream education or work – Action is taken to ensure that children who are not able to attend school receive education suitable to their needs (NSF 6, NSF 7)

Aim	Judgement	Evidence
Achieve personal and social development and enjoy recreation	3.6 All children and young people can access a range of recreational activities, including play and voluntary learning provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There are safe and accessible places where children and young people can play and socialise – A range of affordable, accessible, challenging and rewarding recreational and voluntary learning opportunities is provided – Action is taken to ensure that the cost or availability of transport are not undue barriers to participation in recreational and voluntary learning activities – Recreational and voluntary learning opportunities reflect the needs and interests of individuals as well as groups – Recreational and voluntary learning opportunities reflect the needs of socially excluded groups, and they are given particular encouragement to take them up

The National Youth Agency

works in partnership with young people and with organisations and services to ensure better outcomes for young people. It is an independent, development organisation located between government and funding bodies on the one hand and service providers and their users on the other.

We strive to ensure that the work of services and organisations is:

- relevant to the lives of young people;
 - responsive to policy;
 - effective and of a high standard;
 - efficient and provides good value; and
- successful in securing the best outcomes for young people.

Our five strategic aims are:

- Participation: promoting young people's influence, voice and place in society.
- Professional practice: improving youth work practice, programmes and other services for young people.
- Policy development: influencing and shaping the youth policy of central and local government and the policies of those who plan, commission and provide services for young people.
 - Partnership: creating, supporting and developing partnerships between organisations to improve services and outcomes for young people.
 - Performance: striving for excellence in The Agency's internal workings.

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