## Youth Service Restructure 2013: Consultation Responses

## Introduction

The integrated Youth Support Service conducted a twelve week public consultation using SurveyMonkey between July 2012 to September 2012. We consulted on proposals to restructure the Youth Service to meet the challenges of delivering a service to young people with a £500,000 reduction in our budget. We were also tasked with developing a commissioning pot of money to ensure other providers in the City could bid to deliver positive activities for young people in Coventry.

Below are details of each strand of the proposal with collated themed responses and a short summary of what we will be doing in response to the consultation.

If you require any further information regarding this consultation please feel free to contact:

| Name | Role | Contact No. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Angie Parks | | 024 7683 1414 | Angie.parks@coventry.gov.uk |
| Peter Longden | Neighbourhood Service Manager: IYSS | 024 7683 1414 | Peter.longden@coventry.gov.uk |
| Nigel Patterson | Neighbourhood Service Manager: IYSS | 024 7683 1414 | Nigel.patterson@coventry.gov.uk |
| Brian Mason | Operational Manager: IYSS | 024 7683 1414 | Brian.mason@coventry.gov.uk |

## Strand 1

1. **We proposed strengthening targeted community based youth work.**

The proposed model would maintain delivery of targeted youth services to vulnerable groups in 7 youth centres, each centre staffed by a full time youth worker and supported by assistant youth workers to deliver 4 evenings per week.

Delivery would be targeted at young people who are on the edge of care, CAF, Missing from home, at risk of sexual exploitation, NEETs, known to the Youth Offending service (YOS), at risk of or involved in risky behaviours around alcohol or substance misuse, and sexual activity/ teenage pregnancy, or with mental health difficulties. This model would enable the service to maintain delivery of service to the communities and individuals most in need, whilst allowing time to identify and work with potential social enterprise and voluntary sector partners to deliver in a mixed economy model. The centres would be:

- On Target (Spon End)
- Whoberley Youth Centre
- Hillfields Young People's Centre
- African Caribbean Centre for Young People
- Jardine Crescent Young People's Centre (Tile Hill)
- People's Place (Stoke Aldermoor)
- Wood End Adventure Playground (The Venny)

It was proposed to withdraw from Broad Street Young People's Centre due to the high running costs of the centre.

The model proposed enhancing the Detached Response Team by the addition of two workers, one of whom would be a designated city wide interventions worker who would take referrals of looked after young people, those leaving care and custody , and those at risk of sexual exploitation.

2. **We received 51 responses to the Survey Monkey questionnaire for this proposal:**

21.6% agreed

62.7% disagreed

15.7% Don't Know

3. **You told us that the impact of this would be:**

- Some areas of the  city would be without any provision at all
- There would be no  provision in Upper Stoke
- Having youth clubs placed as proposed would mean that young people have to travel too far to access Youth Service provision.
- Potentially young people could become more vulnerable and at greater risk of being involved in anti-social behaviour because they have nowhere to go or nothing to do.

**4. You suggested that we could:**

- Co-ordinate delivery with partners to help engagement.
- Improve communication and have better signposting that will help stop young people falling through the gaps.
- Keep workers in Wyken and Stoke Park
- Map out the provision against need with other partners.
- Ensure that there is service provision in all parts of the City.
- Remove provision from Broad Street but base them somewhere else cheaper.

**5. This is what we are going to do and why:**

We are going to develop seven Neighbourhood Teams of youth workers across the City. They will be based in Youth Centres and Community Centres. Each Neighbourhood Team will consist of a minimum of one senior youth worker and one youth worker. Each Neighbourhood Team will also have an allocation of assistant youth workers to support the delivery of evening based youth work activities across their neighbourhood.

One of the seven Neighbourhood Teams will be will be a Detached Response Team that will deliver work in a number of locations across the city.

We have reviewed the decision to pull out of the centre on Stoke Park School site and will continue to deliver community based youth work provision from this youth centre.

We believe this approach is responsive to the issues and concerns raised in the consultation. Keeping Stoke Park Youth Club back will ensure provision is available in that part of the city. We intend basing one of the Detached Response Teams at Stoke Park and they will have some responsibility for identifying and responding to gaps on that side of the City, some of which may emerge by our withdrawal from schools.

## Strand 2

1. **We proposed the delivery of Youth Work and capacity building in community venues.**

   The proposal would maintain delivery at 6 community venues, strengthened by support from 6 Senior Youth Workers, whose role would involve working closely with adjacent youth centres to maximise capacity building in the locality, use of buildings, and capacity building with the community venues themselves and other local potential providers of service, to support the shift towards a model of delivery that will include both local authority and external providers. The venues are:

   - Cheylesmore
   - Hagard, Willenhall
   - Henley Green
   - Bell Green
   - Jubilee Crescent
   - Xcel Canley

Each Senior Youth Worker would also have responsibility for a service wide lead on one of the following areas, ensuring an appropriate and co-ordinated response across the city.

- Young people with special needs
- Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Arts and media
- YOS and Looked after
- Health and well being
- Education, raising the participation age, NEETS

In addition Senior Youth Workers would offer support to other potential providers to build their capacity to deliver positive activities in the future delivery model that is a mix of local authority and external provision of youth services.

2. **We received 21 responses to the Survey Monkey questionnaire for this proposal**

   38.1% agreed

   38.1% disagreed

   23.8% Don't Know

3. **You told us that the impact of this would be:**

- Too much focus on buildings and not neighbourhoods
- Community venues would benefit with support for the work they did with young people.
- A positive impact if it could be achieved.
- The model would leave no youth service provision in the Upper Stoke Ward.

4. **You suggested that we could:**

- Reduce management posts.
- Delete the senior youth worker posts.
- Re-look at the geographical impact of what is proposed and carry out further analysis to identify need across the City.
- Make greater use of volunteers.
- Base a youth worker at Stoke Park.
- Work closer with schools there are many building not in use after 6pm.

5. **This is what we are going to do and why:**

Management posts will remain in place to ensure that we can move efficiently to the new working model, including developing a sustainable approach to more commission youth work provision. We will review management capacity twelve months implementation.

Senior Youth Workers will be maintained, and as well as having themed lead responsibilities they will also develop partnership approaches towards increased commissioning of future services. We will adopt a flexible approach within Neighbourhood Teams to determine where staffs are based.

Further needs analysis will take place across the city by all youth workers developing extended community profiles and by the management team's approach to developing a commissioning framework to bridge gaps in youth work provision.

Stoke Park Youth Club will be maintained and as well as delivering a full community based youth work programme, will also accommodate a Detached Response Team.

The operational manager in liaison with Voluntary Action Coventry will continue to ensure opportunities exist across the City for volunteers to actively engage and support youth work delivery.

We will continue to seek opportunities to deliver cost effective youth work programmes across the city and where schools can support us financially we will actively engage with them to explore the options for delivering evening based youth work provision on school sites.

## Strand 3:

**1. We proposed changes in Special Needs Provision (including Hospital Support Group)**

The model proposed to reduce the amount of work with young people with special needs taking place by:

- deleting the Assistant Youth Worker post at Alice Stevens School (working with young people with moderate learning difficulties)
- reducing from 2 to 1 evening per week with pupils from Sherbourne Fields School who meet at Whoberley Youth Club
- reducing from 2 to 1 evening per week with pupils at Baginton Fields School continuing to meet at Baginton Fields School due to the availability of specialist equipment and facilities that enable the group members to access the activities

Coventry Youth Deaf Group would be relocated to Whoberley Youth Centre and continue with its current arrangements.

It is proposed that the Youth Service continue to support the Hospital Group.

**2. We received 14 responses to the Survey Monkey questionnaire for this proposal**

37.7 % agreed

50.0 % disagreed

14.3 % were unsure

**3. You told us that the impact of this would be:**

- An adverse impact on the young people using the special needs youth club due to their complex needs.
- Potentially a significant reduction in the number of young people able to access the facility thus reducing opportunity for special needs young people even more.
- Less opportunity to build on the positive relationships young people with special needs have with their youth workers.
- A detrimental impact on the social and independent development of young people with special needs.
- Further reduction in a very scarce provision already.

**4. You suggested that we could:**

- Protect this part of the service
- Maintain the number of nights for young people at Baginton
- Try to raise money in other areas and use voluntary services.
- Protect this part of the service; ensure support from other services or partners to strengthen links and increase numbers and diversity of young people accessing the groups.
- Use existing Council and partner provision to map against need and priorities. From this the Council and its partners could co-design/deliver services.

**5. This is what we are going to do and why:**

In line with our decision to withdraw services from school sites, we will no longer fund the provision at Alice Stevens but continue to discuss with them potential alternative ways of the school supporting this provision.

We will maintain the existing levels of provision for young people at Baginton and Sherbourne and not reduce down to one evening each. Baginton will continue to meet at their current base and Whoberley Youth Club will continue to accommodate young people from Sherbourne Fields for two evenings a week also.

Coventry Youth Deaf Group will as proposed, will meet at Whoberley Youth Club.

We will continue to support the Hospital Youth Group and negotiate with them to identify an appropriate place to meet.

## Strand 4:

1. **Delete 3 City Wide Posts – Volunteer Coordinator Post, Democracy Project Post, Advice and Information Post.**

The new model proposes to delete the Volunteering Coordinators post. The volunteer database evidences a manageable supply of volunteers without the need for a full time coordinator post. This work will be located in the Operational Managers portfolio and all youth work staff will have a responsibility for supporting volunteer placements.

The full time Democracy Project worker post will be deleted. Budgetary pressures across the service have focussed us on identifying priority activities within each of our areas of work. UKYP and the Youth Council will be prioritised and staffing hours identified to maintain and support the work of these forums will continue. All other Youth Work staff will have a responsibility to ensure that all of the young people we engage will have full access to decision making, both locally and city wide.

The full time Youth Worker for Advice and Information will be deleted due to a reduced demand for Youth Service AIS as the Citizen's Advice Bureau has increased its delivery to young people in schools. Delivery of advice and information will be continued by a team of Assistant Youth Workers in a range of venues around the city. All other Youth Work staff will have a responsibility to ensure that all of the young people we engage will have full advice and information, locally and city wide.

2. **We received 14 responses to the Survey Monkey questionnaire for this proposal.**

35.7% agreed

50.0% disagreed

14.3% were unsure

3. **You told us that the impact on you of this would be:**

- A potential reduction in opportunities for young people to have their voices heard and be involved in political processes and engagement.
- Increased workload If the work was relocated to the Participation Team and concerns about how would they cope with this. It was also felt that the Participation Teams focus primarily on 'Looked After' young people could be to the detriment of the wider youth voice if they took on supporting the work currently supported by the Youth Service.
- Some concerns were expressed regarding the increased demand on voluntary organisations by reducing Youth Service capacity.
- Increasing numbers of unemployed young people could put extra demand on services and the need for increased volunteering opportunities and access to advice and information.

- If we expected the CAB to deliver advice and information in schools, how would we give those young people out of school or post 16 access to advice and information.
- There was some support for deleting the city wide posts. It was felt that that there were only very small numbers currently accessing the advice and information sessions and that this work could be picked up by other organisations.
- Volunteering, it was suggested, could be the responsibility of each youth worker.

**4. You suggested that we could:**

- Reduce Management Posts. Some respondents felt that if there was to be a reduction in frontline staff this should reduce the need for the current levels of management and that the numbers of managers should be reduced. It was also proposed that a reduction in management could support reinvestment in frontline staff.
- Make it the responsibility of all workers to ensure that young people's involvement is ensured in the settings they work in, and that they have opportunities for involvement in decision making and political processes in the wider community.
- Give additional resource to the Participation Team to support the extra capacity required to support work previously undertaken by the Democracy Project Worker.
- Develop strong partnership approaches and ensure provision is mapped against priorities for young people. Co delivery and design could be strengthened to meet the needs of young people. Delivery should consider the strengths of each organisation when planning to deliver work including detached provision.

**5. This is what we are going to do and why:**

Management posts will remain in place to ensure that we can move efficiently to the new working model, including developing a sustainable approach to more commissioned youth work provision. We will review management capacity in twelve months after the transitional and embedding period.

We will delete the three city wide posts as proposed.

All of our Youth Workers will have a responsibility for supporting young people they work with, opportunities to actively engage in decision making and shaping the service. Supporting the on-going activities of both the Youth Council and the UKYP will be led by the operational manager and supported by all youth work staff.

We will continue to work closely with the Participation Team to ensure efficient use of resources in supporting our statutory obligation to give young people a voice and access to decision making.

We will continue to deliver Advice and Information with the support of Assistant Youth Workers and work closely with other potential partners. We have established community based programmes and

increased presence in the City Centre at the Job Shop. We will liaise closely with Citizens Advice Bureau to ensure that resources are maximised and their school based programmes are not duplicated. We will seek shared training opportunities with partners to enhance advice and information delivery across Coventry.

The operational manager will have a continued role in workforce development and this will include ensuring volunteering opportunities exist for young people and adults interested in supporting youth work provision across the city. Stronger links will be developed with Voluntary Action Coventry to create a mechanism for volunteers to access opportunities in youth work settings and to broaden volunteering opportunities to those already offering their services to the Integrated Youth Support Service.

## Strand 5:

1. **Withdraw from all schools.**

It was proposed that Youth Workers are withdrawn from all schools. The School Support Team would also be withdrawn as the Youth Service no longer receives the Early Intervention Grant funding that lead to the development of this work.

The Service proposes to maximise the resources that go into community based youth work by deploying youth workers in six community venues and seven youth centres across the city.

Youth Workers would maintain a relationship with schools in their locality but the vast majority of work would be delivered in the community.

2. **We received 33 responses to the Survey Monkey questionnaire for this proposal.**

   27.3% agreed

   66.7% disagreed

   6.1% Don't Know

3. **You told us that the impact on you of this would be:**

- Many young people losing the opportunity to access familiar and safe surroundings to meet up with friends after or during school hours.
- An increase in the potential for young people to be at greater risk of 'getting into trouble', as they would have no local youth work provision to support or engage them.
- Additional pressure on already strained voluntary organisations who would need to respond to the extra demands placed on them by a reduction in Youth Service activity.
- A reduction in the opportunities for youth work students to undertake their practice placements in school based youth work settings.
- Less opportunity for young people struggling in mainstream education to experience high quality interventions which could, and previously have led to their re-engagement in the classroom.
- Some neighbourhoods would be left with no youth work provision and not all young people could afford of would feel safe travelling to other areas to access youth work provision.
- Some young people becoming more vulnerable and having less social development opportunities.

- The health and wellbeing of young people could be negatively impacted on by not having youth workers in their locality to discuss concerns with or access C-Card and other sexual health services.
- Community cohesion could suffer as many youth work programmes promote tolerance and anti-oppressive practice.

**4. You suggested that we could:**

- Charge schools for youth worker time. If schools were unable to afford a full time member of staff they should consider funding assistant youth workers to provide evening based sessions on school sites.
- Develop partnership approaches with voluntary organisations to map out need and deliver provision against this.
- Continue to operate in the youth centre on the Stoke Park School site as this is owned by the youth service and could still deliver a community based model independent from the school.
- Have phased withdrawal from schools which would afford them opportunity to explore obtaining funds to secure the continued provision of youth work in their schools.
- Reduce the number of hours of youth work in the schools to at least keep some presence and access to vulnerable young people in schools.
- Communicate to schools that extra-curricular activity which is currently delivered by youth services is the schools overall responsibility and that they should fund this.

**5. This is what we are going to do and why:**

- To ensure we can operate with our reduced budget we will withdraw youth work provision from all schools that are unable to fund school based provision. We will continue to negotiate with schools into the future who are interested in funding youth work provision in their school settings.
- Retain Stoke Park Youth Club to develop and deliver youth service provision to the local and surrounding community.
- Add additional support to Stoke Heath Community Centre, bringing the number of community centres supported up from 6 to 7
- Base one of the Detached Response Teams at Stoke Park Youth Centre to deliver youth work provision in communities on that side of the city that have gaps in provision due to a withdrawal from schools.

- We will work with other providers who are interested in developing opportunities for positive engagement with young people in areas which have gaps in provision, and offer commissions to those able to deliver high quality services.

## Strand 6:

1. **Commissioning Positive Activities**

2. **We received 13 responses to the Survey Monkey questionnaire for this proposal.**

   46.2 agreed

   30.8 disagreed

   23.1 were unsure

3. **You told us that the impact on you of this would be:**

- That other providers may want to charge for provision even if commissioned to deliver the work. This would mean that those young people from lower income families may not be able to access the youth work provision in their area and could become more vulnerable to risks.
- Voluntary organisations could have greater demand placed on them and might not be able to meet this demand.
- Cost implications for voluntary organisations who would be willing to support student youth work placements in the commissioned sector.
- An increase in the risks to the most vulnerable young people with multiple needs as commissioned services may not be equipped to deal with these.

4. **You suggested that we could:**

- Agree a period of transition that allowed for current youth work staff to be familiarised with the commissioning model. This could lead to experienced youth workers being in a position to bid and for the City to retain their expertise and experience.
- Bring back the Coventry One Stop Shop as this model worked very effectively.
- Commission the Duke of Edinburgh post to potentially reduce the loss of face to face youth work posts.

5. **This is what we are going to do and why:**

- We will consult with potential providers to develop a commissioning framework for the delivery of Positive Activities.
- We will involve young people in localities in identifying needs and developing responses.
- Invite potential providers to workshops to describe the model and the tendering process.

- Invite tenders to initially deliver Positive Activities in Foleshill and Holbrooks and Willenhall.
- We will work with other providers who are interested in developing opportunities for positive engagement with young people in areas which have gaps in provision, and offer commissions to those able to deliver high quality services.

## Strand 7:

1. **Closure of Youth Resource Centre.**

We proposed to close the Youth Resource Centre and develop a strategy for disposal of the equipment in a meaningful way.

2. **We received 37 responses to the Survey Monkey questionnaire for this proposal and 67 in our mailbox. A total of 104 responses.**

   27.0% agreed

   59.5% disagreed

   13.5% were unsure

3. **You told us that the impact of this would be:**

- 31% of respondents felt that the proposal would potentially reduce the chances of young people from low income families being able to take part in outdoor pursuits and activities. By not having access to affordable equipment young people from low income families would be less likely to take up opportunities when offered.

- 28% of respondents felt that the closure of the Youth Resource Centre would mean that less young people would be able to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award as they don't have their own outdoor activities equipment. Schools were particularly concerned about this issue.

- 28% of respondents felt the closure would have an impact on their ability to provide affordable outdoor activities for their membership. Furthermore the same respondents (21%) expressed concerns that their fundraising activities could be affected by not having access to fund raising activities and games which many currently access through the Youth Resource Centre.

- 24% of respondents expressed concern that young people would have less opportunity to get involved with outdoor activities. Many felt that this flew in the face of national aspirations regarding the Olympic Legacy and also local initiatives like 'The Coventry Experience.' Not having access to the right equipment at affordable prices could mean that some young people could be less willing to engage in outdoor activities. Some felt this could have a counter impact on the cities drive to reduce obesity in young people.

[Prior to the commencement of the public consultation many customers of the Youth Resource Centre emailed us to raise their concerns. We had 67 emails with the bulk of them coming from voluntary organisations and uniformed groups, 70%. Schools (15%) also contacted us to raise concerns.

The concerns mirrored those identified through the public consultation and they felt the greatest impact would be on:

- Young people accessing the outdoors – 48%
- Low income families - 45%
- Fundraising – 27%
- Duke of Edinburgh Award – 9%

76% of those who emailed us asked for the proposal to close the centre to be reconsidered. 8% asked to be involved in exploring alternative options. These respondents were invited to a meeting on 6th August to explore the feasibility of an alternative approach to the service provision.]

4. **You suggested that we could:**

    - Relocate the Youth Resource Centre - 50% of respondents suggested a more centralised service with the provision located either in a less costly setting or given to another organisation or school to house and run. It was also proposed that the equipment be given away to current operating groups who run either scouts or D of E activities.
    - Continue to Fund It - 17% proposed no changes and that we should continue to fund it. It was suggested that increased publicity may generate extra business.
    - Seek sponsorship to support the running of the provision. Possibly looking at supermarket chains that fund community initiatives.
    - One respondent felt that the council should not provide this resource and that it was not the responsibility of a modern local authority.

5. **This is what we are going to do and why:**

The Youth Resource Centre will not be funded by the City Council in the restructured Youth Service model.

A number of interested parties are continuing to explore solutions to providing a similar service to that provided by the Youth Resource Centre and we are keen to work with them to find a solution.

The resources we currently hold will potentially be transferred to another organisation(s) that are able to maintain them and deliver a service consistent with a jointly agreed set of principles for their use.